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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.

Maritime product exports earn US\$204.183 million within 317 days of 2020-2021 FY

EXPORT of over 238,600 tonnes of marine products from Taninthayi Region to Ranong Industriehafen in Thailand earned US\$204.183 million during the 317 days up to 13 August of 2020-2021 Financial Year, according to Kawthoung District Fisheries Department.

Fishermen operate fishing works at the Andaman Sea depending on climatic conditions. At present, 725 fishing trawlers from Dawei, Myeik and Kawthoung are at the sea for fishing. More than 1,400 trawlers from over 50 companies in Taninthayi Region are engaging in fishery sector.

The Fisheries Department arranges the regular flow of marine product exportation with the promise of fishing trawlers which have exported marine products to Ranong Industriehafen to pay the relevant tax to the banks when these banks are opened.

A total of 195 fishermen who sent marine products to Ranong marine product brokerage were vaccinated for prevention of COVID-19. Moreover, the fishermen who are going to the sea



Departmental officials inspect necessary equipment facilitated at fishing trawler. **PHOTO: KANU**

have been examined for their health conditions. Afterwards, the fishermen IDs are issued to them in line with the prevention, control and treatment of the disease.

Regularly, marine products flow into Yangon market while similar products are exported to Ranong Industriehafen. If a marine product market can be

established in Myeik or Kawthoung for cutting the transport charge, control of water resources and earning more foreign exchange, Taninthayi Region will create job opportunities with improvement of socio-economic status of the local people.

“Local fishermen export marine products to Ranong of

Thailand. If we can establish a marine product market, economic status of the region will improve. If the government sets up a fish auction market, foreign merchants will purchase the products from Myanmar. So, we can get tax from trading. Local fishermen will have the opportunities to directly send their stocks to the international

market. Consequently, tourism industry will be booming. In 2019-2020 FY, Myanmar earned US\$252.832 million from export of 296,608 tonnes of marine products. So, we set the target to exceed the export volume in 2020-2021 FY,” said U Thant Zin, Deputy Director of Kawthoung District Fisheries Department.

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State Administration Council

Press Release

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

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, with worries, have evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries due to the incitements and intimidation of NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful associations and terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, stimulation of CDM, and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities on 1 February 2021.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of unlawful association and terrorist group CRPH and NUG, and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in those areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. **The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.**
4. As those who evade their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from the evaded areas to various parts of Myanmar.
5. As such, the information was released that if those who evaded to various areas, except for persons who committed any kinds of crime, wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord due to multiple worries, the citizens abroad can contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates in accord with the easing restrictions under the law.

Information Team
State Administration Council

The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.

Supply of water, thriving vegetable plantations in Hmawby Township inspected

YANGON Region Chief Minister U Hla Soe, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe and officials inspected construction of the water pump station for Hline River-Hlawga water supply project and tasks to supply 60 million gallons of water to Hlawga reservoir through 60-inch diameter water pipelines in Hmawby Township on 15 August.

Mayor U Bo Htay and officials reported on progress of work. The Chief Minister instructed officials to soonest complete the projects and presented COVID-19 protective equipment including PPE suits to philanthropic organizations

from Hmawby Township.

The region Chief Minister, the Commander and party also visited a private fish farm and an organic vegetable patch on 100 acres of land in Nyaunghnapin agriculture and livestock zone in Hmawby Township. They viewed round vegetable patches, vegetables, natural pesticides and plant vitamins. The vegetables grown by 200 farmers are sent to Yangon market at fair prices.

The Chief Minister of the region and the Commander fulfilled the needs of private poultry farms in the zone.—Hsan Kyaw Oo (IPRD)/GNLM



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Hla Soe and Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe view thriving vegetable plantation.

Maritime product exports earn US\$204.183 million within 317 days of 2020-2021 FY

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The sea can be seen with many trawlers which are capturing cuttle-fish in October and November on a yearly basis. The Tatmadaw (Navy) seizes trawlers and motor schooners which

came from other countries and hands them over to relevant departments. Meanwhile, the Fisheries Department supervises preventive measures for shortage of water resources at Myanmar water territory.

In this regard, the department prohibits capturing of fish with poisons, fish mining and use of prohibited fishing equipment.

