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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 125, Fullmoon of Wagaung 1383 ME www.gnlm.com.mm Sunday, 22 August 2021

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19

Announcement

14th Waxing of Wagaung 1383 ME
21 August 2021

1. The State Administration Council issued Notification No 247/2021 dated 20-8-2021 declaring from 23 to 31 August 2021 as successive public holidays.
2. To effectively prevent the spread of COVID-19 during these public holidays, the people must obey the following disciplines:-

SEE PAGE-2

MCCPMD to open No 2 Saleroom of anti-COVID-19 medicines in Pabedan Township on 23 August

THE Myanmar Chamber of Commerce for Pharmaceutical & Medical Device (MCCPMD) arranged to open No 2 Saleroom of the household medicines including anti-COVID-19 medical supplies for retail sale and wholesale at the Myanmar International Trade Centre at the corner of Merchant Street and Bo Sun Pak Street in Pabedan Township in Yangon on 23 August.

It aims to enable the people to easily buy medicines related to prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.

More than 20 chamber member companies will display over 200 items of medicines, vitamins and medical equipment at more than 20 booths of the saleroom from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, starting from coming Monday, said central executive member Dr Win Maw Phyo of MCCPMD.

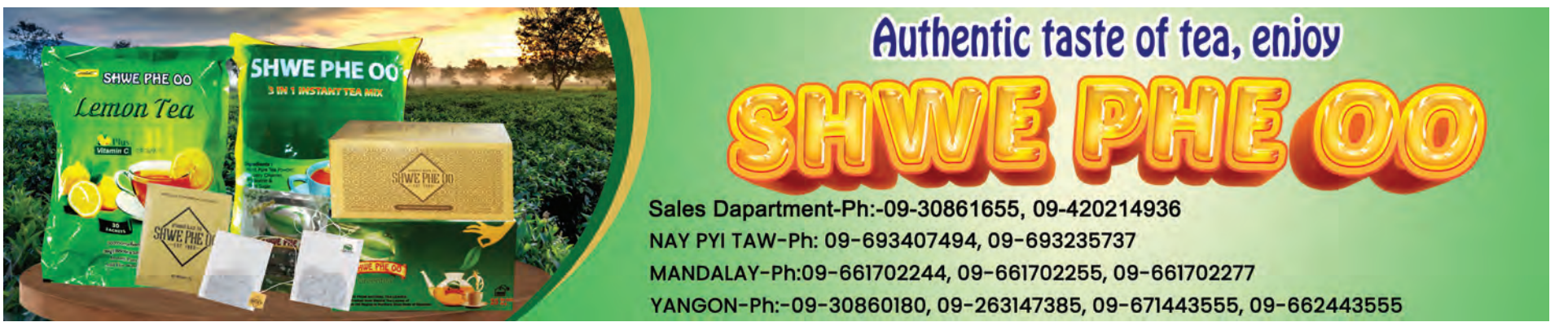
Display of medicines and medical equipment for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 for retail sale and wholesale is crowded with the people in Ahlon Township. **PHOTO: SOE MYINT AUNG**

"On the opening day, new medicines will arrive here. Saleroom No 1 in Ahlon Township gains high demand with crowds of buyers day after day. So, we will arrange No 2 Saleroom in Pabedan Township as of 23 August. Existing Saleroom No 1 will manage continuous sales," said Dr Win Maw Phyo.

The chamber arranges to announce the price lists for various kinds of imported medicines on its website www.mccpmd.org on a weekly basis starting from this week for the people to directly contact and buy the medicines at relevant companies which import medicines and medical equipment related to prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.— Pwint Thitsar/GNLM

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.



Republic of the Union of Myanmar
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21 August 2021

FROM PAGE-1

(a) to reside at homes or dormitories, and not to travel at all except for duty and funeral services;
(b) to open the Central Bank of Myanmar, its subordinate government banks and private banks as usual;
(c) not to decrease productivity, operate the factories and industries under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, Nay Pyi Taw Council and region/state governments in line with the COVID-19 health rules of the Ministry of Health;
(d) to adopt the work-from-home system or other proper ways for important office works of the relevant departments;
(e) to open the shops selling basic essential things like fuel, purified drinking water, livestock, fish and foodstuffs;
(f) to open the pharmacy shops and medical companies;
(g) to realize the take away system at restaurants;
(h) to continue healthcare services (government hospitals/private hospitals and clinics);
(i) to wear protective gears, including masks, if you go outside without fail;
(j) to operate the land, sea and aviation services for those wishing to travel without fail under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nay Pyi Taw Council and region/ state governments;
(k) to comply the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) of trucks to facilitate the flow of goods;
(l) to continue opening of freight handling ports;
(m) to strictly follow the COVID-19 health rules of the Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 and the Ministry of Health without fail.

3. Action will be taken against those who fail to abide by the above-mentioned disciplines under the existing laws.

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)

700,000 units of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine and related equipment imported by Myanmar Chinese Chamber of Commerce arrive at Yangon International Airport

Unloaded Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine some seen at Yangon International Airport.

A total of 700,000 units of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine and related equipment imported by the Myanmar Chinese Chamber of Commerce arrived at the Yangon International Airport by the chartered flight yesterday evening.

Yangon Region Minister for Economic Affairs U Aung Than Oo, Region Minister for Social Affairs U Aung Win Thein, General Secretary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Aye Win and Chair of the Myanmar Chinese Chamber of Commerce U Aing Tun inspected unloading of the stocks onto the cold storage vehicle. They then fulfilled the needs of departmental officials.

The recently-arrived medicines and medical equipment were moved into the cold storage vehicles in time in line with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and transported to the medical warehouse of AA Medical Product Limited at Thakayta Industrial Zone at night for systematic storage.—Hsan Kyaw Oo (IPRD)/GNLM

Elevator tower construction at Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda completed by 45 per cent

THE construction of elevator tower and sky walk way bridge at Mann Shwesettaw pagoda was completed 45 per cent, it is learnt.

The elevator tower will be linking from Hnakyeik Shithsu pagoda to Koekhangyi pagoda. Kyaw Thar company is implementing the elevator tower project and sky walk way bridge project, which is 45 per cent complete so far. The project started on 29 May 2021, said U Than Lwin, the project manager of elevator tower.

An elevator constructed at the Mann Shwesettaw pagoda for the ease of worshipers paying homage.

"Regarding the elevator tower construction project, construction of 24 bored piles was completed in July. Currently, we are constructing two lift towers. The construction materials reached the work area. Lift column will be constructed in the end-August. Then, we will carry out the elevator tower construction project," said the project manager.

The elevator tower is 210 feet in length and 119 feet high. The tower also includes a 12-foot-wide walkway. The total cost is estimated to be about K1.6 billion. The construction project will be completed by 2020 before the Mann Shwesettaw pagoda festival.—Ma Yu (Ngaphe)/GNLM

The construction site for elevator at Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda is in progress.

Preventive measures taken for damage and overflow of water from the dams

LAST year's drought caused shortages of drinking water in the country. This year's rainfalls can remove such worries of water scarcity. However, it is necessary to take preventive measures of damage and overflow of water from the dams.

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

Union Home Affairs Minister inspects Mawlamyine prison, Kyaikmaraw central prison

UNION Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut, member of State Administration Council, inspected the Mawlamyine prison on Friday and Kyaikmaraw central prison yesterday.

During the visit to Mawlamyine prison, the Union Minister said the officials should check the prison central guard squad daily. It also needs to conduct special measures not to break the security and regulations. The central guard squad needs to be loyal and carry out the duties. He then instructed officials to wear the uniforms in accordance with the rules and regulations, to provide meals to the inmates regularly and to scrutinize the foodstuff sent to the inmates.

He then inspected the prison buildings and vaccination processes for the inmates.

The Union Minister gave instructions regarding COVID-19 health rules, food security, water usage, keeping of daily newspapers at every dormitory, installation of televisions and appointment of librarian.

He then met the officials of departments under the ministry at Yamanya Zarni Hall and instructed them to operate manageable scale livestock and breeding and follow the COVID-19 health rules.

During the inspection tour to Kyaikmaraw central prison, the Union Minister inspected the prison buildings and housings for staff, and met the prison officials.—MNA

Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut inspects food supplies at the prison.

Columnist of VOA and Frontier Myanmar, freelance reporter of BBC arrested

Aung San (aka) Sithu Aung Myint.

Htet Htet Khine.

THE security forces arrested Aung San (aka) Sithu Aung Myint, house writer of VOA and Frontier Myanmar, who was charged with Penal Code section 505-a, and Htet Htet Khine, freelance journalist of BBC at Room-9 of Building-12 at Shwegon Yeikmon Housing on Kaba Aye Pagoda road of Ko Min Ko Chin Ward in Bahan Township of Yangon Region on 15 August.

They carried out media and propaganda works at the apartment of Shwegon Yeikmon housing together as of third week of March 2021.

Aung San (aka) Sithu Aung Myint, house writer of VOA and Frontier Myanmar wrote articles criticizing the Tatmadaw for VOA and Frontier Myanmar media outlets after Tatmadaw took State responsibilities, posted articles criticizing the State Administration Council, incitements against government employees to join CDM, supportive manners for terrorist groups NUG/CRPH, false information and fake news regarding Aungbalay lottery sold by the State on his social network page called Sithu Aung Myint as creating misunderstanding among the people. Therefore, he was charged under Penal Code section 505-a.

Similarly, Htet Htet Khine allowed suspect Aung San (aka) Sithu Aung Myint at her house and she served as volunteer editor for Federal FM daily launched by NUG.

Therefore, suspect Aung San (aka) Sithu Aung Myint was prosecuted under Penal Code section 124(a) in addition to section 505-a while Htet Htet Khine under Section 17(1) of the Unlawful Association Act.—MNA

Announcement

DURING the public holidays from 23 to 31 August, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration-DICA will continue offering services for investment and company registration matters at Head Office, No.1, Thitsar Road, Yankin Township and for departmental coordination matters at One Stop Services (OSS) which is located at No. 49, Sein Le May Lane, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Yankin Township.

