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.

Necessary preparations should be undertaken for prevention, control and treatment measures without forgetting the lessons and experiences in outbreak of COVID-19: Senior General

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses seventh meeting of prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.

CARELESS behaviors should not be conducted despite declining of infection rate at present. Necessary preparations should be undertaken for prevention, control and treatment measures without forgetting the lessons and experiences in outbreak of COVID-19, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the seventh coordination meeting of the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 at Bayintnaung Villa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

In his address, the Senior General said the third wave outbreak of COVID-19 in Myanmar saw high infection rate in the late June this year. However, the infection of the disease can be controlled to some extent at present thanks to holding the meetings, daily supervision of the central committee and cooperation of officials and people.

The globe saw more than 202 million confirmed patients and more than 4.3 million dead persons till the night of 8 August while Myanmar faced more than 320,000 confirmed patients and over 11,000 dead persons.

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Press Release
Condemn infringement of ethics of a state

On 7 August 2021, Ms. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations in New York released a statement in connection with the arrests of suspects who were planning to injure or kill U Kyaw Moe Tun, a dismissed civil servant of Myanmar.

The said plot which was happened among the residents inside the United States of America should be taken actions in accordance with the law of the land. Myanmar has nothing to do with this incident. The former Permanent Representative of Myanmar, U Kyaw Moe Tun, was dismissed as a civil servant since the morning of 27 February 2021 in accordance with the Civil Services Law, rules and regulations due to incompliance with the instruction from the country; abuse of his assigned mandate and duty; and following the instructions of unlawful and terrorist organizations, the so-called Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) and the so-called National Unity Government (NUG), and he is currently under warrant of arrest for committing high treason. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already informed the State Department of the United States of America for the extradition of U Kyaw Moe Tun to Myanmar on 12 July 2021. The demand for extradition of U Kyaw Moe Tun who is to be taken legal actions according to the laws of a sovereign state has not been carried out yet.

The remarks by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations are the accusation on Myanmar. Such behavior violates the principles of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations which needs to be followed by a diplomat. Accordingly, Myanmar strongly objects and rejects it. Moreover, the support to U Kyaw Moe Tun who will be taken legal actions of Myanmar is far from the ethics among the United Nations member states. Myanmar also strongly condemns it. Furthermore, Myanmar insists to follow the basic principles of non-interference and mutual respect which are fundamentally stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Nay Pyi Taw
Dated 9 August 2021.

Medical supplies, anti-COVID-19 equipment imported as usual on public holidays

THE Ministry of Commerce is making strenuous efforts to import the anti-COVID-19 equipment including liquid oxygen, oxygen gas, household oxygen concentrators, and medicines via sea, air and border routes on public holidays.

A total of 4,242 oxygen concentrators arrived at the Yangon International Airport and 199 oxygen concentrators at international ports yesterday, while 59 tonnes of liquid oxygen on three bowsers, 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen cylinders, two tonnes of oxygen cylinder, 5,422 empty cylinders, one oxygen plant, 5,341 home oxygen concentrators, 24,360 PPE suits and 89 tonnes of masks were imported at Muse, Lwejel, Chinshwehaw, Myawady, Tachilek and Kawthoung border trade checkpoints.

Cargo trucks are carrying medical supplies and oxygen cylinders to be used in prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.

A total of 29 companies used 57 vehicles in import of these materials.

A total of 516 tonnes of liquid oxygen on bowsers, 109 tonnes of liquid oxygen cylinders, 65 tonnes of oxygen cylinders, 62,212 empty oxygen containers, seven oxygen plants, nine oxygen generators, 51,275 household oxygen concentrators, 141,642 test kits, 305,292 PPE suits, 40 tonnes of gloves and 726 tonnes of masks have been imported so far in August.

In July, a total of 1,294 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 114 tonnes of oxygen cylinder, 40,491 empty oxygen containers, 69,146 household oxygen concentrators, eight oxygen plants, 11 oxygen generators, four oxygen filling machines for hospitals, 322,878 test kits, 1,104 tonnes of mask and 182,975 PPE suits were imported.

The Ministry of Commerce also released a statement on 8 August that as the border trade camps will offer services for importation processes as usual even during the public holidays from 9 to 15 August, they will allow the imports of anti-COVID-19 equipment in accordance with the SOP while the Department of Trade goes fully online for import and export licence.

The Ministry of Commerce has posted contact persons and department announcements on the Ministry's website, Commerce.gov.mm, to access direct contact with relevant authorities if assistance is needed.—MNA

Facing severe problems

THE globe has overcome various pandemics in the past. Although various pandemics such as plague and smallpox diseases can be controlled in the advancement of medical technologies at present, respiratory disease COVID-19 may cause infections whenever breathing. If public cooperation lacks, it is sure to difficultly control the disease. It can be seen that even developed and developing countries are yet to perform control, prevention and treatment of the disease on the upper hand. Even in the United States, hospitals cannot give adequate accommodation to patients, facing shortages of ventilators and air fresheners. So, the patients are receiving treatments at home. The problem of oxygen is a difficulty for the countries facing the outbreak of disease. Myanmar's neighbouring countries India and Indonesia are facing severe problems.

(Excerpt from the speech to the occasion of six months on 1 August 2021 since the State Administration Council has taken the State's responsibilities made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 2 August 2021)

Necessary preparations should be undertaken for prevention ...

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Efforts must be made for ensuring a half decline of infection rate in August and further efforts to decrease the infection rate in coming months. More than 3,400 persons were infected on 1 August and over 3,200 persons on 8 August, accounting for some 30 per cent. The infection rate could be reduced in Yangon, Mandalay and Bago regions in a short period. In observing the indicator and figure on infection, people from major cities abide by the health restrictions but those from some towns are still careless for the disease as usual. So, officials need to raise health awareness about the disease for the people.

As of last week, the prices of basic foodstuffs and household medicines have been rising. The Senior General stressed the need to avoid extreme hiking of prices over the goods. Officials need to manage no rising of prices for basic foodstuffs and personal goods because some businesspersons commit storage of goods and manipulation of prices with attempt to raising the goods prices.

Anti-COVID-19 equipment, basic household medicines and goods are allowed to be imported without any restrictions. So, it is necessary to sell these goods at fair prices. Problems of oxygen requirements could be solved to supply oxygen to the people thanks to cooperation of the government, the Tatmadaw, social organizations, well-wishers and companies. As variant COVID-19 viruses emerge one after another, oxygen plants are being established for supply as part of preventive measures. Careless behaviors should not be conducted despite declining of infection rate at present. Necessary preparations should be undertaken for prevention, control and treatment of the disease without forgetting the lessons and experiences based on lives of the people in outbreak of COVID-19.

In his speech related to further undertakings for the disease, the Senior General said: "I'd like to stress five points over COVID-19. The first point is that COVID-19 would not clearly disappear. So, we need to create the good environs. For example, we need to create the lifestyle and social systems in conformity with the health situation. Such move depends on knowledge and skills of the people as well as living standards and income. The people and the government need to have good economy and income. Only when the government has income, will it carry out the tasks such as establishment of parks and proper drainage facilities. Such tasks such as good environs can be carried out if the government has income. Individually, the people need to create the good environs for their neat and tidy houses. The first point is important to create the good environs not only by the government but by the people. The second point is to improve individual immunity as well as good health and fitness. It means we need to encourage the sports sector for ensuring good immunity of the people. For the third point, it is necessary to ensure food sufficiency. If the people gave food sufficiency, they will have health and fitness through exercises. The exercises will bring good immunity. We need to do so. As Myanmar is based on agriculture and livestock breeding, we have no reason to face deficiency of foods. If we have food sufficiency, it will contribute much to good condition of public health. If we have good environs and facilities for health and fitness, it will benefit the efforts for prevention of the COVID-19. Meanwhile, we need to fully supply prevention and treatment medicines. In the future, we must produce preventive and treatment medicines at home without fail. If we always rely on import of medicines abroad for more than 50 million of population, the country will be poor. We must do it. As a further point, the Ministry of Health cooperates with the medical research unit under the Directorate of Medical Services of the Ministry of Defence in conducting the research on traditional medicines against the COVID-19 under the leadership of the Traditional Medicine Department. We need to expose the new therapy of traditional medicines through modern technologies. There are famous traditional medicine practitioners in Kayin, Kachin and Shan states. Some of traditional medicine practitioners are unknown in the states. We need to invite them to discuss how to make the traditional medicines with their suggestions. If we make systematic production, it is sure that the COVID-19 prevention and treatment medicines can be manufactured at home. So, I'd like to point out the full kinds of production of prevention and treatment medicines including traditional medicines in a long run. The fifth point is to emphasize good income for the people. Those who do not have income can do nothing.

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The fifth point is to emphasize good income for the people. Those who do not have income can do nothing. The people must always have income. In the tenures of previous governments, efforts were made to alleviate the poverty rate. It does not have the cent per cent success till today. COVID-19 brings worse result to such projects. So, we need to create the way for the people to have income through agriculture and livestock breeding tasks.