In August, fishermen from Kawthoung sent marine products weighing ranging from

300 tonnes to over 800 tonnes to Ranong Industriehafen on a daily basis. Myanmar fishermen bagged US\$252.832 million from export of 296,608 tonnes of marine products in 2019-2020 Financial Year and US\$204.183

million from 1 September to 13 August in 2020-2021 FY. At present, they are striving for earning more foreign exchange from export of marine products in August and September.—Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

2,674 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 15 August, total figure rises to 354,279

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 354,279 after 2,674 new cases were reported on 15 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 271,228 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 13,263 after 185 died. —MNA

Emphasis must be placed on development tasks while prioritizing peace and stability, especially political stability

THEY are carrying out the government tasks in a smooth process. It is necessary to consider extension of new sectors. The unrests and terror acts based on vote-rigging in the 2020 election are being combated. Emphasis must be placed on development tasks while prioritizing the peace and stability, especially political stability. The provisional government of Myanmar temporarily takes the responsibility of the country, and when the emergency period runs out, the election will be held under the law. Undertakings will be carried out to hand over the State duty to the government emerged by the election in accord with the Constitution.

(Excerpt from the speech to the meeting 13/2021 of the State Administration Council made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 8 August 2021)

MoIP discusses to formulate population policy suitable for the country

THE Ministry of Immigration and Population held the coordination meeting on formulating population policy, an indicator for the socio-economic development, yesterday afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Khin Yi said factors, problems and difficulties in making population policy for socio-economic development as indicated by population must be carefully considered.

Director of the Population Department Dr Khine Khine Soe explained the results of the 2014 National Population and Household Census and 2019 Interim Population Census that are being used by the departments and or-

ganizations working for the development of the country; the status of the population policy formation based on the census results in different parts of the world and the need to formulate the population policy in Myanmar.

Regarding the explanation, the Union Minister said the census results collected by the department are the basic statistics used for national development, defence and security measures of the State, adding that plans are being based on the collected data for the country's socio-economic development. The Union Minister stressed the need to formulate population policy that must be appropriate for the country.—MNA



MoIP focuses on formulating population policy for development of socio-economic status of the people.

Kayin state Chief Minister inspects construction of oxygen plant, Barme hill natural park in Hpa-an



Kayin state Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo visits Barme Hill Natural Park in Hpa-an Township.

CHIEF MINISTER of Kayin State U Saw Myint Oo, accompanied by ministers of the Kayin state government and department officials, made an inspection tour to the construction of the steel-structure-type oxygen plant in Hpa-an Township on 14 August.

The Chief Minister and party also inspected the temporary storage of the oxygen plant which arrived on 12 August and gave necessary instructions. The oxygen plant under construction will be completed on 18 August and it will supply 200 40-litre oxygen cylinders per

day. Afterwards, they viewed round completion of the Barme Hill Natural Park in Hpa-an and the Director of Kayin State Development Committee and officials explained progress of construction tasks.—Kayin state (IPRD)/GNLM

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)

Imports of essential medical supplies continue on long public holidays

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, a total of 1,467 oxygen concentrators were imported via airways at the Yangon International Airport. In addition, 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 9 tonnes of liquid oxygen with oxygen cylinders, 1,690 empty oxygen containers, 2,056 home oxygen concentrators, 15,500 PPE suits, 10 tonnes of

gloves and 53 tonnes of masks were imported through border trade points.

A total of 942 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 72 tonnes of oxygen cylinders, 7 liquid oxygen containers, 6 oxygen distributors, 101,291 empty oxygen containers, 22 oxygen plants, 10 oxygen generators, 72,560 oxygen concentrators, 150,268 test kits, 488,512 PPE suits, 82 tonnes of gloves and 1,036 tonnes of masks have been imported by far in August.

Of 77 liquid oxygen bowsers imported between 1 July and 15 August, 59 of them were distributed to Yangon, 11 to Mandalay, 4 to Mawlamyine, 2 to Bago



■ Liquid oxygen and medical supplies are imported through Myawady trade centre.



■ A cargo truck carries medical equipment via Myawady trade centre.



■ Vehicles transport oxygen cylinders and medicines via Hteekhee border trade camp.