Directorate of Investment and Company Administration

2,744 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 21 August, total figure rises to 371,512

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **371,512 after 2,744 new cases** were reported on 21 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **295,338** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **14,236** after **140** died. —MNA

Importation processes of medical supplies arranged without delay

A cargo truck packed with medical supplies is redy to start trip in Muse.

A light truck is seen with cartons of medicines in Muse.

THE Ministry of Commerce is working hard to ensure people have access to essential medical supplies which are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, arranging the continuous importation on public holidays.

Yesterday, 606 oxygen concentrators, 500 PPE suits were imported through the Yangon International Airport while 12 tonnes of liquid oxygen cylinders, 1,440 empty oxygen cylinders, one storage container/tank and one oxygen generator via seaports. In addition, 39 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 36 tonnes of oxygen liquid in cylinders, one liquid oxygen storage container/tank, seven oxygen plants, six oxygen generators, 1,113 home oxygen concentrators, 24,000 test kits, 112,500 PPE suits, 13 tonnes of gloves and 67 tonnes of masks were imported through border trade points.

Cargo trucks are rolling on the roads to transport medicines and medical equipment to regions and states.

From 1 July to 21 August, 1,930 tonnes of liquid oxygen by bowser, 877 tonnes of liquid oxygen cylinders, nine tonnes of gas oxygen on bowser, 187 tonnes of liquid oxygen cylinders, 13 storage containers, six liquid oxygen distributors, 183,151 empty oxygen cylinders, 48 oxygen plants, six oxygen refills for hospitals, two oxygen refills, 28 oxygen generators, 152,625 oxygen concentrators, 508,686 test kits, 855,400 PPE suits, 113 tonnes of gloves and 2,712 tonnes of masks were imported.

Of 95 liquid oxygen bowsers imported between 1 July and 21 August, 70 of them were distributed to Yangon, 15 to Mandalay, two to Bago, four to Mawlamyine, one each to Thaton, Thanbyuzayat, Monywa and Nay Pyi Taw respectively.

Among 48 oxygen plants, 15 were allotted to Yangon, five to Lashio, four to Bago, five to Mandalay, three to Kyaukpadaung, two each to Pakokku, Hpa-an, Mawlamyine and Monywa and one each to Taunggyi, Thanbyuzayat, Magway, Dawei, Wakema, Myittha, Mogaung and Kyaukdaga respectively.

The Ministry of Commerce also released a statement that the border trade camps will provide services as usual during the holidays from 23 to 31 August and the Department of Trade will go fully online for export/import licences.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is allowing the importation of COVID-19 devices in accordance with the SOP priority negotiated by relevant departments, and announcements related to the imports of medical supplies and equipment are posted on commerce.gov.mm.—MNA

An oxygen container is seen in Myawady.

Cargo trucks driving from Chinshwehaw are transporting medical equipment.

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

Shwebo grows 76,486 acres of monsoon paddy this year

SHWEBO Township in Sagaing region grew about 76,486 acres of monsoon paddy this year, said Daw Zar Zar Min, the head of Shwebo Township Agriculture Department.

This year, the farmers from Shwebo township started sowing of the monsoon paddy in July. It has been cultivated since 1 August, and about 76,486 acres of monsoon paddy have been cultivated as of today.

"We have planned to cultivate 83,009 acres of monsoon paddy in Thaphanseik dam area. There are more than 29,000 areas that depend upon the groundwater, irrigation water, water from other dams and rainwater," she added.

"We will cultivate 118,500 acres of monsoon paddy including over 30,000 acres using of other method and over 80,000 acres using of dam water. As of today, we have already cultivated 76,486 acres (65 per cent) of monsoon paddy. The cultivation will be completed by the end of September," said Daw Zar Zar Min.

In order to meet the monsoon paddy cultivation target and get high yield in Shwebo township, township Agriculture Department inspected the monsoon paddy fields in the villages and is negotiating with the local farmers and giving awareness regarding the monsoon paddy cultivation.

In 2021-2022 FY, the local farmers from Shwebo Township targeted to cultivate 221,863 acres of monsoon crops. Those monsoon crops are started cultivating in July 2021. As of today, over 154,962 acres of monsoon crops have been cultivated, according to the Shwebo Township Agriculture Department.

Besides, about 100 acres of experimental monsoon paddy will be developed in Myinchin village in 2021-22 FY, under the JICA (Agriculture Income Improvement Project-AIIP). It has been cultivating since the first week of August, 2021. So far, about 48 acres have been cultivated. —Lulay/GNLM

Paddy plants are thriving in the field with irrigation water of Thaphanseik Dam in Shwevo Township.

Livestock products prices likely to go up as feed prices incessantly increase

THE prices of livestock-based products are likely to go up as the feed prices are increasing incessantly, according to Mawlamyine commodity depot.

Most of the livestock businesses in Mon State have suffered losses due to decrease of consumption since the first wave of COVID-19, and rising feed prices since February.

With rising prices of feedstuff from K24,000 to K32,500 per bag, the production cost have risen, likewise the product prices have also mounted.

Besides, the livestock-based products have climbed slightly since the second week of July due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the need for medical nutrition.

On 30 July, the price of chicken egg rose to K130 per one while the duck egg jumped to K150 per one. Besides, the price of chicken has risen to K50,00 per viss (1.6 kilogrammes or 3.6 pounds).

The price of house chicken eggs has also significantly increased K600-K800 per one.

The price of livestock-based products has mounted. This is not because of the wholesaler, but because of rising prices in local retail market.

The National Enlightenment Institute (NEI) finds out that the chicken egg in the retail market is ranging K180-K200 per one.

The price of livestock-based products is likely to rise if the feed price continuously mounted. Consequently, the livestock entrepreneurs may be difficult to stand for any further in their livestock industry.—NN/GNLM

Machinery is being used in producing feedstuff.

Domestic fuel prices drop K20 per litre in three weeks

DOMESTIC fuel prices have dropped K 20 per litre in three weeks, according to the domestic fuel oil stations.

On 2 August, oil prices were fixed at around K1,095 per litre for diesel, K1,105 per litre for premium diesel, K1,145 per litre for Octane 92 and K1,215 for Octane 95.

The fuel oil was dropped to K1,075 per litre for diesel, K1,085 per litre for premium diesel, K1,125 per litre for Octane 92 and K1,195 for Octane 95 on 21 August in the domestic retail market. The fuel oil price has declined by K20 per litre after three weeks,

Domestic oil price is definitely related to the dollar value. The domestic fuel price dropped down as US dollar depreciated.

The current dollar exchange rate is K1,663 per dollar in the domestic exchange market. On 17 August, the market foreign exchange rate of US dollar against Myanmar kyat has reached an all-time high, registering K1,800 per dollar. Myanmar imports around 6 million tonnes of oil per year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The imports are mainly from Singapore.

The country imported 2.7 million tonnes of fuel worth U$S 1.2 billion in the first seven months of this FY. This FY saw a decrease of 1.002 million tonnes worth $ 663.347 million compared to the same period that of last FY.

During the same period in this FY, 1.66 million tonnes of diesel worth $721.173 million were imported, declining by over 650,000 tonnes worth over $43 0 million when compared to last FY.

Likewise, over 1 million tonnes of petrol worth $536.113 million were imported, declining by over 350,000 tonnes worth over $227.187 million. Normally, Myanmar imports fuel oil primarily from Singapore, with monthly volumes touching 200,000 tonnes for gasoline and 400,000 tonnes for diesel.

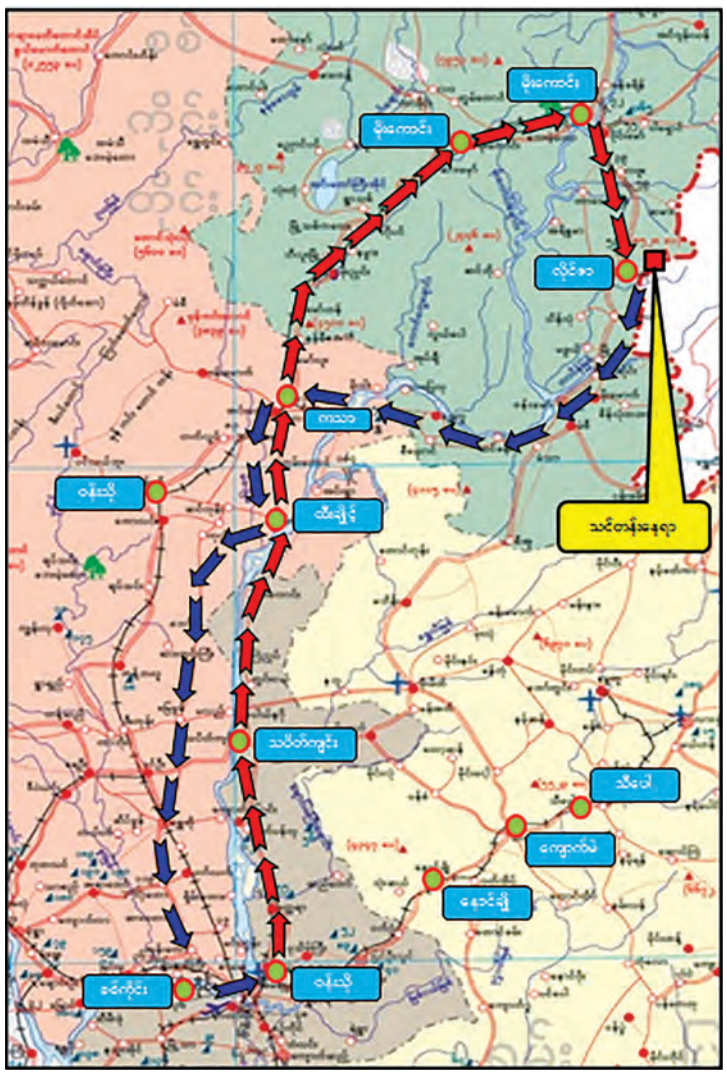
There are about 2,000 fuel stations and over 50 oil importer companies in Myanmar, the Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association stated.