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Next, the Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister of the State and meeting participants reported on further measures for prevention, control and treatment of the disease, needs of supervision over easing restrictions due to declining of infection rate, medical examination and control of infection over foreign returnee citizens, arrivals of vaccines imported from foreign countries and continuous process of vaccination.

They also presented reports on distribution of vaccines to regions and states, aid from international community including ASEAN for combating COVID-19, import of oxygen and production of it at home and control of prices in sale of oxygen.

Further reports comprised training given to those who participate in the treatment measures, distribution of medicines related to COVID-19, supervisions for sales of medicines and medical equipment, production of pharmaceuticals from State-own and private pharmaceutical factories, running of relief flights for citizens from other countries, and operation of inland water, aviation and rail transportations.

They also explained cooperation with traditional medicine practitioners for production of prevention and treatment medicines, appointment of health staff for necessary areas, raising health awareness of the people through TV channels, daily newspapers and media, treatment measures at military hospitals, and assignment of Tatmadaw members at treatment centres.

In his supplementary speech, the Senior General stressed the need to distribute the arrivals of vaccines and inject it into the people in time. Priority must be given to the health staff in vaccination. Efforts must be made for relevant ministries and medical services corps to effectively produce the prevention and treatment vaccines through traditional medicines. Foreign returnee citizens must be systematically conducted medical check-ups and patients provided medical treatment.

In his conclusion speech on vaccination, the Senior General said: "Vaccines must be distributed in a rapid manner. The already-arrived vaccines should be distributed quickly, especially to Mandalay and Yangon. Moreover, the vaccines must be quickly sent to regions and states. If the vaccines arrive at the target areas one day earlier than the schedules, it can take preventive measures one day earlier than the planned. It is related to the medicine. Likewise, products such as foodstuffs and personal goods from respective regions must be distributed quickly and efficiently. For example, an event happened in Shan State last year. State government and respective military commands cooperated with cooperative societies in quick distribution of garlic, cabbage and vegetables with participation of private businesspersons. I mean no products are kept in hand. It must be changed with income. It is the first point. For the second point, it is necessary to use the products. If vaccines arrive in regions and states, it is necessary to inoculate it to the people quickly. If the vaccines arrive at the target areas one day earlier than the schedules, it will prevent the disease one day earlier than the planned. If the people have received vaccine, they will have preventive facilities to some extent. So, I'd like to point out rapid distribution of vaccine and quick use of it for the COVID-19."

> If the vaccines arrive at the target areas one day earlier than the schedules, it will prevent the disease one day earlier than the planned. If the people have received vaccine, they will have preventive facilities to some extent. So, I'd like to point out rapid distribution of vaccine and quick use of it for the COVID-19.

Afterwards, the Senior General said that their organization is the highest to make decisions for immediately doing the tasks. It is necessary to vaccinate the people in regions and states where there remain high rate of vaccination. Relevant regions and states need to manage the rapid vaccination and submit the report to the State Administration Council in time. Region and state authorities must take legal action against those who hike the prices of medicines and oxygen.

The Senior General noted that NUG and PDF terrorists committed disturbance against vaccination and health care services in some regions and states. So, it is necessary to systematically control them for taking security measures of the State. The Senior General stressed the need to effectively control the medicines which can harm the national cause of the State.

High prices of goods may be based on inequality of supply and demand. Hence, officials of regions and states should systematically supervise the equality of supply and demand in products. Creation of jobs for the people to earn income is of great importance. Efforts for food sufficiency and creation of job opportunities for the people to earn income will contribute to other sectors.—MNA

Village-level poverty alleviation model project under implementation in Tatkon Township

UNION Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Hla Moe inspected the implementation of village-level poverty alleviation model project developed in Chanayetha Model Village in Tatkon Township yesterday.

The project was jointly implemented by the Department of Rural Development and IPRCC (International Poverty Reduction Centre) of China.

The pilot project was being carried out with the financial assistance of China (from 2018-2021) to develop the socio-economic status and living standard of the residents in Chanayetha Model Village of Tatkon Township and Minpyin Village of Lawe Township in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. The project can bring a system to improve the ability for poverty reduction and village social status growth. The system will be an ideal poverty reduction project not only in Myanmar but also in ASEAN region countries.

The Union Minister then met the executive members of Seinpannwe Agriculture (2) general business cooperative society in Nweyit Village of Tatkon Township and instructed officials to make efforts to improve the agriculture and livestock sectors and fulfill the needs of society members.—MNA

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Govt tries to meet bean shipping target to India

THE Ministry of Commerce is constantly monitoring the prices of products to prevent shortages and price-gouging in the market for the consumers to buy the basic foodstuffs at reasonable prices during COVID-19 outbreak, said Union Minister Dr Pwint San during a virtual coordination meeting yesterday.

Then, he added that the relevant departmental officials and entrepreneurs should discuss the matters to be provided or solved by the government in distributing the foodstuffs and preventing the high prices.

Deputy Minister U Nyunt Aung, other departmental officials, Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw development Committee members clarified their respective work plans.

The meeting focuses on shipping of Myanmar's bean to meet the export target to India.

The Union Minister also presided over a coordination meeting on exporting mung bean and pigeon pea to India under MoU at noon. During the meeting, the Union Minister said the bilateral MoU between India and Myanmar for the exports of mung beans and pigeon peas was made on 18 June 2021.

He also discussed the local production rate, market situation, good points and weak points of exporters, formation of joint oversight committee on bean exports, systematic plans for the exports of mung beans and pigeons unlike other bean exports under G to G agreement and plans to meet the fixed tonnes of beans yearly. He also highlighted the needs to increase the export volumes considering the country's bean cultivation acres, production rate and surplus rate, and the plans to penetrate the foreign markets in addition to Indian market.

Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation discussed the 5-year solid market for Myanmar bean farmers through G to G agreement with India, plans for farmers to follow GAP, distribution of proper seedlings and modern techniques, issuance of Phytosanitary Certificate (PC) and other cooperation work in exporting beans to India.—MNA

Extremist insurgents attack COVID-19 checkpoint in Kawlin, vaccination forum in Namhkam

THE government is accelerating the COVID-19 prevention and control activities and conducting COVID-19 vaccination programmes across the nation together with the health workers, officials and volunteers, and the extremist terrorists intentionally disturb the COVID-19 vaccination processes.

Two remote mines planted by the extremist terrorists near the inspection gate for COVID-19 at the entrance of Kawlin Township of Sagaing Region exploded yesterday morning. Then, four extremist terrorists (under scrutiny) attacked the checkpoint with 40mm grenade launcher from 150 yards west from that place.

During the attacks, four police members and one municipal staff were injured and one of the police members died on the way to Kawlin township hospital.

Similarly, two insurgents by motorcycle threw a homemade mine into Kyarphyu hall in Ward 5 of Namhkam in Shan State (North) where the health personnel, social welfare organization members and officials made preparations for vaccination on the same day. The mine blast did not have any injury but damaged about 5ft by 5ft concrete floor.

The security forces investigate the suspects who committed the bomb attacks and the people are urged to inform the officials regarding with the activities of the unscrupulous persons. –MNA

3,611 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 9 August, total figure rises to 333,127

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **333,127 after 3,611 new cases** were reported on 9 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **249,633** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **12,014** after **238** died. —MNA

Public request by Ministry of Health

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

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

Ministry of Health (2-8-2021)

Water treatment plant project in Dala Tsp to supply 70% of drinking water needs

ACCORDING to the Dala Township Water Supply Committee, 70 per cent of the construction work for 630 mm (24 inch) HDPE Main Transmission pipelines long the Dala-Twantay Road has been completed.

Pre-construction works are also underway for an international standard water treatment plant that will supply 3.3 million gallons of drinking water per day and 66,000 gallons of drinking water to meet the needs of many local people in Dala Township, Yangon Region, officials said.

Heavy machinery are used in construction of water treatment plant in Dala Township to supply 3.3 million gallons of drinking water per day to local people.

Preliminary works such as widening 9,500 feet of dirt road and paving concrete road are being carried out in the water treatment plant project area in Phayagyisu village, Twantay Township.

Currently, the construction of a 630 mm (24 inch) HDPE Main Transmission Pipelines (41,569 ft) from the top of entrance road to Yangonpauk Water Supply Camp to the Service Reservoir on Kanaung Road, Dala Township is underway, said officials from Yangon City Development Committee.

At present, the Yangonpauk Water Supply Station in Twantay Township supplies 1 million gallons of water daily to the Dala Township Water Supply Station through a 24-inch diameter pipelines, and supplies water to 4,625 households in 24 wards in the township.

In the past, drinking water for Dala Township was supplied directly from the Yangonpauk Water Supply Station. A water treatment plant will now be built to supply and purify Nano Filter water.

An international standard water treatment plant project is being implemented to meet the drinking water needs of many people in Dala Township, officials said.

The 630 mm (24 inch) HDPE Pipe Connection along Dala-Twantay Road will be 23,260 feet long. Under the construction, it is now 16,478 feet long, and thus only 6,782 feet of work remains to be done.