■ Cargo trucks convey medicines and medical equipment to be used in treatment of COVID-19 patients via Chinshwehaw border point.

and 1 to Thaton respectively. Among 30 oxygen plants, 5 were transported to Lashio, 4 each to Yangon and Bago, 3 to Mandalay, 2 each to Pakokku, Hpa-an, and Mawlamyine, one each to Taunggyi, Thanbyuzayat, Magway, Dawei, Wakema, Myittha, Kyaukpadaung and Mogaung respectively.

The Ministry on 8 August announced that the border trade points will not be suspended from work on declared public holidays, from 9 to 15 August, and import operations will be conducted as usual. The importation of COVID-19 devices will be allowed in accordance with the SOP priority, negotiated by relevant departments, and online import licence application will also be allowed as usual during the office hours.—MNA

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Myanmar rice export earns \$549 mln in eight months

MYANMAR generated US\$549 million income from exports of rice and broken rice in the past eight months (Oct-May) of the current financial year 2020-2021, according to Myanmar Customs Department.

The volume of rice and broken rice exported in the past eight months was estimated at over 1.14 million metric tonnes.

Border trade disruption led to sluggish market yet the flat price occurs in the border export market.

The prices of white rice varieties range US\$375 to 405 per metric tonne, the price of glutinous rice price reached \$600-610 per MT and the broken rice fetched \$300-335 per MT depending on the different varieties and quality, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

This year, rice shipment to European countries is declining. However, Myanmar is delivering rice and broken rice to China and Bangladesh. The market cools



Freight handling process is seen at the port for loading bags of rice aboard the vessel.

down now owing to the transport difficulties amid the closure of the border posts. The price is quite stable with the sluggish trade.

Next, high-quality rice is demanded in the domestic market and the price moves in the range

of K36,000-K44,600 per bag depending on different varieties. The low-quality rice is priced between K26,000 and K28,800 per bag at the present time. The price indicated a gradual increase.

Furthermore, as per the 2020

rice price data, the price of staple rice usually increases in the rainy season. Consequently, the price gain is seen as the expected during the monsoon season of this year, a trader stated.

The federation conducted the virtual meeting with the com-

mittee members in the regions and states, exporters and the companies concerned regarding the rice production and price stability on 14 August 2021. They discussed matters related to the possible production drop in 2021-2022 monsoon season amid the COVID-19 impacts and high input cost and plans for rice donations to those people in need and selling rice at affordable price near the industrial zones.

Myanmar set the rice export target at only two million tonnes in the current FY as summer paddy growing acreage drops, as per MRF. Weather changes affected irrigation water resource availability on agriculture. Consequently, the export figures showed a drop of 300,000 tonnes of rice in exports this year.

Myanmar generated over \$800 million from rice exports in the previous FY2019-2020 ended 30 September, with estimated volume of over 2.5 million tonnes.—KH/GNLM

Myanmar mineral exports slump to \$776 mln amid COVID-19 pandemic

THE value of Myanmar's mineral exports has drastically sunk to US\$776.737 million as of 9 July in the current financial year 2020-2021 since 1 October, reflecting a severe drop of \$776.917 million as against a-year period, the Ministry of Commerce's data indicated.

The mineral exports hit over \$1.5 billion in the corresponding period of last FY.

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

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

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

Within two years of the implementation of the Myanmar Mines Law, the Mining Depart-

ment approved more than 140 out of 3,000 proposed mining blocks, and many more blocks are to be granted permit.

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

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

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

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

YRIC endorses \$19 mln worth ten proposals so far



YRIC manages approval for investments in projects in Yangon Region with attraction of local and foreign investments.

THE Yangon Region Investment Committee (YRIC) has endorsed eight foreign enterprises and two joint ventures in the manufacturing sector, with estimated capital of US\$19 million, in the past months of the current financial year 2020-2021.

Additionally, two domestic enterprises were also given the go-ahead, with capital of K3.5 billion.

Those enterprises are to create around 4,220 jobs. They will execute manufacturing of bags, footwear, underwear and garments on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis,

manufacturing of construction materials, production and sales of aluminum, grinding and manufacturing of pulses and beans, and production and distribution of fish sauce, YRIC stated.