Ninety per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally.—NN/GNLM

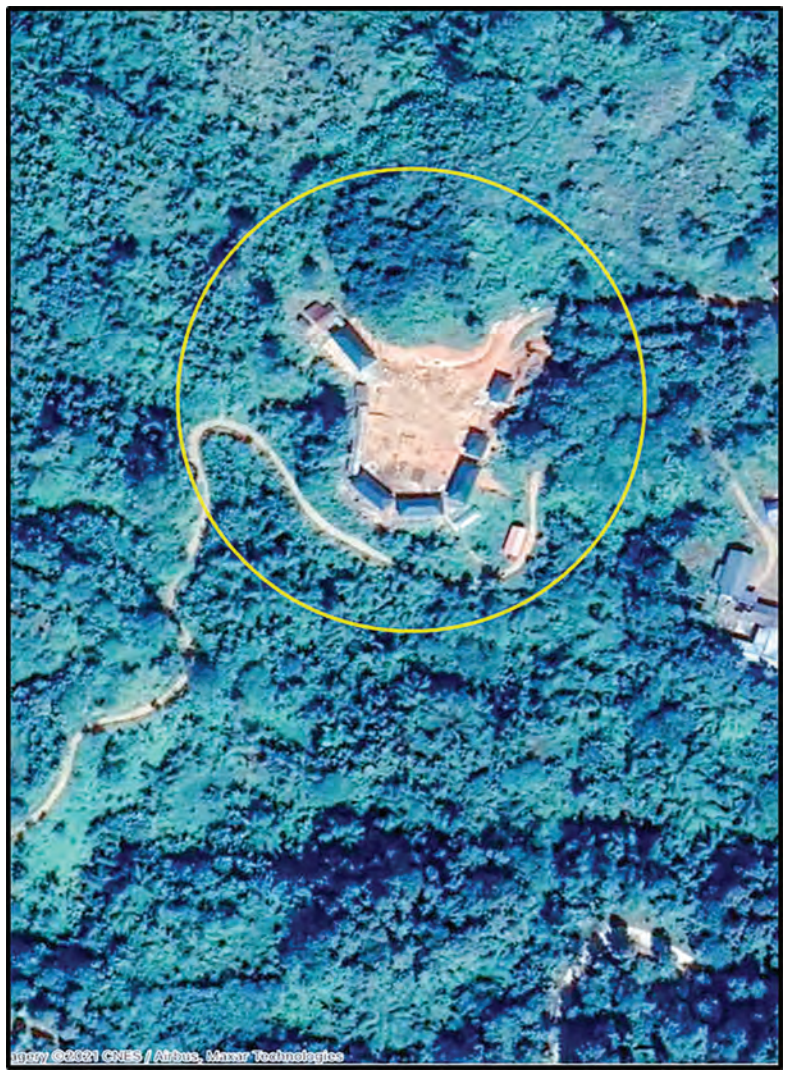
Police arrest 23 Mandalay PDF members together with firearms

THE security forces arrested two suspects Zaw Noe and Soe Thu Win, who sent the PDF members for explosive trainings to ethnic armed groups, near Pyinsar Village of PyinOoLwin Township on 31 July. The police also detained another five suspects Htet Paing Kyaw, Ye Yint Thu, Kyaw Zin Thaung (aka) Pili, Aung Zin Hein and Wah Wah Htet near Aungchantha Village on 1 August.

Firearms and related accessories are seized from Mandalay PDF members in Chanmyathazi and Mahaaungmye townships.



The map shows location of training course near Panwoelay village in Nawnghkio Township.



An aerial view shows PDF training school in KIA area, south of Laiza.

According to the confession of Kyaw Zin Thaung (aka) Pili, the security members detained Htet Naung Win, leader of Mahaaungmye PDF in West Thanlyetmaw Ward. According to his words, the police raided Ayechantha monastery and seized firearms, bullets, grenade and other materials.

Similarly, Soe Pyae Aung, Bo Bo Myint Thu (aka) Bo Bo, Aung Min Htet, Zu Zu (aka) Su Sandi Zaw were arrested in Htunton Ward of Chanmyathazi Township together with firearms.

According to the confession of Wah Wah Htet, the police arrested Aung Kyaw Thein (aka) Naung Naung in PyinOoLwin on 2 August.

The police continuously arrested Thiha Win (aka) Ko Thi, Thet Zaw Tun (aka) Thet Zaw, Myat Min Soe (aka) Ar Luu, Min Chit Zaw and Ma May Myat Noe together with one homemade gas gun, six bombs, three 91grenades, one keypad and 40 iron pipes near Kywenwahtauk Village on 5 August.

The security forces detained Bo Bo Aung (aka) Bo Bo and Aung Thu Hein near the Anisakhan and Paing Wunna at Yenge village on 11 August while Wine Wine Lin Htet (aka) Wine Wine and Htut Sit Hmue Lwin (aka) Htut Sit in Ward (1) in PyinOoLwin on 14 August based on the words of suspect Thet Zaw Tun (aka) Thet Zaw.

Zaw Noe admitted that he communicated with Mahaaungmye Township NLD member Ye Min Zaw and NUG's Defence Minister Yi Mon to send the youths to explosive training in KIA controlled area and gather terrorists. Zaw Noe, Soe Thu Win, Htet Naung Win and Htut Sit Hmue Lwin joined the explosive training conducted near Laiza.

Htet Naung Win completed the explosive training of KIA and took the weapons/explosives to conduct attacks.

The former Pyigyidagun Pyithu Hluttaw MP of NLD Kyaw Soe Lin (2015) and former Kawlin Township Pyithu Hluttaw MP of NLD Myo Zaw Aung (2015), who completed the trainings, ordered another trainees to disturb the government mechanism, reopening of schools and kill the informers when they return to their respective townships.

According to the words of detainees, Min Chit Zaw, Thet Zaw Tun (aka) Nga Thet, Myat Min Soe (aka) Ar Luu, Wine Wine Lin Htet and Paing Wunna joined the explosive training of TNLA near Panwoelay Village in Nawnghkio Township on 19 May. Suspect Zaw Noe led the squad including Aung Zin Hein, Soe Pyae Aung and Bo Bo Myint Thu to join the training in Singu Township.

Soe Pyae Aung participated in bombs and weapon trading. Zaw Noe took part in conducting destructive elements in Mandalay together with Kyaw Zin Thaung, Tun Tauk Naing, Moe Tain and Tin Maung Htwe (still at large).

Zaw Noe also transported 250 granades from TNLA together with other suspects Tin Maung Htwe and Myo Min. He also rented weapons to kill the informers and to conduct bomb attack on government building and crowded places under the order of KIA. He also jointly shot to two police men in Patheingyi Township in June together with Wai Soe who is still at large.

Moreover, it found that Aung Kyaw Thein (aka) Naung Naung and Thet Zaw Tun (aka) Nga Thet are the suspects who committed bomb attacks on Anisakhan police outpost on 20 April and ward administrative office of Ward 5 in PyinOoLwin on 12 June.

Myat Min Soe also participated in bombing attack near Defence Services Technological Academy on 18 July.

According to the confession of Kyaw Zin Thaung, they exploded in front of Mandalay general hospital located on 62nd street of Mandalay in April and also arranged to explode at central women's hospital.

Wah Wah Htet and Htet Paing Kyaw crated 100 fire bottles and 50 homemade bombs at their houses on 86th street in Chanayethazan Township. They contacted CRPH and ordered 80 homemade bombs.

Wah Wah Htet got injuries during planting bomb in front of KaNyaNa office in Aungmyethazan Township in the third week of April together with Nweni Hlaing who is still at large.

Moreover, Aung Min Htet participated in bombing attack on B.E.H.S (27), education officer office and Samyintzwe Ward administrative office in Pyigyidagun Township on 29 May together with another absconder Myo Thiha.

The security forces arrested 24 members of Mandalay PDF and seized one assaulted rifle, one homemade gas gun, four magazines, 209 bullets, one MG-1 grenade, six hand grenades, three 91 grenades, one homemade mine, 40 iron piles and other materials. The suspects will face legal action in accordance with the law. The people are also requested to secretly inform to the officials regarding with the activities or hiding places of terrorists.—MNA

Police arrest six terrorists who launched attacks in Shan, Kayah states

ACTING on tip-off that the terrorists transported the weapons/firearms to destroy the tranquility of the State, the security forces conduct investigation to uncover the cases.

On 30 July, NLD member of Pekhon Pital Aung, in charge of transportation of Pekhon PDF who was charged under Penal Code section 505-a in Namsang Township of Shan State (South) and other PDF members Hline Kyu (aka) Sai Lu and Maung Net, Zin Thaw Hein and Maung Noh who completed training in PNLO controlled area were arrested together with firearms.