The construction of the water pipeline is 70 per cent complete and the project is expected to be completed by 2023, officials added.—Naing Lin Kyaw (IPRD)/GNLM

Over 36 % of population in Lashio vaccinated against COVID-19

THE second dose of COVID-19 vaccines are being administrated in Lashio, Shan State (North) starting from 6 August, it is learnt, Shan State (North) has received its second 15,200 doses of China's Sinopharm vaccine. These vaccines will be administered to 30,400 people approximately. Lashio township received 1,800 doses of its ongoing Sinopharm vaccine. This translates to vaccination for approximately 3,600 residents. As the injection is completed this time, it will cover 36.19 per cent of the population that needs to be vaccinated, according to the office data of Lashio Township Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19.

The elderly people at over 65, the government staff, private health staff and the volunteers are given the second dose of COVID-19 at Lashio township hospital while the civil service personnel and its family members and, bank staff are administered at No 4 high school in Lashio.

The employees from private factories, companies, hotels, motels and guests have been vaccinated in Shwe Kyei (Golden Star) hall in ward-7 while the staffs from markets, supermarkets and private transportation companies are provided the COVID-19 vaccine at No 3 high school in ward-12.

This is a second time that Lashio received the Sinopharm vaccine made in China. On 29 July, Lashio received its first 8,800 does of a COVID-19 vaccine to inoculate 17,600 people. On 5 August, the township accepted another 1,800 does of vaccines to be delivered to 3,600 residents. Around 1.75 million people of 54 million have so far been vaccinated in the country, according to authorities.

After containing the number of COVID-19 cases at the beginning of the pandemic, Myanmar is now struggling with third wave, recording 329,516 cases and 11,776 deaths.—Aye Maung/GNLM

Myanmar's maritime trade drops by 5.6 bln in 10 months

Freight handling process is in progress at the port of Yangon.

MYANMAR'S maritime trade reached US$ 1.57 billion as of 23 July in the current financial year 2020-21 which started in October, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The country's export through maritime routes hit $ 6.58 billion while its import reached $ 9.11 billion during the period from 1 October to 23 July this year. Compared to the same period in the 2020-21 fiscal year, imports fell by $3.96 billion, while exports reported a decrease of $1.66 billion. Total external trade value saw a significant drop of $5.6 billion compared to the same period of last FY.

Both maritime trade and border trade dropped amid the coronavirus impacts. The country currently has nine ports involved in the sea trade. Yangon Port is the main gateway to Myanmar's maritime trade and includes Yangon inner terminals and the outer Thilawa Port.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

The external trade stood at $36.73 billion in the 2019-2020 FY, $35.147 billion in the 2018-2019 FY, $18.728 billion in the 2018 six-month mini budget period, $33.578 billion in the 2017-2018 FY and $29.209 billion in the 2016-2017 FY respectively, as per the Commerce Ministry's statistics.

Meanwhile, the country's total foreign trade registered over $12.31 billion as of 23 July this 2020-21 FY, of which its border trade registered over $5.7 billion.—GNLM

6,000 cattle stranded in Muse since 2020-end

LEGITIMATE live cattle trading has grounded to a halt since 2020-end and about 6,000 herds have stuck in Muse, said U Soe Naing, chair of Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association.

"About 6,000-7,000 cattles are still stranded in Muse at the present time," U Soe Naing stressed.

Earlier, around 15,000 herds were stuck in Muse and some traders returned their cattle to their home towns owing to the burden of labour wages and cost of feedstuff. Nonetheless, some traders embarked on the illegal sales. At present, about 6,000 herds remained stuck in Muse. It costs about 400,000-600,000 per 100 herds for feedstuff, labour wages and general cost, the association stated.

Herds of cattle are kept in ranches in waiting for the turn of exportation.

For legitimate trade, China permits live cattle import only after ensuring the cattle is free from 20 diseases including Foot and Mouth Disease, along with vaccination certificates, health certificates, and farming registration certificates. Yet, those import criteria do not matter on the black market.

At present, the legitimate border trade between China and Myanmar has suspended in light of the COVID-19 threats.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, about 1,500-2,000 herds were daily exported to China via Muse land border. China has banned legal cattle trade at the present time.

Myanmar's live cattle export is heavily relying on China market due to a good price although Myanmar has other external markets such as Laos, Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh.

The Ministry of Commerce grants a permit to each company for 100 cattle export and the permit is valid for three months. The companies can be taken legal action if they do not sell the cattle during three-month period.

Live cattle export was allowed in late 2017, with a view to eradicating illegal exports, creating more opportunities for breeders, promoting their interests and generating more revenues.

Myanmar shipped US$360 million worth of animal products including cattle to the external markets in the financial year 2018-2019. The value of animal product exports dropped by $100 million in the 2019-2020 FY as against a-year ago period, following the impacts of the COVID-19.

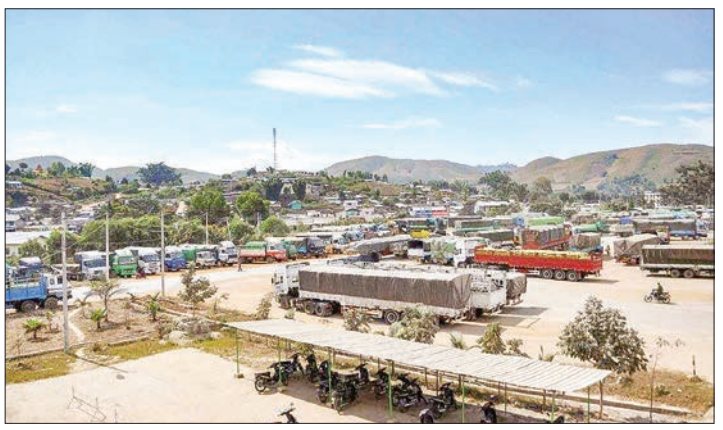
According to the 2018 pilot project of livestock census, there were 1.8 million buffalo and 9.7 million cattle, totalling 11.5 million, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation stated.

Of them, 1.1 million cattle are old enough to be placed in market every year. Myanmar can yearly export over 600,000 herds of cattle beyond domestic consumption of 400,000 herds, according to the ministry.—NN/GNLM

Muse border trade falls by 12% as of 23 July

MUSE border trade climbed down 12 per cent nearly ten months in the current financial year 2020-2021 against the last year's, the Ministry of Commerce's data showed.

As the COVID-19 infections are spiking in Myanmar, trade through Myanmar's major border area Muse has completely stopped, along with other border posts between Myanmar and China from 8 July.



A distance view shows Muse 105th mile trade zone.

The value of trade between Myanmar and China via Muse land border touched a low of US$3.54 billion between 1 October and 23 July in the current financial year 2020-2021 amid the political instability and the COVID-19 surge. The figures plummeted from $4.03 billion recorded in the year-ago period, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

As of 23 July 2021, Myanmar's exports to China through Muse land border were valued at $2.42 billion, while imports are worth $1.12 billion. The trade showed a slump in both export and import.

On 30 March, Man Wein, which is a major border crossing between Muse and Kyalgaung areas, were suspended owing to the COVID-19 cases. The traders have to send the goods, including rice and broken rice, various pulses and beans, marine products, onion, chilli and other export items to China via Kyinsankyawt checkpoint owing to the closure of the Man Wein checkpoint.

Following up the COVID-19 detection of the staff from Muse-105th mile trade zone, China closed down all the border posts. Wamting, Kyinsankyawt and Pangsan (Kyukok) border posts came to an abrupt halt on 8 July.

In a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus in border, China banned border crossing, causing the price hike for the agricultural input, cement and medical devices.

Earlier, China practiced driver substitution programme and those drivers were tested every three days.

Myanmar exports agricultural products including rice, beans and corns, and marine products such as crab, prawn, etc. Furthermore, Myanmar's natural gas export to China is also conducted through Muse-Ruili border. The raw CMP materials, electrical appliance and consumer goods are imported into the country.—KK/GNLM

Black gram price soars to K1.52 mln per tonne

THE prices of black gram (urad) remain on the upward trend and hit a record high of K1,521,000 per tonne for Special Quality (SQ), as per Bayintnaung's brokerage data.

The black gram price rose by K30,000 per tonne in two weeks. It fetched only K1,260,000 per tonne for fair and average quality (FAQ) in late July 2021. On 9 August, the black gram was priced K1,291,000 per tonne for FAQ/RC and K1,521,000 for SQ/RC.

The price is expected to stay in bull market following decrease in sown acreage of India and closure of some warehouse and wholesale centres amid the COVID-19 crisis, exporters said.

Following the policy change of India's pulses import, the prices of black gram will remain strong in the domestic market, according to the traders from Mandalay commodity depot.

The domestic bean market is positively related to the law of supply and demand. The price depends on the buyers and sellers, the traders pointed out.

As Myanmar is facing the rapid spread of COVID-19, agricultural exports to China through border posts also came to abrupt stop, resulting in the price slip in green gram, sesame and peanut.

Nonetheless, the prices of black bean and pigeon remain high on the back of strong demand by India.