Between 1 October and 30 September of the previous financial year 2019-2020, Yangon Region attracted FDI of \$308.768 million from 137 foreign enterprises.

The manufacturing sector has attracted the most foreign investments in Yangon Region, with enterprises engaging in the production of pharmaceuticals, vehicles, container boxes, and garments on a Cutting,

Making, and Packing (CMP) basis.

To date, foreign investments from China, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, China (Taipei), Malaysia, the British Virgin Islands and Seychelles are arriving in the region.

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the region and state Investment Committees to grant permissions for local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion or \$5 million.—Htet Myat/GNLM

Russian President Vladimir Putin greets India on 75th Independence Day



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort during the celebrations to mark the country's 75th Independence Day in New Delhi on Sunday. **PHOTO: AFP**

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin extended his warm greetings to Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of the 75th Independence Day, stating that further enhancement of Russian-Indian ties was in the interests of both nations.

"Kindly accept cordial congratulations on #Independence Day. The success achieved by

#India in economic, social, other spheres is widely acknowledged. India rightfully enjoys high prestige in the global arena, plays important role in solving topical issues of the international agenda," Putin said in his congratulatory message on Sunday.

"We appreciate Russia-India relations of privileged strategic partnership. I'm convinced, further enhancement of the whole

range of constructive ties entirely meets interests of our peoples and goes within course of strengthening stability and security on regional and global level," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the national flag and delivered the customary address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi today.— ANI ■

Malaysian PM to offer resignation Monday: minister

MALAYSIA'S embattled leader will offer his resignation to the king Monday, a minister said, potentially spelling an end to his 17-month-old government and plunging the country into fresh turmoil.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has faced mounting pressure to step aside after losing his parliamentary majority, and over his administration's handling of a worsening coronavirus outbreak.

He made a last-ditch attempt to cling to power Friday by urging opposition MPs to support him in exchange for institutional reforms -- but his offer was rejected.

Minister Mohamad Redzuan Yusof told AFP that Muhyiddin informed lawmakers from his party during a meeting in Kuala Lumpur Sunday that he would tender his resignation.

"He will hold a final cabinet meeting on Monday, then he will head to the palace to submit his resignation letter," said the minister in the prime minister's department.



Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's government has been beset by turmoil from day one. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

"We did try to convince him to stay on, but he said: 'We do not have the number of MPs.'"

Muhyiddin told the meeting it would be up to the king—who has publicly criticised his government—to accept his resignation or not, the minister added.

Malaysia's constitutional monarch formally appoints the candidate whom he believes commands majority support in parliament as premier.

There has been speculation that, should he step down, a new government will be formed without elections due to concerns that polls could worsen the virus outbreak.— AFP ■

Taliban on outskirts of Afghan capital

TALIBAN fighters were on the outskirts of Kabul on Sunday and on the brink of a complete military takeover of Afghanistan, but a spokesman said they had been ordered not to enter the city.

The Taliban's announcement signalled the insurgents were confident of taking power imminently, as the United States and other nations rushed to evacuate their citizens from the capital.

"The Islamic Emirate instructs all its forces to stand at the gates of Kabul, not to try to enter the city," a spokesman for the Taliban tweeted.

"Until the completion of the transition process, the responsibility for the security of Kabul is with the other side (the Afghan government)".

The order came as residents reported seeing insurgents peacefully enter some of Kabul's outer suburbs, triggering panic and fear.

"I saw police taking off their uniforms and putting on shalwar kameez," said one resident, referring to traditional South Asian clothing.

The capture of Kabul would cap an astonishing rout of government forces and warlord militias across all of Afghanistan's major cities achieved in just 10 days.

It would also see the hardline Islamic group take back power two decades after US-led forces toppled it in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The scale and speed of the insurgents advance have shocked Afghans and the US-led alliance that poured billions into the country over the past two decades.

President Ashraf Ghani's government was left completely isolated on Sunday after the Taliban claimed the anti-Taliban northern stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif and the eastern city of Jalalabad.

Like with most of the other captured cities, the seizure of power came after government forces surrendered or retreated.