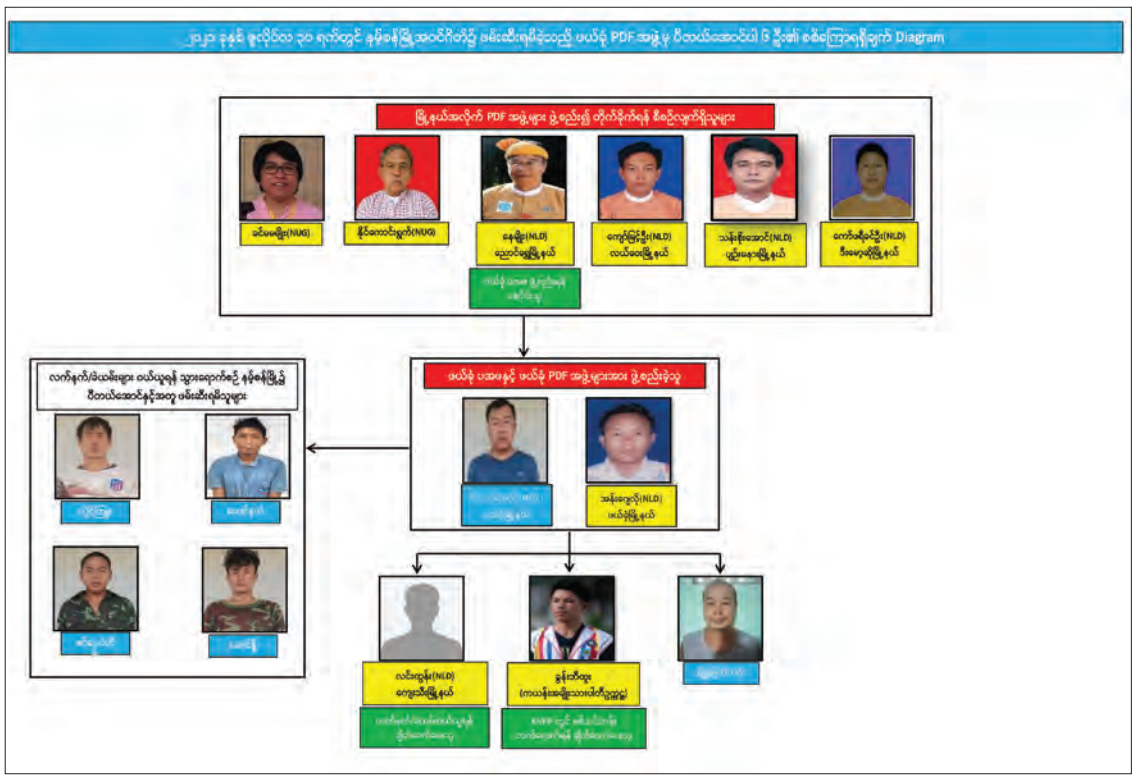
According to the confession of Pital Aung, the police arrested Myo Myat Lin (aka) Phoe Pye, who received/transferred the cash assistance from foreign countries for PDF, with five record books at his house in Nyaungkone Ward 5 of Pekhon Township on 5 August. Moreover, Pital Aung organized Pekhon Township PDF with 16 members including former 2015 Pekhon No (2) Constituency MP Ann Jay Lo in March according to the instruction of Nay Myo, former Nyaungshwe Township Pyithu Hluttaw MP, member of CRPH.

He then contacted Kayan National Party Chairman Khun Bi Htoo of NUG in April and May to send the youths from Moebye and Pekhon Township to the training conducted at Nyanmugon of KNPP, and they organized Pekhon PDF and Moebye PDF.

On 23 May, former Pekhon No (2) Constituency MP Ann Jay Lo cooperated with KNPP and attacked Moebye police station.

Pital Aung used the cash contribution of Karenni living in local and foreign countries to purchase the weapons and communicated with Lin Tun, chairman of NLD party winning committee of Kehsi Township to buy firearms.

On 28 July, Khin Ma Ma Myo, member of NUG led a zoom meeting and Naing Kaung Ywet, former Nyaungshwe Pyithu Hluttaw MP (2015) Nay Myo, former Amyotha Hluttaw (11) Constituency of Mandalay Region Kyaw Myint Oo, former Pyinmana Pyithu Hluttaw MP Than Soe Aung and Dimawhso NLD member Kaw Fari Khin Oo joined the meeting. During the meeting, Khin Ma Ma Myo said that arrangements are being made to conduct attacks in major cities by forming the township PDF and guerrilla warfare and civil war by cooperating with ethnic armed groups.



The diagram is depicted based on confession of Pital Aung arrested at entrance gate to Namsang on 30 July 2021.

NUG is arranging to achieve a base in ethnic armed group controlled area and trying to destroy the administrative machinery of the State Administration Council.

According to the words of Hlaing Kyuu, he is the leader of eastern Pekhon PDF. He purchased the arms from Thailand and transported via Myawady.

He requested Nyein Kyaw Htay, major of PNLO for their security when he went to Namsang Township to buy weapons together with Pital Aung on 30 July. Therefore, they came along with Maung Noh and Zin Thaw Hein.

Maung Noh and Zin Thaw Hein joined PNLO in May 2021 and completed the military training of PNLO. During their training days, the youths were giving training and the terrorist group NUG arranged to provide rations and firearms in August.

The six suspects who attempted to destroy the tranquility and rule of law will face legal action in accordance with the law. The people are requested to inform to the officials regarding with the movements or hiding places of terrorist in order to arrest Lin Tun, chairman of NLD winning committee of Keshi Township.—MNA

Megaship that blocked Suez heads back to Asia

A super tanker that blocked the Suez Canal is heading back to Asia, authorities said, five months after it became wedged across the vital waterway and crippled world trade.

The MV Ever Given had "successfully crossed" the canal after unloading its cargo in Britain and was now on its way to China, Suez Canal Authority chief Osama Rabie said on Friday.

Rabie said that the vessel's passage on Friday was overseen by "senior" guides of the authority. The vessel was seen sailing in open waters accompanied by Egypt-flagged tugboats in aerial video footage posted on the SCA's Twitter account.

The Ever Given — a behemoth with deadweight tonnage of 199,000 — got stuck diagonally across the canal during a sandstorm on March 23.

A round-the-clock salvage operation took six days to dislodge it.

A file picture taken on 7 July 2021 shows the MV Ever Given container ship sailing near a felucca along Egypt's Suez Canal near the canal's central city of Ismailia, as it departs from the waterway. **PHOTO: AFP**

After it was freed, Egypt seized the ship and demanded compensation from owners Shoei Kisen Kaisha for lost canal revenues, salvage costs and damage to the waterway.

The Taiwanese-operated vessel steamed out of the Suez last month after the Japanese owners reached a compensation deal with Egypt.

The terms of the deal were not disclosed publicly but Egypt had originally demanded more than $900 million in compensation, which it later reduced to $550 million. One employee of the SCA was killed during the rescue operation.

In May, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi approved a two-year project to widen and deepen the southern part of the waterway where the ship ran aground to avoid any repetition of the crisis. Egypt, which takes a toll from ships traversing the canal, said the crisis cost it as much as $15 million per day, while maritime insurers estimated the hit to world trade to be in the billions. — AFP ■

Sri Lanka bans 'drunk driving' of elephants in new protection law

SRI Lanka will issue captive elephants with their own biometric identity cards and ban their riders from drinking on the job under a wide-ranging new animal protection law.

Many rich Sri Lankans — including Buddhist monks — keep elephants as pets to show off their wealth, but complaints of ill treatment and cruelty are widespread.

The new measures are aimed at protecting the animals' welfare and include strict regulations around working elephants, as well as mandating a daily two-and-a-half-hour bath for each creature.

Official records show there are about 200 domesticated elephants in the South Asian nation, with the population in the wild estimated at about 7,500.

The new law will require all owners to ensure that animals under their care have new photo identity cards with a DNA stamp.

It also brings in multiple regulations for working elephants. Baby elephants can no longer be used for work — even cultural pageants — and cannot be separated from their mothers. Logging elephants cannot be worked for more than four hours a day and night work is prohibited.

There are new restrictions on the tourism industry too — from now on, no more than four people can ride an elephant at once, and they must sit on a well-padded saddle.

Their use in films is banned, except for government productions under strict veterinary supervision, as is allowing their riders to drink while working.

"The person who owns or has the custody of such elephants shall ensure that the mahout (rider) is not consuming any liquor or any harmful drug while employed," Wildlife Protection minister Wimalaweera Dissanayaka said in a gazette notification dated Thursday. — AFP ■

22 AUGUST 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Uplift capability of youth with enlarging their scopes

THE government establishes community centres one after another attached to township information and public relations departments across the nation in order to give facilities of library and reading rooms.

These centres and departments aim to contribute to promoting the physical and mental ability of the youths to be able to become active, fit ones who love the sports and grab the learning access and right knowledge. In fact, the community centres should be shifted into the youth-based centres where the youths have to take physical and mental training for ensuring self-improvement.

It is because the Prime Minister of the State, in his instructions, urged officials to promote the role of youths. The youths play a key role in building the future of country. Global countries are making efforts for development of the human resources. It is necessary to create a better environment for the youths as they are the hopes of the country.

That is why the relevant ministries need to provide the community centres and libraries with better and better facilities useful for the youths to apply them in their lives and at the workplaces in the future for improvement of productivity as well as their intelligence quotient and emotional quotient as ideals for future generations.

Hence, the Information Ministry needs to adopt various media to keep the patriotism for the country and religion in their mind. In addition, they should encourage the youths to forge the patriotism for the country and the nationals. Relevant ministries and stakeholders of the union level organizations need to give a helping hand to the youths in marching into their goals along the right path.

Ministries concerned and region and state governments should implement the development programmes for lives of the youths. Those youths will have good creative thinking, high reading skill, comprehensive writing capacity, wider scope of knowledge on internal and international affairs, proper relationship with each other, and improvement of political, historical, logical and traditional awareness.

Generally, today's youths don't have adequate knowledge how to shift the lessons obtained from various good and bad things in the society into the advantage for themselves as well as for the State and the people. It is because they don't have valuable guidance from the experienced senior citizens.

That is why the relevant ministries need to provide the community centres and libraries with better and better facilities useful for the youths to apply them in their lives and at the workplaces in the future for improvement of productivity as well as their intelligence quotient and emotional quotient as ideals for future generations.

■ ■ ■

WHO seeks experts for pandemic prevention group

The World Health Organization called Friday for experts to advise on the scientific steps needed when facing new dangerous pathogens with the potential to spark pandemics like Covid-19

THE UN health agency launched a call for nominations of experts across a wide range of fields, including virology, veterinary medicine and laboratory safety and security, to join its new permanent International Scientific Advisory Group for Origins of Novel Pathogens, or SAGO.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced the creation of the group last month, stressing that it would "play a vital role" in the next phase of investigations into how the SARS CoV-2 virus behind Covid-19 first jumped into humans.