Myanmar shipped over 509,014 tonnes of black gram to foreign countries as of 23 July, generating an income of US$390.538 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

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

10 AUGUST 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Take meditation for raising oxygen in body organs

MOST of the people suffering from impacts of COVID-19 in the third wave said they experienced the decrease of oxygen in body organs, and so they took oxygen supply by hiring the oxygen cylinders form some philanthropic centres.

The declining of oxygen in body organs is various dangerous, harmful to the lives of patients. So, family members of the patients search oxygen cylinders here and there for saving their patients in time. But they faced most of the cylinders have been hired to other patients before them. Hence, all the people need to culture sympathy over all.

> Actually, the meditation is an exercise of living beings, not very related to the religious orders. Hence, all the people facing or not facing the COVID-19 may take meditation for concentration of their minds as well as for improvement of health conditions to overcome the challenges of COVID-19.

In this regard, some of the patients queued at the charity centres for hiring the oxygen cylinders. But, some people took the cylinders for their families in advance without ailing of their family members. It is because they wish readiness to use the oxygen cylinders when they need oxygen. As such, those who actually need oxygen cannot search the oxygen cylinders elsewhere. In fact, the incorrect way of breathing oxygen may cause danger to the patients.

Whatever it may be, an advice would be given to the people wishing to use oxygen for their health. To regain the satisfactory level of oxygen in the body, they need to take meditation. The way of meditation is a kind of breathing. Anyone including confirmed patients of COVID-19 may take such exercise by breathing in and breathing out.

Especially, the COVID-19 patients need to concentrate their mind on breathing in and breathing out in a slow manner. Firstly, the process may be difficult for those patients but it will be gradually comfortable. While breathing, the patients should not be downhearted for their health conditions. They should remove worries from their minds. They may take meditation in appropriate position of cross-legged sitting or supine position. When the patients breathe easily, it is sure that their oxygen levels in the body would have risen.

Any persons from various religions may take meditation for regaining the satisfactory levels of oxygen. Actually, the meditation is an exercise of living beings, not very related to the religious orders. Hence, all the people facing or not facing the COVID-19 may take meditation for concentration of their minds as well as for improvement of health conditions to overcome the challenges of COVID-19.

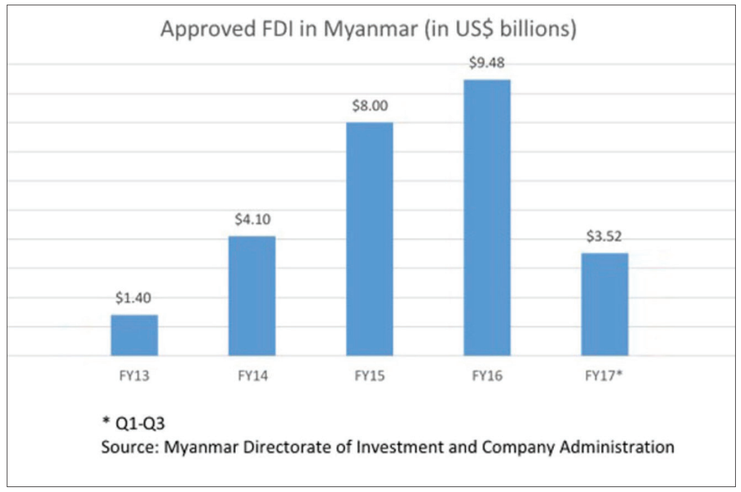
■ ■ ■

The Sooner We Call Tenders, the Quicker We Can Drill to Find Discovery and Benefit National Economy

By Kyaw Kyaw Hlaing (SMART)

Myanmar's offshore natural gases are internationally transported to neighbouring countries like Thailand and China, as well as locally used to generate electricity for Myanmar and domestic industrial uses. TOTAL Oil Company produces about 800 million cubic feet of natural gas daily from YADANA Gas Field. About 600 million are exported to Thailand and 200 million are transported to Yangon via 24-inch pipelines for power generation. POSCO Daewoo Oil Company produces about 500 million cubic feet of natural gas from the SHWE Gas Field. 400 million cubic feet are exported to China and about 100 million cubic feet are used for the needs in Myanmar.

PTTEP Oil Company receives 380 million cubic feet of natural gas from the ZAWTIKA Gas Field. Approximately, 300 million cubic feet are exported to Thailand and the remaining 80 million cubic feet are operated on needs in Myanmar. In year 2000, PETRONAS CARIGALI Co., Ltd started the YETAGUN Oil Company to produce oil and natural gas. Previously, YETAGUN Oil and Condensate Field has been producing more than 400 million cubic feet of natural gas and more than 10,000 barrels of condensate per day. The block has been temporarily shut down due to low production (15 million cubic feet of natural gas per day).



According to EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative), natural gas exports account for 30% of Myanmar's total earnings from abroad. It accounts for 4.8% of GDP and provides 5.2% of government revenue. EITI implements the global standard to promote the open and accountable management of oil, gas and mineral resources.

Production Sharing Contracts

In the end of 2012, President U Thein Sein (2010-2015) affirmed that they would implement Extractive Industries requirements and prepare to be a signatory to EITI. As promised, the government worked to meet the requirements of the EITI and became a member in 2014. As a new EITI member, Myanmar oil and gas exploration and production presented a high degree of transparency. The sale of natural gas abroad generates significant incomes for the country and empowering companies to build oil and gas blocks greatly enhances the country's foreign investment. In 2011 to 2012, under President U Thein Sein's leadership, onshore blocks were tendered and eight onshore blocks were signed Production Sharing Contract with eight foreign companies. In 2013, tenders were called again for onshore and offshore blocks including shallow and deep-water blocks. Eleven onshore blocks and four offshore blocks signed Production Sharing Contracts with foreign companies in 2014. In 2015, three Improve Oil Recovery contracts were signed for three old oil fields and sixteen offshore blocks were signed Production Sharing Contract with foreign companies.

After striving for EITI membership and calling for tenders for blocks, foreign investment reached USD 9.1 billion in 2016. According to the World Bank report released on 25th January 2017, this was the highest amount of foreign investment in 10 years (2010-2020). During the government's tenure from 2015 to 2020, there were no tenders for onshore and offshore blocks. Imagine how much opportunities we missed in five years? Today, world oil prices are hovering above USD 70 for a barrel although they used to be only over USD 50 per bbl before Covid-19. Despite the third wave of Covid-19, experts predict that oil prices will rise further by the end of the pandemic. Taking advantage of the Covid-19 situation, Malaysia's Petronas called for tenders for thirteen offshore blocks in early 2021. Petronas has announced that they will sign contracts before the end of the year.

There are still many unexplored and undiscovered gas deposits in the offshore shallow and deep waters of our country. The sooner we call the tenders, the quicker we can sign contracts and start drilling to bring more gas to the country. It should be noted that exploration takes nine to ten years from the date of discovery of a gas to commercial production. Even if the tender is called today and the contract is to be signed the next year, the discovered gas still would not be available for commercial until 2031.

How long the gas demand will high?

The idea that oil and gas reserves should be left behind for future generations is a misconception. We must develop our citizens to benefit maximum growth from export gas income. Once we manage to build the capacity of the nation, we can obtain an educated society. This is the way to achieve sustainable development for the country. According to the published report of the Mckinsey in February 2021, natural gas demand is expected to peak in 2037 and after then gradually decline.

Other renewable energy sources are now becoming more affordable. If this prediction is true, our country which has a lot of gas reserves will have to make immediate plans before 2037 to commercialize gas from gas reserves.

India's strategy to combat Covid crisis gave priority to poor, says PM Modi

India gave first priority to the poor in its strategy to combat the COVID-19 crisis, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday.

While interacting with beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana in Madhya Pradesh, through video conferencing, the Prime Minister said: "Be it Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana or Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana, we thought about the food and employment of the poor from the first day itself." He noted that over 80 crore citizens have been provided free ration after the COVID-19 started in the country.

"Not just wheat, rice or pulses but over 8 crore poor families were even provided free gas cylinders during the lockdown. Over 20 crore women received around Rs 30,000 crores directly in their Jan Dhan bank accounts," the Prime Minister stated.

Terming heavy rain and floods in several districts of Madhya Pradesh as "unfortunate", PM Modi said, "Lives and livelihood of several people affected. The Government of India and the entire nation stands with Madhya Pradesh in these times of crisis." "Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and his entire team are going to the spots and carrying out rescue and relief operations. Be it NDRF, Central forces, or Air Force, all facilities are being provided to the State government for help in this situation," he noted.

He said that at a time when there is a worldwide crisis on livelihood, it is constantly being ensured that there is a minimum loss in India.

"For this, many steps have been taken in the last year and are being taken continuously. Lakhs of crores of rupees have been provided to small, small, micro industries to continue their work," PM Modi said.

Source : ANI

Nurses from the Rajawadi Hospital make the victory sign gesture as they pose in front of a television broadcasting a live address by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi before the start of the Covid-19 coronavirus vaccination drive in Mumbai on 16 January 2021. **PHOTO: INDRANIL MUKHERJEE/AFP**

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 9 August 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 10 August 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions, fairly widespread in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady Regions and Rakhine, Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weak monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 August 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 August 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 August 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

Iran's daily Covid caseload exceeds 40,000 in new high

IRAN'S daily Covid caseload crossed the 40,000 mark on Monday, its health ministry said, marking a new record in infections and deaths for the second day running.