But he stressed in a closed-door briefing with member states Thursday that the new group was about much more than the current pandemic.

"It is a long-term initiative to support studies into the origins of any and all future emerging pathogens," he said, pointing out that the virus behind the Covid pandemic was only the latest high-threat pathogen to emerge, following the likes of SARS, MERS, Ebola and Marburg.

A laboratory technician wearing full personal protective equipment handles live samples taken from people tested for the coronavirus. **PHOTO: ANDREW MILLIGAN/POOL/AFP/FILE**

Disease X

The first phase of the Covid origins probe saw a team of international experts go to Wuhan earlier this year and produce a report with their Chinese counterparts that drew no firm conclusions.

Instead it ranked four hypotheses, deeming a jump fro bats to human via an intermediate animal was the most probable scenario, while a lab leak was seen as "extremely unlikely".

But the investigation faced criticism for lacking transparency and access, and for not evaluating the lab-leak theory more thoroughly.

A WHO call last month for the investigation's second stage to include audits of the Wuhan labs infuriated Beijing, which has also rejected as political the agency's call for raw data from the earliest Covid cases.

WHO's technical lead on Covid-19 Maria Van Kerkhove stressed to AFP that the new advisory group would not be responsible for organising possible future missions to China or elsewhere in the hunt for the pandemic origins.

She said the experts would be asked to provide "an independent evaluation of where we are on the scientific findings, the technical findings of all available data, all available studies into the global search for SARS CoV-2".

And they would be asked to advise the WHO on how to move forward with the second phase of the origins probe, with more studies needed "not only in China but also in other countries".

Van Kerkove stressed though that SAGO's role was "long term", helping to streamline the process for dealing with dangerous new pathogens, many of which may already be waiting in the wings.

"We believe that the next Disease X is out there."

SOURCE: AFP

This Is Going To Hurt: Top 10 COVID Scams

From the sophisticated to downright strange, the pandemic has set off a wave of scams around the world from bogus doses and fake vaccine passes to criminal cremations.

HERE are 10 of the most outrageous and nefarious frauds of the last few months:

'Vaccination Is Optional'

Since the French government made proof of vaccination mandatory to enter cafes and other public places this month, a black market selling fake health passes for hundreds of euros has flourished.

Go to the social media app Snapchat, type in "fake health pass" and hey presto. Accounts that rarely last for more than a few days openly advertise counterfeit documents.

Among the ads are "Vaccination is optional thanks to our service" or, "Say no to the vaccine and get a health pass without getting vaccinated."

Forgers making fake vaccinations certificates are also thriving in Russia.

Bleed The Rich

At least 800 people were given fake vaccines in Uganda last month in a scam involving "unscrupulous" doctors and health workers who targeted people looking to pay for immunisation, including corporate employees asked to pay between US$25-US$120 (20-100 euros) for a fake shot.

Just Water

A bigger scale scam in India's commercial capital Mumbai in June conned 2,000 people who thought they were being vaccinated. In fact, they were injected with shots of a saline solution.

Criminal Cremation

Five gang members in the Indian city of Agra donned full protective gear to cremate a man they had murdered, pretending he had died from COVID-19, in a morbid case exposed in June.

"To avoid being caught... they wore PPE kit and used a body bag to pack and transport the body to the cremation ground," police said.

Uncivil Servant

A man posing as a civil servant with a master's degree in genetics was nabbed in Kolkata in southern India in June for allegedly running as many as eight spurious vaccination camps.

At least 250 disabled and transgender people were injected at one site and nearly 500 people in total are believed to have been given counterfeit jabs.

The scam came to light after an actress and politician Mimi Chakraborty, who received a shot at one of the camps to raise awareness, became suspicious and alerted police.

Mean Millionaires

A rich Canadian couple got their comeuppance after travelling to a remote community to receive a vaccine intended for vulnerable and elderly Indigenous people. In June they were fined C$2,300 (US$1,800), but many felt they had got off too lightly and called for a harsher sentence.

Anti-Vaxxer's Revenge

A vaccine sceptic pharmacist at a hospital in Wisconsin was jailed for three years in June after pleading guilty to tampering with hundreds of Moderna doses in a case that affected 57 people.

The pharmacist had removed vaccine vials from their refrigerator and left them outside for hours before returning them to be administered the next day.

Robbing Prisoners

Four people were arrested in Indonesia for allegedly stealing vaccines earmarked for prisoners and selling them to the public.

The suspects took more than 1,000 doses of China's Sinovac jab and offered them to buyers in the country's capital Jakarta and in Medan, North Sumatra, for around 250,000 rupiah (US$17) each.

Dirty Cotton Swabs

Spare a thought for passengers who passed through Medan airport where health workers had been recycling cotton swabs from COVID tests by washing and repackaging them.

Police said the scheme could have affected thousands of passengers.

Anti-Wrinkle Cream

Fraudsters selling fake doses of Pfizer's vaccine for as much as $2,500 a shot had earlier been nabbed in Poland and Mexico.

The bogus vials were stored in beer coolers in a Mexico clinic while in Poland the confiscated doses contained a cosmetic substance thought to be anti-wrinkle cream.

SOURCE: AFP

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Appointment of Heads of Service Organizations

THE State Administration Council has appointed the following persons as heads of service organizations shown against each of their names on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
1. U Aung Min Deputy Managing Director Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise Ministry of Electricity and Energy	Managing Director Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise Ministry of Electricity and Energy
2. Dr Aye Aye Khaing Pro-Rector Bago University Department of Higher Education Ministry of Education	Rector Bago University Department of Higher Education Ministry of Education

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 21 August 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 22 August, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Magway, Yangon Regions and Kachin, (Northern and Southern) Shan, Kayah, Kayin, Mon states, fairly widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Magway Region. 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: Likelihood of increase of rain in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FLOOD WARNING

According to the (13:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River at Hpa-an is observed as about (1) foot below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next (2) days.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas at Hpa-an Township to take precaution measure.

Diving among ancient ruins where Romans used to party

By the 4th century, the porticos, marble columns, shrines and ornamental fish ponds of Baiae had begun to sink due to bradyseism, the gradual rise and fall of land due to hydrothermal and seismic activity. **PHOTO: AFP**

FISH dart across mosaic floors and into the ruined villas, where holidaying Romans once drank, plotted and flirted in the party town of Baiae, now an underwater archaeological park near Naples. Statues which once decorated luxury abodes in this beachside resort are now playgrounds for crabs off the coast of Italy, where divers can explore ruins of palaces and domed bathhouses built for emperors.

Rome's nobility were first attracted in the 2nd century BC to the hot springs at Baiae, which sits on the coast within the Campi Flegrei -- a supervolcano known in English as the Phlegraean Fields. Seven emperors, including Augustus and Nero, had villas here, as did Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony. The poet Sextus Propertius described the town as a place of vice, which was "foe to virtuous creatures".

It was where "old men behave like young boys, and lots of young boys act like young girls," according to the Roman scholar Varro. But by the 4th century, the porticos, marble columns, shrines and ornamental fish ponds had begun to sink due to bradyseism, the gradual rise and fall of land due to hydrothermal and seismic activity. The whole area, including the neighbouring commercial capital of Pozzuoli and military seat at Miseno, were submerged. Their ruins now lie between four and six metres (15 to 20 feet) underwater.

'Something unique'

"It's difficult, especially for those coming for the first time, to imagine that you can find things you would never be able to see anywhere else in the world in just a few metres of water," said Marcello Bertolaso, head of the Campi Flegrei diving centre, which takes tourists around the site.— AFP ■

Netflix announces documentary series on Inspiration4 space mission

NETFLIX will soon premiere a documentary series chronicling Inspiration4, the world's first all-civilian space mission, the streaming service said Thursday.

The five-episode show will air in September and will depict how the four-member crew is preparing and then launching into space aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, in near real time.

The mission, scheduled for September 15, is financed and run by Jared Isaacman, the 38-year-old founder of payment processing company Shift4 Payments and the latest wealthy businessman to take advantage of the growing space tourism industry. Isaacman has invited three "everyday" people along with him for the ride: a medical worker, a college professor and an engineer. The show, titled "Countdown: Inspiration4 Mission To Space" will "take viewers behind the scenes with the four crew members -- from their unconventional selection and intensive months-long commercial astronaut training, through the intimate and emotional moments leading up to liftoff," Netflix said in a statement. The final episode will air after the mission is completed and will "feature unprecedented access inside the spacecraft, capturing the launch and the crew's journey to space, as well as their return home to Earth."— AFP ■

Grace makes landfall in Mexico as major hurricane

HURRICANE Grace slammed into Mexico for a second time early Saturday as a major Category Three storm, threatening to bring significant flooding and mudslides, US forecasters said.

The storm made landfall near Tecolutla in Veracruz state, clocking maximum sustained winds of 125 miles (200 kilometers) per hour, according to the US National Hurricane Center (NHC).

Category Three is the third highest of five levels on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

A hurricane warning was in effect for coastline stretching from Puerto Veracruz to Cabo Rojo.

"Rapid weakening is expected as Grace moves inland over the mountains of central Mexico later today," the NHC said.

Nearly 8,000 civil defense members, soldiers and electricity board workers were ready to tackle the aftermath of the storm, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador wrote on Twitter. He urged residents living in places considered to be at risk to "seek refuge in high places with relatives and in shelters."

Highways closed

Authorities in the state of Veracruz said they had prepared 200 storm shelters and planned to open another 2,000 if necessary.

Veracruz Governor Cuitlahuac Garcia warned of the risk of flooding and mudslides as the storm dumped heavy rain on the mountainous region.

A hurricane warning is in effect for the Mexican coastline stretching from Puerto Veracruz to Cabo Rojo. **PHOTO: AFP**

Members of the Mexican armed forces were ready to deploy if needed to protect residents, said civil protection national coordinator Laura Velazquez.