In the past 24 hours, 40,808 people tested positive for the coronavirus and 588 died, it said.

The latest figures bring the total number of infections to 4,199,537 since the pandemic started and the number of deaths to 94,603.

Iranian health officials have acknowledged that the Islamic republic's Covid figures underestimate the real toll.

Iran remains the Middle East country worst hit by the pandemic.

Covid infections have been surging since June, in what officials have warned is a "fifth wave" caused by the highly infectious Delta variant.

Tehran, with a population of over eight million, is facing the highest numbers of deaths, infections and hospitalisation, according to Nader Tavakoli, deputy head of the capital's virus task force.

Iranians wear face masks as a measure against the Covid-19 coronavirus, in a street in the capital Tehran, on 7 July, 2021. **PHOTO: ATTA KENARE / AFP**

He also told ISNA news agency "we will see deaths increase in the coming days".

"We have no idea when we would reach the peak of this fifth wave," Tavakoli said, adding that Tehran's hospitals and emergency wards are overburdened.

Iran has pinned its hopes on vaccinations to help with the health crisis, but the innoculation campaign launched in February has progressed slower than authorities had planned.

Choked by US sanctions that have made it difficult to transfer money abroad, Iran says it is struggling to import vaccines for its 83-million-strong population.

More than 13 million people have been given a first vaccine does, but only 3.7 million have received the necessary two jabs, the health ministry said Monday.

More than half of Iran's 448 counties including Tehran are currently listed as "red" -- the highest risk level on the country's colour-coded scale, according to the ministry. In red zones, all commercial activity must shut down except for those considered essential, such as grocery stores and pharmacies. But malls and small retail shops in northern and central Tehran were still operating, according to AFP journalists. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Samsung heir Lee granted parole, set to be released on Fri

THE Justice Ministry said Monday it will release Samsung heir Lee Jae Yong on parole on Friday, just ahead of the country's August 15 Liberation Day.

Justice Minister Park Beom Kye said economic concerns are rising amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and that was the main factor in the ministry's decision to grant parole to Lee, who had met the requirements for parole eligibility by completing 60 per cent of his prison sentence, and business groups are hoping will get back to managing the nation's major conglomerate.

The vice chairman to South Korean tech giant Samsung Electronics Co. has been jailed since he was sentenced to two and a half years in prison by the Seoul High Court in January in a retrial of a bribery case involving ousted former President Park Geun Hye.— Kyodo News ■

EU countries boost fire-fighting help to Greece

EU countries are stepping up their help to Greece to fight forest fires devastating its mainland and some islands, the European Commission said on Monday as it coordinated the assistance.

There are now nine planes, 1,000 firefighters and 200 vehicles deployed by European Union states, a statement said.

France, Germany, Poland, Austria and Slovakia added resources and were sending extra fire fighting units, adding to ones already in Greece from France and other EU nations.

In addition, EU help has gone to battle fires that are also burning in Italy as well as in neighbouring non-EU countries North Macedonia, Albania and Turkey, the commission said.

"We are mobilising one of Europe's biggest ever common firefighting operations as multiple fires affect several countries simultaneously," the EU commission for crisis management, Janez Lenarcic, said.

"I am very thankful to all the countries who have offered help for their tangible solidarity. Our thoughts are with all those affected and with the first responders who are risking their lives to battle the fires." — AFP ■

Russian tourists fly in to Egypt's Red Sea resorts after 6-year ban

A Russian tourist flight from Moscow landed in an Egyptian Red Sea resort Monday for the first time since the October 2015 jihadist bombing of a Russian airliner, a civil aviation official said.

Moscow barred direct flights to Egypt after the bombing of the passenger plane shortly after it took off from the popular Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, killing all 224 people on board.

Monday's EgyptAir flight from the Russian capital brought 300 tourists to Hurghada, and a second flight is due on Tuesday to bring Russia holidaymakers to the popular resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

EgyptAir CEO Amr Abulenein told AFP the national carrier would be operating a total of seven flights a week between Moscow and Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh.

A Russian delegation inspected both airports and resort hotels at the end of last month to check on security and health procedures, according to Russia's Tass news agency.

Visitors from Russia arrive in Egypt's Red Sea resort of Hurgada on 9 August 2021 on the first Russian tourist flight since the October 2015 bombing of a Russian airliner, according to the Egyptian civil aviation authority. Moscow barred direct flights to Egypt after the bombing of the passenger plane shortly after it took off from the popular Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, killing all 224 people on board. Egypt reopened to foreign tourists in July last year after having closed its borders in March to stem the flow of coronavirus infections. **PHOTO: EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF TOURISM / AFP**

The attack six years ago claimed by the jihadist Islamic State group dealt a blow to Egypt's key tourist industry, and the sector has been further battered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Egypt reopened to foreign tourists in July last year after having closed its borders in March to stem the flow of coronavirus infections.

In 2019, the last full year before the pandemic struck, tourism made up about 12 per cent of Egypt's GDP.

After a long period of political instability that dented earnings, revenues from the sector recovered to $13 billion that year.

But in 2020, a year when Egypt had initially eyed a further rebound to $16 billion, takings collapsed to $4 billion. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Typhoon Lupit weakens to extratropical cyclone over western Japan

TYPHOON Lupit weakened to an extratropical cyclone Monday morning as it traversed western Japan following its landfall earlier in the day, the weather agency said, warning of downpours and stormy winds across wide areas.

It is forecast to reach the Sea of Japan, bringing heavy rain and strong winds to western, eastern and northern Japan areas through Tuesday, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

The ninth typhoon of the year hit the southwestern Kyushu region Sunday before making landfall near Kure in Hiroshima Prefecture shortly past 5 am Monday. A 46-year-old man in Masuda, Shimane Prefecture went missing after he fell into the swollen Takatsu River while trying to bring a capsized boat closer to the bank at around 6:50 am Monday, according to local police.

The weather agency's highest-level rain alert was issued at one point Monday morning for the town of Kitahiroshima in Hiroshima Prefecture, but there were no reports of injuries or houses being flooded there as of 8:30 am, according to local firefighters. — Kyodo News ■

Twelve soldiers killed in attack in northwest Burkina Faso

TWELVE Burkina Faso soldiers were killed and eight wounded in an ambush by suspected jihadists near the West African country's border with Mali, the government said Monday.

Communications Minister Ousseni Tamboura "strongly condemned the barbaric attack" on Sunday near the village of Dounkoun in Toeni commune in Sourou province, the latest in a series both near the borders with Mali and Niger.

"Members of the ground forces and the rapid intervention force GARSI were ambushed" in the northwest Boucle du Mouhoun region, Tamboura said in a statement. "The provisional toll indicates 12 soldiers fallen and eight wounded."

The statement added seven soldiers went missing after the ambush but were found at dawn on Monday, including one who had been wounded in the thigh, though he was in stable condition.

"Clean up operations are under way and the wounded have been evacuated," said the minister, who is also government spokesman.

President Roch Marc Christian Kabore said in a tweet that "we continue to wage without concession the war the obscurantist and barbaric forces have imposed on our country." — AFP ■

Local residents fight the wildfire in the village of Gouves on Evia (Euboea) island, second largest Greek island, on 8 August 2021. **PHOTO: ANGELOS TZORTZINIS / AFP**

Firefighters try to stop Greek island blaze from reaching forest

FIREFIGHTERS tried Monday to prevent fires from reaching key communities and a thick forest that could fuel an inferno that one official said has destroyed hundreds of homes in seven days on the Greek island of Evia.

If most of nearly two weeks of fires had stabilised or receded in other parts of Greece, the ones on rugged and forested Evia were the most worrying and created apocalyptic scenes.

Firefighters were putting the priority on saving the villages of Kamatriades and Galatsades on Monday because "if the fire passes through there, it will end up in a thick forest that will be difficult to extinguish," firefighters told the Greek news agency ANA.

After the fire laid siege to one village after another on the north of the island, firefighters also toiled until dawn to quench flames at Monokarya in order to protect the town of Istiaia, all without the help of water-dousing aircraft, ANA reported.

Thick and suffocating smoke on Monday also enveloped the coastal region of Pefki, where hundreds of villagers had been evacuated by sea, while others regrouped, an AFP reporting team said.

- Climate change reality -

Greece and neighbouring Turkey have been battling the devastating fires for nearly two weeks as the region suffers its worst heatwave in decades. Two people have been confirmed dead in Greece and eight in Turkey, while dozens have been hospitalised.

While rain brought some respite from the blazes in Turkey over the weekend, Greece continued to suffer from an intense heatwave that Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said should show even doubters the hard reality of climate change.

On Sunday Civil protection deputy minister Nikos Hardalias warned of "another difficult night" ahead, saying that strong winds were pushing a fire front towards beach villages on Evia, northeast of Athens.

Among 650 firefighters deployed on the island, Greece's second biggest after Crete, were 250 from Serbia and Romania, supported by 11 planes and helicopters dousing flames with water during the day, according to the Greek firefighting services.