Authorities closed most highways in Veracruz, which is crossed by numerous rivers. — AFP ■

Rescuers race to save tortoises in France's burnt biodiversity hotspot

Hermann's tortoise is already classified as "vulnerable" on the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species. **PHOTO: AFP**

IN a deadly silent and scorched landscape, French scientist Dominique Guicheteau lies on his front, plunges his hand under a rock and brings out a Hermann's tortoise.

This one, at least, appears to have survived the raging wildfire's merciless passage through a biodiversity hotspots in southern France, near the glitzy resort of Saint Tropez.

For four days firefighters have battled the blaze that killed two and forced thousands to flee. A few kilometres away, the struggle continues.

Equipped with antennas, around 20 specialist volunteers are Thursday on the lookout for the creatures with black and yellow-patterned carapaces still in the area, home to 241 protected species.

So far, the group has found 31 alive, and one dead. But the happy average is far from a coincidence.

"We headed to the areas where we knew the tortoises might survive, thanks to the rocks" that protect from the flames, says Guicheteau, the scientific director of Plaine des Maures natural reserve.

The tortoises are plunged into a bowl of water, weighed and measured. The volunteers then carefully put them back in their now-burnt natural habitat where they will have to wait for autumn and rain to feed on grass, before hibernating.

As wildfires supercharged by climate change-induced drought and heatwaves ravage parts of Europe, conservationists are increasingly concerned for the fate of wild species. — AFP ■

Thailand's COVID-19 cases top 1 mln

A pedestrian wearing a face mask walks on Khao San Road in Bangkok, Thailand, on 19 Aug 2021. The cumulative COVID-19 cases in Thailand surpassed 1 million on Friday, driven by a continued surge in infections, primarily attributed to the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant. **PHOTO: XINHUA/WANG TENG**

THE cumulative COVID-19 cases in Thailand surpassed 1 million on Friday, driven by a continued surge in infections, primarily attributed to the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant.

On Friday, the number of daily cases dipped below 20,000 for the first time in 10 days. With 19,851 new cases reported, and the country's total tally now stands at 1,009,710, according to the data released by the Ministry of Public Health.

The ministry also reported 240 fatalities over the past 24 hours, taking the death toll since the start of the pandemic to 8,826. More than 97 percent of Thailand's total caseload has been reported since the latest outbreak originated in the capital Bangkok in early April.

Since then more cases caused by the variants Alpha and Delta have been rapidly detected, with the Delta variant now being the dominant among the infections. There are currently 205,079 active cases nationwide, of which 5,388 are in critical condition with 1,161 on ventilators. A slight decrease in hospitalized patients has been shown, however, the country's medical infrastructure is still under great pressure.—Xinhua ■

Vietnam's daily COVID-19 cases hit new high

VIETNAM reported a new high of 10,657 new COVID-19 cases on Friday, marking the second day in a row with over 10,000 new cases recorded in the country, according to the Ministry of Health. The new infections, including 10,650 locally transmitted and seven imported, brought the total tally to 323,268, with 7,540 deaths, the ministry said.

Most of the community cases were detected in southern localities, including 4,223 in Binh Duong province, 3,375 in the epicenter Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), and 686 in Dong Nai province. As many as 132,815 patients have so far recovered, up 12,756 from Thursday, while 16.3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered nationwide, according to the ministry. As of Friday, Vietnam has registered a total of 319,209 locally transmitted cases since the start of the current wave in late April, the ministry said.

Morning commuters wearing face masks, amidst concerns about the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, ride past in Hanoi on 4 May, 2021 **PHOTO: AFP**

On Friday, authorities of HCMC announced that even stricter COVID-19 prevention and control measures will be applied in the city starting from Aug. 23 to ensure further isolation among citizens, while authorities of the Vietnamese capital Hanoi also announced the extension of current social-distancing measures by another 15 days until Sept. 6. — Xinhua ■

Superhero battles Covid lies in California theater production

Captain Empathy, Chavez (R), fights the Covid-19 virus during the closing scene of a superhero-themed Covid-19 play on 19 August. **PHOTO: AFP**

IS it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Captain Empathy, a superhero ready to vanquish misinformation about vaccines in a Hollywood-style twist on the fight against Covid-19.

Wearing a yellow cape, the warrior battles the evil Coronavirus with medical science as his superpower in a piece of educational theater in San Bernardino, near Los Angeles, California. The hero disarms his nemesis by convincing two young people to get immunized. "We thought of this play as a way to educate people about the importance of vaccines, especially young people," says director Valentina Sanabria.

"There are many people who are resisting the vaccine... because of rumors that it contains a microchip, or because... not enough time has passed to take a good look and educate themselves," she says. Vaccines in the United States are free and widely available for anyone over the age of 12 who wants them, but just 51 percent of the population is fully immunized against Covid-19.— AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cuba approves two more locally made Covid vaccines

Cuba on Friday approved two more domestic Covid-19 vaccines for emergency use, the island nation's medication regulatory body said.

The authorization came after a "rigorous evaluation process of the Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus vaccines," the body, CECMED, said in a statement.

The two Soberana vaccines are complementary.

Last month, Cuba became the first Latin American country to approve a home-made vaccine when CECMED gave the go-ahead to the Abdala jab.

The news comes at a time when the island nation faces particularly high infection rates.—AFP ■

Prevalence of Delta variant of COVID-19 increases significantly in Mongolia

Mongolia's health ministry on Saturday urged its citizens to stay at home and not go out unless absolutely necessary as the prevalence of the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant is increasing significantly across the country.

The Delta variant has accounted for at least 50 percent of all COVID-19 cases in Mongolia recently, the ministry said in a statement.

The Asian country reported 1,651 new locally transmitted COVID-19 cases and four more deaths in the last 24 hours, bringing the national counts to 191,899 and 896, according to the ministry.—Xinhua ■

Cross-species transmission most likely source of COVID-19: Cell

Animal trans-species transmission is the most likely origin of COVID-19 based on current scientific data, said a recent article in the U.S. science journal, the Cell.

Scientists have added more depth and diversity to the understanding of the viral origins of SARS-CoV-2, sequencing 411 bat samples from a small region in China's Yunnan collected between 2019 and 2020, leading to 24 full-length coronavirus genomes, said the article titled "The continuing search for the origins of SARS-CoV-2."—Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

China, Arab states should deepen energy cooperation: Chinese energy chief

ENERGY cooperation plays a vital role in China-Arab strategic partnership as both sides face the issue of ensuring energy security and realizing energy transition amid the global background of carbon neutrality, Zhang Jianhua, head of China's National Energy Administration, said Thursday.

Zhang made the remarks at a forum held on the sidelines of the ongoing fifth China-Arab States Expo, which opened Thursday in Yinchuan, the capital of northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

China and the Arab states should deepen cooperation in traditional energy to achieve win-win results and mutual benefits, and join hands to push forward the transition to clean, low-carbon energy including solar, wind, hydro, and nuclear power, Zhang noted.

He added that China welcomes the Arab states to join the Belt and Road Energy Partnership, an energy cooperation platform inaugurated in 2019 under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, to facilitate collaboration in the area.

Arab states are the most important source of crude oil imports for China, and a number of China-invested enterprises have engaged in energy projects in Arab countries including Iraq and the United Arab Emirates, Zhang said. – Xinhua ■

Global stocks rebound, but end week lower on virus fears

EUROPEAN and US stocks rebounded on Friday after a week in which enthusiasm waned as traders digested worries over the fast-spreading COVID-19 Delta variant, the Federal Reserve's taper plans and China's regulatory crackdown.

Asian markets continued to fall, however, with Hong Kong's main index down 5.8 per cent for the week.

Oil prices fell further on concerns the Delta surge could lead to further closures and restrictions that dampen energy demand.

"We can't ignore the fact that this week has seen a bit of a shift in sentiment when it comes to optimism about the overall recovery story," said Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

On Wall Street, all major indices ended with gains of less than one per cent, but were lower for the week.

Sentiment suffered after indications from the Federal Reserve it would begin to taper its stimulus this year, while investors have generally been on edge over unrest in Afghanistan and China's regulatory crackdown.

London stocks rose 0.4 per cent amid news UK supermarket Morrisons accepted a £7.0 billion ($9.6 billion, 8.2 billion euro) takeover from US private equity firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice.

The FTSE 100 shed 1.8 per cent for the week.– AFP ■

US Vice President Harris departs for Singapore, Vietnam

Harris will stay in Singapore for three days from Sunday, holding talks with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Monday, according to U.S. government officials. **PHOTO: KYODO**

VICE PRESIDENT Kamala Harris on Friday departed for Singapore and Vietnam on a trip to demonstrate U.S. commitment to the Indo-Pacific region amid the growing clout of China.

Her travel comes as U.S. President Joe Biden faces strong criticism at home and abroad over a chaotic withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan amid the Taliban's recent takeover of the country.

Harris will stay in Singapore for three days from Sunday, holding talks with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Monday, according to U.S. government officials. She is scheduled to deliver a speech the following day, underscoring the importance of partnerships and areas for further cooperation.

Harris will then fly to Vietnam for meetings with government officials and civil society representatives, becoming the first sitting U.S. vice president ever to visit the country. Topics of discussion during her trip will include global health issues, economic partnership and security as well as regional issues, including China, one of the officials said. The Biden administration has been striving to strengthen cooperation with its partners and like-minded countries to counter China's growing assertiveness in the region.—Kyodo ■

China's Hunan reports trade surge with Belt and Road countries

Customs officers carry out routine inspections on the testing kits that are bound for overseas clients in Changsha, capital of central China's Hunan Province, 25 March 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

CENTRAL China's Hunan Province saw its trade with countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative amounted to 89.78 billion yuan (about 13.8 billion U.S. dollars) in the first seven months of this year, surging 18.3 percent year on year, local customs said Saturday.

The province's exports to these countries increased 17.1 percent to 69.11 billion yuan during the period, and its imports reached 20.67 billion yuan, up 22.5 percent year on year, according to the customs of Changsha, the provincial capital. Hunan's trade volume with Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia stood at 11.85 billion yuan, 10.4 billion yuan and 8.37 billion yuan respectively in the seven-month period, ranking the top three among Belt and Road countries.—Xinhua ■

Jobless benefit cuts cause lost earnings, spending in US states: study

A study found the 26 US states that ended pandemic unemployment benefits early saw slight increases in employment but big falls in spending and income. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

AMERICAN states that ended pandemic jobless benefits early saw slight dips in unemployment rates but big declines in spending and income, according to a study released Friday, in what could be a preview of the effects nationwide when the programs end completely.

First created by the CARES Act in March 2020 and extended several times since, the emergency benefits increased weekly unemployment payments and expanded them to freelance workers and the long-term unemployed.

But the federal aid has become controversial in recent months, as critics say it encourages people not to return to work even as Covid-19 vaccines became widely available and businesses struggle to fill open positions.

Officials in 26 states — mostly led by Republicans — have announced early cuts to some or all of the programs, which are due to expire nationwide on September 6.

Analyzing data from 18,648 people who had received unemployment payments, the study found nearly 25 per cent had jobs at the end of July in 19 of the 22 states that ended extra benefits in June.

That compares to about 22 per cent in the 23 states that continued the programs.

However, the employment gains did not make up for the decline in incomes and spending that followed, according to the researchers from Columbia University, Harvard University, University of Massachusetts Amherst and University of Toronto. — AFP ■

GM expands Chevrolet Bolt EV recall, adding $1 bn in costs

GENERAL Motors expanded a recall of its Chevrolet Bolt on Friday, announcing plans to repair thousands more of the electric autos in a move that will add $1 billion in costs.

The recall will address two manufacturing defects that can be present in electric battery cells, leading to fires in "rare circumstances," GM said in a news release.

The latest moves adds to the $812 million in costs connected to the earlier recall of Bolt vehicles.

GM said it was pursuing reimbursement from the supplier, LG.

The automaker "discovered manufacturing defects in certain battery cells produced at LG manufacturing facilities beyond the Ochang, Korea plant," GM said.

"GM and LG are working to rectify the cause of these defects. In the meantime, GM is pursuing commitments from LG for reimbursement of this field action."

GM is now recalling additional Bolt vehicles from 2019 as well as those of the 2020-2022 model year after the July 23 announcement covered vehicles from the 2017-2019 period. Friday's recall affects about 73,000 autos in the United States and Canada, a bit more than the 69,000 covered by the initial recall.

"Our focus on safety and doing the right thing for our customers guides every decision we make at GM," said Doug Parks, GM executive vice president. "As leaders in the transition to an all-electric future, we know that building and maintaining trust is critical."—AFP ■

Waldorf Astoria hotel to open in Osaka by 2025 ahead of World Expo

HOTEL operating giant Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc. is planning to open a Waldorf Astoria luxury hotel — the group's highest standard of accommodation — in Osaka by 2025 ahead of the world exposition in the city, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Hilton will build Japan's first Waldorf Astoria hotel near JR Osaka Station in western Japan, anticipating a recovery in travel demand among wealthy people in a post-coronavirus era, the sources said.

The chain is also planning to open a hotel of the same brand in Tokyo's Nihombashi district in 2026.

Photo taken on 15 October 2015, shows the Waldorf Astoria luxury hotel in New York. **PHOTO: KYODO**

In addition to the Waldorf Astoria hotel, Hilton is also considering launching its upscale Canopy hotel brand in an area formerly used for a freight station in Osaka. The hotels will be constructed together with offices and apartments, they said.

Hilton has pointed out that Japan lacks high-end accommodation that caters to affluent visitors from elsewhere in Asia and demand for such hotels will continue.

"We had been considering the establishment of a luxury hotel brand in the Kansai area, expecting demand to grow substantially," said a source familiar with the matter.

Under an urban development project near JR Osaka Station, the Grand Front Osaka complex featuring a shopping mall, an Intercontinental hotel, offices and apartments opened in 2013.—Kyodo ■

Indonesia's 'YouTube Village' banks on homegrown video stars

Siswanto's success as a YouTuber inspired his neighbours to start making their own videos. **PHOTO: AFP**

SISWANTO was a down-on-his-luck mechanic until his improbable pivot to internet videos turned his neighbours into stars and vaulted his poor farming community into the limelight as Indonesia's "YouTube Village". The rags-to-riches tale begins four years ago as he struggled to keep his auto shop business afloat in Kasegeran -- a remote town in Java that most Indonesians would struggle to find on a map. He was cash-strapped and desperate for extra income to feed his growing family, but side jobs scavenging junk and soybean farming were not earning enough to pay the bills. Siswanto eventually tried publishing short comedy routines over Kasegeran's glacial Internet connection after watching a TV show about an Indonesian influencer who made big money through online videos. "But nobody watched them so I stopped," said the 38-year-old, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.—AFP ■

VW reins in production due to ongoing chip shortage

GERMAN car giant Volkswagen will slash production at its main plant due to ongoing problems with the global supply of computer chips, a spokesman told AFP on Friday.

Following the summer holidays for workers in Germany, work on the assembly line at the company's facility in Wolfsburg will be "limited" and will have to "adapt to the supply situation", the spokesman said.

Next week, cars will only be produced during the early shift at the factory, while the rest of production will be halted.

Shortages of semiconductors are set to continue, according to the carmaker.

The renewed scarcity is in part the result of "outbreaks of Covid-19, particularly in Malaysia,

Computer chips are a key component in many car systems and automakers have had to cut production as their shortage continues. **PHOTO : POOL/AFP/FILE**

which have led to factory closures for semiconductor producers", Volkswagen said.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NORDDAL VOY.NO. (133N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NORDDAL VOY.NO. (133N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **22-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Combined photo shows Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi (L) and new Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Japan foreign minister planning talks with new Iran president on Sun.

JAPANESE Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi is planning to talk with new Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on Sunday, diplomatic sources said Saturday.

The meeting with Raisi, an anti-U.S. conservative hardliner who took office this month, comes as Iran faces a deadlock in nuclear talks with the United States and Europe. Japan, meanwhile, has built friendly ties with Tehran while also being allied with Washington.

Motegi is on a trip to the Middle East that also saw him visit Israel, another country that recently underwent changes in government. After arriving in Tehran on Saturday, Motegi is expected to hold talks with Raisi and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday. He is also planning to meet with Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a former Iranian deputy foreign minister who is set to succeed Zarif under the Raisi administration, the sources said.

Raisi has called for the lifting of U.S. sanctions on Iran, which have been strengthened since 2018 when then President Donald Trump's administration unilaterally walked out of the 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran.

Under the deal, Iran and six major powers agreed to limit Tehran's nuclear activities in return for sanctions relief.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Viral footage of US Marine aiding baby captures Kabul chaos

A heart-breaking video showing a US Marine lifting a baby over a razor wire-topped wall at Kabul's airport caught global attention Friday, amid the chaos of thousands trying to flee Afghanistan newly controlled by the Taliban.

The video, which shows the infant, its diaper slipping off, being pulled up by one arm high above a crowd of Afghans seeking to enter the airport, took over social media nearly one week into the airlift to evacuate foreigners and Afghans from the war-torn country.—AFP ■

R. Kelly ex-associate says bribed official for fake ID in Aaliyah marriage

R. Kelly's former tour manager on Friday said he bribed a worker at a public aid office to get false identification saying the late singer Aaliyah was of age, so she could marry the R&B star now on trial for sex crimes. Testifying under a grant of immunity from later prosecution, Demetrius Smith – who worked for Kelly for more than a decade in the 1980s and 1990s – said he paid a worker $500 to secure the then-15-year-old Aaliyah Haughton a fake ID, used shortly thereafter to wed Kelly, who was then 27. "I went to the welfare office, and I walked in, and I said, 'Hey wanna make some money?'" Smith, now 65, said during the dramatic afternoon at the Brooklyn courthouse where Kelly is on trial for crimes including racketeering, bribery and sexual exploitation of a child.—AFP ■

Why didn't Biden leave 2,500 troops in Afghanistan?

THE Taliban's lightning-fast takeover of Afghanistan after President Joe Biden's decision to withdraw US troops by 31 August has critics asking: why didn't he just leave 2,500 troops there to fortify the now-fallen government?

That was how many US forces remained in the country when Biden took office in January, after his predecessor Donald Trump slashed their numbers from 15,000.

In appearances, the 2,500 troops and 16,000 US civilian contractors behind them, seemed to have been enough to keep the Afghan government in power in the year after Trump signed a withdrawal agreement with the Taliban insurgents on February 29, 2020.

Trump set a final pullout date of May 1, 2021, and even tried to speed that up.

While the Taliban stepped up attacks on Afghan government targets, their gains remained limited to non-strategic rural areas.

But, abiding to the agreement, their attacks on US and NATO forces meanwhile almost dried up. No US soldier was killed after Trump's deal.

Critics argue this showed that, when backed by a skeleton US force, Kabul could hold the line against the insurgents.

A battlefield stalemate was more desirable than a full Taliban victory, they said.

"We only had 2,500 troops there, light touch, no chaos, not a single American soldier killed in a year in combat," top Republican Senator Mitch McConnell said this week. He urged Biden to increase support for Afghan troops rather than leave.

"If we let the Taliban dominate Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda return, it will resonate throughout the global jihadist movement," McConnell said.

US Marines assist with security at an Evacuation Control Checkpoint at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul on 20 August 2021, as the United States scrambles to get its citizens out of the country. **PHOTO: US CENTRAL COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS/AFP**

'Third decade of conflict'

Biden, who had long advocated exiting Afghanistan, launched a review after taking office. In April, he announced his decision: the US would leave, but the departure deadline was pushed back three months, to the end of August.—AFP ■

New strike to hit German passenger rail from Monday

An empty platform at the main railway station in Frankfurt am Main during a strike of train drivers earlier this month. **PHOTO: AFP**

GERMANY'S passenger train network faces a second round of strikes on Monday and disruption to freight services this weekend, adding more pain to the tourist season and already strained supply chains.