But the air support faced "serious difficulties" because of turbulence, thick smoke and limited visibility, Hardalias said. — AFP ■

Coronavirus: Latest global developments

New Zealand's team lineup for the national anthems at the first rugby Test between the New Zealand and Australia at Eden Park in Auckland on 7 August 2021. **`PHOTO: MICHAEL BRADLEY / AFP**

HERE are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis:

France Covid pass

People in France must now show a health pass to order a coffee in a cafe or travel on intercity trains as President Emmanuel Macron's controversial plan to squeeze infections and encourage vaccination comes into full effect.

Mass cremations

Sri Lanka begins mass cremations to clear a backlog of dead bodies from Covid-19 as cases surge across the island.

Tokyo after the Games

The Japanese capital wakes to a huge bill and soaring virus cases after pulling off a mid-pandemic Olympics that at times looked impossible and faced hostility at home.

German exports soar

For the first time since the virus wreaked havoc on trade, official data shows German exports soared past pre-pandemic levels in June as industry shrugged off supply chain shortages.

Rugby blow

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern pours cold water on Australian hopes that their National Rugby League grand final could be played in front of a crowd in Auckland.

Over 4.2 million dead

The coronavirus pandemic has killed at least 4,294,735 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP compilation of official data.

The US is the worst-affected country with 616,829 deaths, followed by Brazil with 563,151, India with 428,309, Mexico with 244,420 and Peru with 196,950.— AFP ■

France implements Macron's Covid pass despite protests

PEOPLE in France will from Monday need to show a health pass to enjoy usually routine activities such as sipping a coffee in a cafe or travelling on an intercity train, in a plan championed by President Emmanuel Macron to squeeze Covid-19 infections and encourage vaccination.

The government is pressing ahead with the extension of an already-existing health pass to cafes, restaurants and intercity travel, despite four weekends of angry protests that saw almost a quarter of a million rally nationwide on Saturday.

Macron, who has expressed exasperation with the protests, hopes that the plan will help ramp up vaccinations and quell the fourth wave of coronavirus in France in a strategy similar to that of EU neighbours such as Italy and Germany.

The health pass is generated in a QR code either by a full course of vaccinations, a recent negative virus test or a recovery from Covid-19. The government expects a one-week grace period for consumers and businesses to get used to the new rules.

"The pass and the vaccination drive should help us avoid new curfews and lockdowns," Health Minister Olivier Veran told Le Parisien daily.

Veran announced slight modifications in the rules -- notably that tests could be 72 hours old and not 48, and also that self-tests carried out under medical supervision would be allowed.

'Enough is enough'

But he emphasised there would be no going back on rules which will remain in place until at least November, lamenting the attention paid to those who are "anti-vax, anti-science and anti-state" over those who respected distancing and had been vaccinated. "I am willing to hear the fears, do everything to reassure. But there comes a time when enough is enough," he said.

The numbers in hospital are still way off previous highs seen in the pandemic, but there were 1,510 people in intensive care with Covid-19 on Saturday compared with 1,099 just one week ago. — AFP ■

A waiter checks a customer's Covid-19 health pass on a mobile phone at the entrance of his cafe in Valenciennes, northern France, on 9 August 2021. **PHOTO: FRANCOIS LO PRESTI / AFP**

Climate report must be 'death knell' for fossil fuels: UN chief

A bombshell climate science report "must sound a death knell" for coal, oil and gas, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Monday, warning that fossil fuels were destroying the planet.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that the 1.5C temperature goal of the Paris Agreement would likely be breached around 2030 — a decade earlier than it itself projected just three years ago.

Guterres called the IPCC's assessment — the most detailed review of climate science ever conducted — "code red for humanity".

"This report must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels, before they destroy our planet," he said in a statement.

"Countries should also end all new fossil fuel exploration and production, and shift fossil fuel subsidies into renewable energy."

In its first major scientific assessment since 2014, the IPCC said that Earth's average surface temperature is projected to hit 1.5 or 1.6 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels at around 2030, no matter what trajectory greenhouse gas emissions take in the meantime.

By mid-century, the 1.5C threshold will have been breached across the board, by a tenth of a degree along the most ambitious pathway, and by nearly a full degree at the opposite extreme.

'The alarm bells are deafening'

In his most frontal assault yet on the fossil fuel industry that powers the global economy, Guterres said "immediate action" was needed to decarbonise the energy sector.

"The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk," said Guterres.

The Portuguese diplomat said keeping the 1.5C temperature goal in play meant that no new coal plants could be built and that all energy derived from burning coal must come from renewable sources by 2040.

Atmospheric levels of planet-warming CO2 are currently at their highest in at least the last two million years, with methane and nitrous oxide levels at their highest since 800,000 years ago.

Despite a record drop in carbon pollution last year driven by pandemic restrictions, the IPCC found "no detectable decrease" in the rate of greenhouse gas accumulation.

Guterres called on world leaders to ensure the COP26 climate summit in November leads to ramped up emissions cuts and finance to countries already dealing with the fallout from global heating.

"If we combine forces now, we can avert climate catastrophe," he said.

"But, as today's report makes clear, there is no time for delay and no room for excuses." — AFP ■

German exports rise past pre-pandemic levels in June

GERMAN exports soared past pre-pandemic levels in June for the first time since the coronavirus crisis wreaked havoc on trade, official data showed Monday, as the industry shrugged off supply chain shortages.

The pandemic has severely disrupted global supply chains, leading to shortage in raw materials or components including timber, plastics and steel.

Germany's crucial car industry has also been hit by a global computer chip crunch caused by a surge in demand for home electronics as employees are asked to work from home to cut infection risks.

But Europe's biggest economy exported 118.7 billion euros ($140 billion) of goods in June, 1.1 per cent more than in February 2020 — before the health emergency snared Germany.

The indicator rose for the 14th month in a row, and was 1.3 per cent higher compared to May, after seasonal variations and calendar effects were taken into account.

"Today's strong data illustrates that supply chain frictions have not yet affected German exports," said analyst Carsten Brzeski of ING. But he warned that this could change in coming months.

"While order books are still richly filled, supply chain frictions, particularly the lack of microchips, could lead to more delivery problems in key sectors like the automotive industry and therefore to some distortions of export data in the coming months," he said. — AFP ■

Egypt papyrus makers keep tradition alive despite tourism slump

IN the lush green fields of Egypt's fertile Delta Valley, farmers and artisans are struggling to make a living as they keep alive the Pharaonic-era tradition of making papyrus. In the 1970s, an art teacher in the village of Al-Qaramus taught farmers the millennia-old techniques for transforming the plant into sought-after paper decorated with ornate drawings and text.

The village and its surrounds, located about 80 kilometres (50 miles) northeast of Cairo, now make up the largest hub of papyrus production in the country, experts in the sector say.

Once used by ancient Egyptians as writing paper, local artists now decorate the papyrus with hieroglyphics, Arabic calligraphy and representations from antiquity and nature to create souvenirs for eager visitors.

But tourism in the North African country has taken a battering since its 2011 revolution, and after a Russian airliner was downed by the Islamic State group in 2015. The Covid-19 pandemic has further debilitated the sector: Egypt earned just $4 billion in tourist revenues last year, a quarter of what it had anticipated before the global health crisis. Today, Al-Qaramus has 25 farms trying to make ends meet by selling papyrus, compared to around 500 prior to the revolution, according to farmer and artist Said Tarakhan. — AFP ■

A woman uses a thread to slice papyrus into thin strips at the workshop in the village of al-Qaramous in Sharqiyah province, in Egypt's northern fertile Nile Delta region, northeast of the capital, on 28 July 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

Asian markets rise but Fed taper talk, Delta keep traders on edge

ASIAN markets rose Monday but investors remained cautious after a forecast-beating US jobs report reinforced optimism about the economic recovery but fanned speculation the Federal Reserve could begin tapering monetary policy this year.

Spiking infections around the world from the Delta Covid variant are also jangling nerves as governments reassess their growth outlooks with some — including China — forced to reimpose lockdowns and other containment measures.

Data on Friday showed the world's biggest economy created 943,000 new jobs in July, while the June reading was also revised higher to more than 900,000. The news provided some much-needed reassurance that the rebound was still on track despite Delta's spread.

However, it also renewed concerns that in a bid to prevent overheating, the Fed will start to wind down the ultra-loose policies — including record low interest rates and a vast bond-buying scheme — that have been integral to an equity market rally since April last year.

The bank has continuously stressed that it will maintain its accommodative stance for as long as the economy needs to recover but with inflation at multi-year highs and jobs returning, it is coming under increasing pressure to act.

"You have these concerns that if the economy is growing very, very strongly then that might bring forward the tightening or the tapering by the Fed," Shane Oliver, at AMP Capital, told Bloomberg Television.

"There is a good chance they might announce that tapering in September and it would start later this year."

And National Australia Bank's Rodrigo Catril added: "Overall, there is not a lot of disagreement on a taper announcement coming sometime between September-December followed by actual tapering sometime between November and January." — AFP ■

Aluminum cans slowly replace plastics to tackle marine pollution

A number of Japanese beverage vendors have recently moved to abandon the use of plastic bottles, replacing them with aluminum cans in a bid to combat marine plastic pollution, wreaking havoc with the ecosystem.

All 12 teas and soft drinks sold by Ryohin Keikaku Co, operator of retail brand Muji, have been provided in aluminum cans since April after data showed the rate of "horizontal recycling," which allows for the reuse of materials in a comparable function, was substantially higher for such cans compared to plastic bottles.

The rate of horizontal recycling for aluminum cans stands at 71.0 per cent compared to 24.3 per cent for plastic bottles, according to the Japan Aluminium Association and the Council for PET Bottle Recycling.

In the case of plastic bottles, as the material weakens over multiple bouts of recycling, they often end up being reshaped into plastic trays for food. Meanwhile, aluminum cans can better prevent their contents from deteriorating as their opacity keeps light from damaging them. Ryohin Keikaku introduced those cans also to cut down on wasted drinks.

By switching to aluminum cans, expiry dates for soft drinks were extended 90 days to 270 days, according to the retailer. The packages were newly designed to include illustrations and different colors to indicate the contents of the drinks, which are visible in transparent plastic bottles. — Kyodo News ■

Photo taken 22 April 2021, shows aluminum-can drinks sold at a Ryohin Keikaku Co store in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

China Telecom eyes $8.4 bn Shanghai IPO, world's biggest in 2021

CHINA Telecom could raise more than $8 billion in a Shanghai initial public offering that would be the biggest this year, months after it was delisted in the United States amid Washington's stand-off with Beijing.The firm said it had priced its offer at 4.53 yuan per share, which would be worth 47.1 billion ($7.3 billion), according to a filing with the Shanghai Stock Exchange on Friday.

However, if an over-allotment option was exercised that would jump to 54 billion yuan ($8.4 billion), Bloomberg News said.

China Telecom was delisted by the New York Stock Exchange in January along with fellow state-owned telecoms firms China Mobile and China Unicom following an executive order by former president Donald Trump. The order banned investments by Americans into a range of companies deemed to be supplying or supporting China's military and security apparatus.

China Telecom is the country's largest fixed-line operator, and the share issue would be the biggest of the year, topping the $5.4 billion raised in Hong Kong by TikTok rival Kuaishou Technology in February.

Many of China's biggest tech and telecom firms listed their shares on the more developed US stock markets in the 2000s as they sought access to funding, but the tide has been turning. Authorities have been pushing in recent years to instead encourage such companies to list on its domestic exchanges in Shanghai and Shenzhen, as well as Hong Kong, a trend expected to be accelerated by an ongoing government campaign to strengthen control over its major tech giants. — AFP ■

Historic drought threatens California farms supplying much US food

IN the valleys of central California, the search for water has turned into an all-out obsession as the region suffers through a drought that could threaten the US food supply.

Residents have watched with dismay as verdant fields have turned into brown, dusty plains, leaving shriveled trees, dying plants and exasperated farmers. Much of California, and of the broader US West, has suffered through years of lighter-than-usual precipitation and a particularly dry winter.

State and local authorities, fearful that there may not be enough water for city dwellers or wildlife, have abruptly cut supplies to farms, provoking anger and consternation. Along the roads between major farming operations, billboards have popped up everywhere, urging: "Save California's Water." They accuse the authorities of "dumping... our water in the ocean."

Growers complain that the state's Democratic governor, Gavin Newsom, is strangling them under a mountain of pointless restrictions, leaving them unable to fill their usual role of supplying America's supermarkets.

'Starving' the world

"I had two wells dry up last week," 28-year-old Nick Foglio, a fourth-generation farmer and feed broker, told AFP. He added that he has "2,000 acres (800 hectares) of alfalfa going dry."

Farmer Liset Garcia completes a sale at her Sweet Girl Farms stand in Reedley, California in California's drought-stricken Central Valley, 23 July 2021. **PHOTO: ROBYN BECK / AFP**

Standing in a dusty field near Fresno, he said he worries that with "the wrong political agenda, we're simply going to starve ourselves and probably the rest of the world."

California authorities don't seem to be hearing that message.

Reacting to dire signs of a worsening climate crisis, they passed new emergency legislation last week to prevent thousands of people -- notably farmers -- from diverting streams or rivers. "In a year when Mother Nature doesn't make it rain, there is no water for them," said Jeanine Jones, a manager with the California Department of Water Resources. — AFP ■

California wildfire now second-worst in state history

Flames shoot into the sky as the Dixie fire jumps across highway 89 near Greenville, California on 3 August 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE monstrous Dixie Fire in northern California has grown to become the second-largest wildfire in state history, authorities said Sunday, with three people reported missing and thousands fleeing the advancing flames.

As of Sunday, the fire had destroyed 489,287 acres (198,007 hectares), authorities said, up from the previous day's 447,723 acres. It now covers an area larger than Los Angeles.

The Dixie blaze is the largest active wildfire in the United States, but only one of 11 major wildfires in California.

Over the weekend, it surpassed the 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire to make it the second-worst fire in state history.

"It was like driving out of a war zone that you see in a movie," Tami Kugler told AFP, sitting beside her tent at an evacuation station after fleeing the historic town of Greenville before it burned down.

"My neighborhood is gone — I mean gone, gone. Everybody I care and love about that's in that neighborhood, their homes are gone," she said, adding: "I didn't have insurance."

On Saturday, Governor Gavin Newsom visited the charred remains of Greenville, expressing his "deep gratitude" to the teams fighting the flames.

He said authorities had to devote more resources to managing forests and preventing fires.

But he added that "the dries are getting a lot drier, it is hotter than it has ever been... we need to acknowledge just straight up these are climate-induced wildfires."

Climate change amplifies droughts, creating ideal conditions for wildfires to spread out of control and inflict unprecedented material and environmental damage. — AFP ■

US 'failing' on Covid: top health official

People look at a Covid-19 sign promoting safety measures, posted at the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization Building in Washington, DC on 6 August 2021. **PHOTO : DANIEL SLIM / AFP**

WITH the United States recording its highest daily Covid case load in six months, a top public health official warned Sunday that the country is "failing" in its battle to keep the coronavirus in check.

A surge of the highly transmissible Delta variant has brought a slew of bad news in the United States, which already has the highest reported death toll worldwide from Covid-19 at more than 616,000.

Total daily new cases have soared to 118,000, their highest level since February; deaths are up 89 percent over the past two weeks, even while slightly declining around the world; and children's hospitals in US states like Florida are being overwhelmed as young people are increasingly affected.

"We should not really have ever got to the place we are," Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, said on ABC's "This Week." "In that regard, yes, we are failing."

Fears about the Delta variant have sparked a surge in vaccination rates, but millions, especially in conservative-leaning areas of the country, remain skeptical about getting the shot. "We would not be in the place we are right now with this Delta surge if we had been more effective in getting everybody" vaccinated, Collins said. "Now we're paying a terrible price."

Another top health official, infectious diseases expert Anthony Fauci, said final full approval of key vaccines from the federal Food and Drug Administration could come as early as this month — something some skeptics have said they need to hear before taking the plunge. — AFP ■

Taliban seize three more Afghan provincial capitals in northern blitz

THE Taliban tightened the noose around northern Afghanistan Sunday, capturing three more provincial capitals as they take their fight to the cities after seizing much of the countryside in recent months.

The insurgents have snatched up five provincial capitals in Afghanistan since Friday in a lightning offensive that appears to have overwhelmed government forces.

Fighting in Afghanistan's long-running conflict has intensified since May, when foreign forces began the final stage of a withdrawal due to be completed later this month.

Kunduz, Sar-e-Pul and Taloqan in the north fell within hours of each other Sunday, lawmakers, security sources and residents in the cities confirmed.

In Kunduz, capital of the province of the same name, one resident described the city as being enveloped in "total chaos".

"After some fierce fighting, the mujahideen, with the grace of God, captured the capital of Kunduz," the Taliban said in a statement. "The mujahideen also captured Sar-e-Pul city, the government buildings and all the installations there."

The insurgents said on Twitter later Sunday that they had also taken Taloqan, the capital of Takhar province.

Parwina Azimi, a women's rights activist in Sar-e-Pul, told AFP by phone that government officials and the remaining forces had retreated to an army barracks about three kilometres (two miles) from the city.

The Taliban had the compound "surrounded", said Mohammad Hussein Mujahidzada, a member of the provincial council. — AFP ■

Soviet dissident Sergei Kovalev dies

ONE of Russia's most famous human rights defenders and former Soviet dissident, Sergei Kovalev, has died aged 91, his family said Monday.

Kovalev was a biologist who became one of the leading members of the USSR's pro-democracy movement. He was held in Soviet labour camps for his activism.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, he became a fierce critic of Moscow's war in Chechnya and warned against democratic backsliding when President Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000.

His son Ivan Kovalev said on Facebook that his father died "in his sleep" in the early hours of Monday morning.

Russian rights group Memorial, which Kovalev once chaired, said he was "faithful to the idea of human rights always and in everything — in war and peace, in politics and every day life".