The latest move in an escalating wage dispute will impact passenger services from 2am (0000 GMT) on August 23 and last 48 hours, the head of the GDL train drivers union Claus Weselsky told reporters Friday.

The industrial action affecting cargo trains will begin August 21 and end at the same time four days later, the union head said.

"Deutsche Bahn has up to this point not given notice that it will make any concessions in the pay dispute it started," Weselsky said, referring to the German rail operator. "The GDL sees itself forced to call for new strikes at Deutsche Bahn," he said.

Deutsche Bahn criticised the announcement of the new strike, saying in a statement that it was "a wholly unnecessary burden for our passengers and freight clients".

Earlier this month, the union-led a walkout after its members voted 95% in favour, following the collapse of pay talks with Deutsche Bahn. On Germany's long-distance rail network, carriages were packed as only 25% of the scheduled service ran, during the two-day strike which began in the morning of 11 August.—AFP ■

As conservatives' fortunes plunge, Merkel hopes to ride to rescue

GERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel will seek Saturday to shore up the chances of her would-be successor Armin Laschet, whose dismal poll ratings a month before elections have triggered fears their party could crash out of government.

Merkel's conservative CDU-CSU alliance has led Germany in various coalitions since 2005 when she took office, but the country's future new government has been thrown open as her departure from the political stage nears.

The 67-year-old veteran will step down after September 26 elections.

While her popularity ratings have held steady in the twilight of her reign, the man who is seeking to claim her crown has struggled to find favour with voters.

The latest polls show their conservative bloc now hanging on to a narrow lead of two percentage points against junior coalition partners the Social Democrats, who have in recent weeks made big strides to overtake erstwhile runners-up the Greens.

A survey published Friday showed just as many Germans want the Social Democrats to lead the next government as the conservatives — an alarmingly big drop of five percentage points in backing for the CDU-CSU from early August.

While Merkel's popularity ratings have held steady in the twilight of her reign, the man who is seeking to claim her crown, Armin Laschet, has struggled to find favour with voters. **PHOTO: AFP**

With the conservatives badly in need of a boost, Merkel will step in at an election rally in Berlin on Saturday to help stem the haemorrhage in support.

'Quick and painful'

While frustration against the government over the coronavirus pandemic had initially weighed on the conservatives' popularity earlier in the year, the mood had brightened as more Germans were vaccinated and curbs were eased.

An initial boost in support for the Greens had also melted away as its leader was embroiled in a plagiarism scandal and other gaffes, giving the conservatives a strong lead in polls entering the summer.

But the mood dramatically turned in July when Laschet was seen chuckling in the background with local officials while Germany's president gave a speech mourning victims of deadly floods.

Since the disaster, the conservatives have been unable to halt a falling trend in popularity. — AFP ■

Quake-hit Haiti's PM vows elections 'soon as possible'

HAITIAN Prime Minister Ariel Henry pledged Friday to organize elections as soon as possible despite the devastation of last week's earthquake, in a nation still reeling from its president's assassination.

Henry acknowledged that the international community views with concern the Caribbean country's "chronic" political instability, including the killing of president Jovenel Moise in July.

"I am committed to doing everything in my power to put my country back on the rails of a functioning democracy with the organization as soon as possible of free and transparent elections," he told the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS).

Last week, before a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti and killed nearly 2,200 people, the provisional electoral authorities had said that the first round of the presidential elections, initially scheduled for September, would be held on November 7.

Delayed legislative elections and a constitutional referendum that Moise supported, postponed twice due to the coronavirus pandemic, are set for the same day.

Moise, who was gunned down in his home, had been ruling by decree after the 2018 legislative elections were postponed, and disputes arose over whether his term should end in February 2021 or 2022.—AFP ■

Prime Minister Ariel Henry has vowed to organize elections as soon as possible. **PHOTO: AFP**

Desperation deepens as Afghan evacuations falter

Joe Biden says he cannot predict the outcome of the Kabul airlift operation. **PHOTO: US MARINE CORPS/AFP**

DESPERATION deepened around Kabul's airport on Saturday with evacuation operations in chaos and US President Joe Biden warning he could not predict the outcome of one of the "most difficult airlifts in history".

Six days after the Taliban took back power in Afghanistan, the flow of people trying to flee their feared hardline Islamist rule continued to overwhelm the international community.

Traffic, people and checkpoints choked roads to the airport, while families hoping for a miracle escape crowded between the barbed-wire surrounds of an unofficial no-man's land separating the Taliban from US-troops and remnants of an Afghan special forces brigade helping them.

Video of a US soldier lifting a baby over a wall at Kabul's airport offered the latest tragic imagery of the utter despair, following horror footage of people hanging onto the outside of departing planes.

"Please, please, please help me — where should I go, what should I do," one man, who said he worked for the US embassy in the mid-2000s, wrote on a WhatsApp group set up for people to share information on how to get out.

"I have tried to get there (to the airport) for some days, but I cannot reach. Please save me."

Thousands of US soldiers are at the airport trying to shepherd foreigners and Afghans onto flights, but President Joe Biden admitted the troops' presence offered no guarantees of safe passage.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Caught in the crossfire, Ethiopian minority flees to Sudan

Dragged into a conflict not of their making, members of Ethiopia's Qemant ethnic group say their only choice was fleeing to Sudan -- marking another bleak turn in a widening war. "Houses were burned, and people killed by machetes," said refugee Emebet Demoz, who, like thousands of others, ran from her village last month. "We couldn't even take the bodies and bury them." Thousands have been killed since fighting erupted in November in Ethiopia's northernmost Tigray region, when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sent in troops to topple the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the regional ruling party, saying the move came in response to TPLF attacks on army camps.—AFP ■

Bolivia files 'genocide' charges against ex-president Anez

THE Bolivian prosecutor's office said on Friday it had filed charges of "genocide" and other crimes against former acting president Jeanine Anez, over the death of 20 opposition protesters in 2019. Attorney General Juan Lanchipa said he had presented documents "against citizen Jeanine Anez" before the country's Supreme Court of Justice, including charges for "genocide," which carries a sentence of 10 to 20 years in prison, according to the Bolivian penal code. The conservative Anez came to power in November 2019 after her predecessor and rival, former president Evo Morales, resigned following weeks of protests over his controversial re-election to an unconstitutional fourth term.—AFP ■

ONE Championship to launch Battleground III event on 27 August

PHOTO:ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

A special event of the ONE Championship named "Battleground III" featuring bouts of world-class fighters will be held at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore on 27 August, according to an official announcement of the ONE Championship.

There will be a total of six fights: five men's fights plus one women's bout.

Myanmar MMA star Tial Thang will also take on Song Min Jong of South Korea in the Men's Bantamweight clash of the ONE event.

In the main card or Featherweight Men's Muay Thai bout, Sittichai of Thailand will fight against Tawanchai of Thailand.

In the Men's Catchweight bout, Dejdamrong of Thailand will face Banma Duoji of China.

Next in the Men's Flyweight fight, Dae Hwan Kim of South Korea will take on Xie Wei of China.

In the Women's Atomweight fight, Binguyen of Viet Nam will meet against Jenelyn Olsim of the Philippines.

In another Men's bout of Bantamweight, Purev Otgonjargal of Mongolia will fight with Ben Royle of the United Kingdom.

The event will start at 8:30 PM of Singapore Standard Time which is 7:00 PM of Myanmar Standard Time and will be streamed live on ONE Championship mobile application and its YouTube Channel.—GNLM

Nuno waits on Kane as Ndombele is cast aside

TOTTENHAM manager Nuno Espirito Santo refused to say whether Harry Kane will play for the first time this season at Wolves on Sunday as the standoff over the England captain's future continues.

Kane is keen to leave his boyhood club for a move to Premier League champions Manchester City before the end of the transfer window.

City are reportedly willing to break the Premier League transfer record for the second time this month after splashing £100 million ($137 million) on Jack Grealish.

Kane missed Spurs' 1-0 win over City to open their Premier League season last weekend and a shock 1-0 defeat to Pacos de Ferreira in the Europa Conference League on Thursday.

However, the 28-year-old has trained all week with his teammates.

"It is a day-by-day situation," said Nuno at his prematch press conference ahead of his return to old club Wolves.

"He trained today, trained good. He'll train tomorrow and we'll make a decision. "I'm so sorry to keep saying the same thing, but this is how we work." Another player who is yet to feature this season is Tanguy Ndombele with Tottenham's own record signing seemingly not part of Nuno's plans.

The French midfielder, who joined from Lyon for two years ago for over £50 million, did not even play a single minute of action in pre-season.—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

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

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

2. Economic affairs

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

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

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

3. Social affairs

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

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

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

Top seeds Medvedev, Barty secure triumphs at Cincinnati

DANIIL Medvedev took quick revenge on Friday for his Olympic loss to Pablo Carreno Busta, with the top seed at the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters delivering a crushing 6-1, 6-1 verdict.

The Russian world number two had it all his way into the semi-finals with a 56-minute rout, which ended on the Spaniard's double-fault.

"I was feeling great during the match. In these conditions you try to win the match as fast as possible, especially against Carreno Busta, who can catch fire at any moment and start getting you into long rallies," Medvedev said.

"I tried to keep pushing him and I am really happy I managed to do it."

Women's top seed Ashleigh Barty recovered from being down a break in the second set to sweep past fellow French Open champion Barbora Krejcikova 6-2, 6-4.

The Australian handed her Czech opponent only a third loss since mid-May.

Krejcikova won Roland Garros in June while Barty claimed the Paris title in 2019 and Wimbledon this season.—AFP ■

Top-ranked Ashleigh Barty of Australia defeated Barbora Krejcikova of the Czech Republic on Friday to reach the WTA Cincinnati semi-finals. **PHOTO: AFP**