The leading rights organisation — which has been labelled a "foreign agent" by Russian authorities under a controversial law — said Kovalev had campaigned for human rights since 1969.

"He consistently fought for the same principles" in post-Soviet Russia, it said on Facebook.

A dissident under the late Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, Kovalev was appointed chairman of President Boris Yeltsin's human rights commission in 1994.

He was dismissed from the post for his outspoken criticism of Russia's brutal intervention in the Chechen conflict.

Kovalev also criticised the political system created by Putin, a former spy for the KGB security agency.

"A controlled democracy is being created in our country that seeks to create problems for 'enemies inside as well as outside'," he said in July 2001, two months after Putin was inaugurated as president. — AFP ■

Japan fulfilled responsibility as Olympics host, Suga says

PRIME Minister Yoshihide Suga said Monday that Japan has fulfilled its responsibility as host of the Tokyo Olympics and thanked the people for their cooperation.

"Although the Olympics were postponed for a year and held under various restrictions, I believe we were able to fulfill our responsibility as host country. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Japanese people for their understanding and cooperation," Suga said a day after the closing of the Summer Games.

Suga was speaking at a press conference in Nagasaki after attending a ceremony marking the 76th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the southwestern Japan city.

The Olympics were held mostly without spectators under a state of emergency over the coronavirus pandemic in the capital and other areas. The event ended as Japan was suffering from an explosive spread of COVID-19.

Suga said that getting vaccinations and refraining from nonessential outings were keys in preventing the spread of the virus. The cumulative total of vaccine doses administered in the country has topped 100 million, he said.

"With the Bon holidays starting this week amid the continuing spread of a highly contagious (COVID-19) variant, now is an extremely important period" to curb infections, the prime minister said. He was referring to the major summer vacation season in Japan when many people return to their hometowns or travel elsewhere.

Suga called on younger people to refrain from traveling during the period, saying about 70 per cent of new COVID-19 patients in Tokyo were in their 30s or younger.

The government will continue providing information targeting them via YouTube and Twitter, he said. — Kyodo News ■

Doves are released at Peace Park in Nagasaki on 9 August 2021, during a ceremony marking the 76th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the southwestern Japan city. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Nagasaki marks 76th A-bomb anniversary, urges Japan be nuke-ban proactive

NAGASAKI marked the 76th anniversary Monday of the US atomic bombing of the city in World War II, with its mayor urging the Japanese government to take a more active role in realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. At the annual memorial ceremony, Mayor Tomihisa Taue urged the government to sign and ratify a UN treaty banning nuclear weapons and join as an observer in its first meeting of state parties to the treaty, which came into effect in January, and explore building a nuclear-weapon-free zone in northeast Asia.

After a moment of silence was observed at 11:02 am, the exact time of the bombing on 9 August 1945, Taue praised the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a "new horizon" for nuclear disarmament but also expressed concern about the growing danger presented by an ongoing nuclear arms race.

"In order to follow a single path toward a world free of nuclear weapons amidst these two conflicting movements, world leaders must commit to nuclear arms reductions and build trust through dialogue, and civil society must push them in this direction," Taue said in his speech at the city's Peace Park. Taue's call on Japan to join the nuclear weapon ban treaty followed a similar appeal made by Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui three days ago, when the city, also devastated by an atomic bomb during World War II, had its annual ceremony.

But Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga again did not touch on the treaty when he addressed the crowd, which included survivors and families of the victims, reflecting the country's conflicted position. Japan has maintained its three principles of not producing, possessing or allowing nuclear arms on its territory. But the country sits under the US nuclear umbrella and hosts its military facilities under a decades-old bilateral security accord. According to a research center at Nagasaki University, there were an estimated 13,130 nuclear warheads across the globe as of June, with the number in military stockpiles not decreasing amid reignited tensions among major nuclear powers. — Kyodo News ■

Sri Lanka holds mass cremations as Covid cases surge

SRI LANKA has begun mass cremations to clear a backlog of dead bodies from Covid-19 as cases surge across the island, officials said Monday. Daily virus infections in the country have doubled in a month to more than 2,500 with nearly 100 deaths, putting huge strain on hospitals. On Sunday evening Colombo Municipality began mass cremations, disposing of 15 corpses at the Colombo General Cemetery after the island's main hospital said it had no more freezer space.

People sit in a queue as they wait to receive a dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine against the Covid-19 coronavirus in Colombo on 5 August 2021. **PHOTO : AFP**

It was the first mass cremation since December when the government overruled religious objections and cremated 15 members of the Muslim minority, including a 20-day-old baby.

Following local and international protests, the government then allowed Muslims to be buried in a remote corner of the island's east, in accordance with Islamic traditions. The Public Health Inspectors (PHI) union said bodies of Covid-19 patients piled up at hospitals over the weekend as crematoriums working round the clock were unable to cope with a rapid rise in deaths. — AFP ■

Ex-US officials ask Japan leaders to accept no-first-use nuke plan

A group of former US officials, including former Defense Secretary William Perry, and experts on nuclear disarmament sent an open letter Monday asking Japanese political parties not to oppose a "no-first-use" nuclear stance that may be announced by the United States.

The letter, addressed to Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, among other party leaders, states how US President Joe Biden is considering a declaration saying the United States would not use nuclear weapons in an initial attack, requesting Japan support the policy after the country expressed opposition earlier in the year.

The move comes as Japan marked the 76th anniversary of the wartime atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on Friday and Monday, respectively.

"It would be tragic if Japan, the only country to suffer nuclear attacks, and a staunch advocate of the abolition of nuclear weapons, blocked this small but important step toward the abolition of nuclear weapons," the letter reads. Prior to his inauguration, Biden expressed support for the policy to the media, saying the United States' nuclear arsenal should exist solely to deter an attack.

He suggested nuclear weapons should only be used to retaliate against a nuclear attack against the country or its allies. — Kyodo News ■

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.

Cambodia prepares for 2023 South East Asian Games

Cambodia will host the South East Asian Games in 2023. **PHOTO: KHMERTIMESKH.COM**

CAMBODIA is now preparing for the next 2023 South East Asian Games, said the tourney organizers.

Vath Chamroeun, Secretary General of the National Olympic Committee of Cambodia (NOCC) said in a virtual meeting that Cambodia will not give up the hard work invested in preparing for the games, adding however that any final change will be decided by the Royal Government of Cambodia.

A special meeting was chaired by the Secretary General and representatives from member countries of the Southeast Asian Sports Federation also focused on the proposal of Viet Nam to postpone the 2021 SEA Games to next year and after that Cambodia will host the tourney in 2023.

Officials also discussed the committee's efforts in implementing strategic plans for the SEA Games 2023.

Vath Chamroeun said, "The Cambodian SEA Games Organising Committee (CAMSOC) will continue its preparations led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence, Tea Banh, President of CAMSOC and CAMSOC Permanent Vice President Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism. Cambodia is committed to be host the historic XXXII SEA Games and ASEAN Para Games 2023 in the country," the secretary general added.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

No Messi, no problem as Barcelona defeat Juventus

BARCELONA started life without Lionel Messi on Sunday with a 3-0 win over Juventus in the pre-season Gamper Trophy.

Messi had earlier Sunday said his farewells to the club he had served for 20 years at a tearful news conference.

Memphis Depay opened the scoring for Barcelona after just three minutes with Martin Braithwaite adding a second goal just before the hour mark from a corner.

Young hope Riqui Puig scored a third in stoppage time with a fine left foot drive.

In Sunday's other high-profile friendly, Real Madrid and AC Milan fought to a 0-0 stalemate.

Spain's La Liga season gets underway on Friday while the Italian Serie A starts on 22 August. — AFP ■

PSG braced for Messi arrival as Barcelona weeps

Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi cries at the start of a press conference at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on 8 August 2021. **PHOTO: PAU BARRENA / AFP**

LIONEL MESSI is expected to arrive in the French capital on Monday, lured by the limitless funds of Paris Saint-Germain, having said a tearful farewell to Barcelona after 21 years.

The 34-year-old, seen by the French giants' Qatari owners as the vital missing piece of their frustrating Champions League puzzle, has already had fans playing a guessing game.

On Sunday night, dozens of PSG diehards gathered at the gates of Le Bourget airport to the north of the capital in the hope of catching a glimpse of their newest 'galactico'.

Their wait was in vain although French media maintained that it was a question of 'when' and not 'if' Messi arrives.

"The news is expected Monday, even Tuesday. This is the most likely scenario," said Le Parisien on Monday morning.

"It only seems to be a matter of hours," suggested sports daily L'Equipe, which proclaimed "we are entering the most incredible days in the history of the French championship."

Before signing the contract in Paris, Messi will first have to undergo a medical examination.

Stressing no deals had been done, Messi conceded at his tearful farewell news conference in Barcelona on Sunday that joining PSG was a "possibility". In reality, they are the only club who can afford what is expected to be a deal worth 35 million euros ($41m) a year for the 34-year-old Argentine.

"I gave everything for Barcelona from the first day that I arrived right to the last. I never imagined having to say goodbye," a tearful Messi told the news conference. — AFP ■