It left the Taliban holding all the cards in any negotiated surrender of the capital.— AFP ■

Thousands join convoy protests against Thai PM

THOUSANDS of protesters in cars and on bikes massed in Bangkok's central shopping district Sunday, one of several mobile rallies across Thailand demanding Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha resign over his handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

The kingdom is grappling with its worst outbreak so far, registering record numbers of daily infections each week as hospitals struggle to cope. In

total, it has reported more than 907,000 cases and 7,551 deaths from Covid-19. A sluggish vaccine roll-out -- coupled with financial woes from weeks-long restrictions on businesses -- has fanned anger at Prayut's administration. Sparked by concerns about public gatherings spreading the virus, protesters have in recent weeks turned to organising massive car convoys at major intersections -- thus clogging up Bangkok's already traffic-choked

streets. Thousands turned up in their cars and motorbikes Sunday in at least three rallies across the Thai capital -- with the largest near Bangkok's gleaming shopping malls, empty in recent weeks.

"The time is up for Prayut. The government has shown clearly they will not take responsibility for any loss," shouted Natatawut Saikuar, a politician long associated with former premier Thaksin Shinawatra.— AFP ■



Protesters in cars and on bikes massed in Bangkok's central shopping district. **PHOTO: AFP**

Latvians take to the water for distanced concerts

LATVIANS are taking to the country's waterways for a socially distanced musical experience this summer, boarding kayaks, dinghies and motor yachts to enjoy some music — even if unvaccinated.

At a concert on Juglas Lake near the Latvian capital Riga on Saturday, hundreds of boats could be seen bobbing to rock, folk and heavy metal.

"The idea — is so great," said Vladimirs Kravchenko, a heavy metal fan who has been attending hard rock festivals since the 1990s.

"I hope festivals on lakes like this will continue even after the virus is over," Kravchenko said.

Organisers said there were around 1,500 people on the water, and 3,500 more watching from the shore.

The stage was located on the shore and two floating bars in the lake sold beer and cocktails.

Only people with Covid-19 vaccinations were allowed to



Only people with Covid-19 vaccinations were allowed to attend the concert on the shore while the lake was also open to those without a vaccine. PHOTO: AFP

attend the concert on the shore while the lake was also open to those without a vaccine.

"This is simply a brilliant idea for how to hold a festival and ensure social distancing for the unvaccinated at the same time," Anna Berzina, who was rowing a kayak with her husband, told

AFP.

The Baltic state has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the European Union — around 43 percent.

The government has imposed restrictions for unvaccinated people in a bid to encourage more Latvians to get

vaccinated — including threatening soldiers with dismissal if they do not get the jab.

For live events, the rule is that there must be two separate zones for vaccinated and unvaccinated spectators, creating a headache for organisers. — AFP ■

Vietnam's daily new COVID-19 cases hit another new high



Local officials give conical hats as gifts to two patients recovering from COVID-19 in Vietnam's central Hue city, on 7 April, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA

VIETNAM reported a new high of 9,716 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, surpassing the previous record of 9,690 cases on Aug. 8, according to the country's Ministry of Health.

The new infections, including 9,710 locally transmitted and six imported, brought the total tally to 265,464, with 5,437 deaths, the ministry said.

Most of the community cases were detected in southern Vietnam, including 4,231 in the epicenter Ho Chi Minh City, 2,029 in the nearby Binh Duong

province, and 1,023 in Dong Nai province.

As many as 96,985 COVID-19 patients have so far recovered, up 4,247 from Friday, while 13.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered nationwide, according to the ministry.

As of Saturday, Vietnam has registered a total of 263,033 domestically transmitted COVID-19 cases, including 261,463 detected since the start of the current wave in late April, the ministry said. — Xinhua ■

Number of severe COVID patients in Japan hits record-high 1,563

THE number of coronavirus patients with severe symptoms across Japan totaled 1,563 as of Saturday, up 42 from the previous day and hitting a record high for the third straight day, the health ministry said Sunday.

In Tokyo, daily COVID-19 cases totaled 4,295 on Sunday, the metropolitan government said, as it continues to struggle with a strain on the medical system in the capital due to a resurgence of the virus.

The seven-day rolling average of infections in Tokyo has risen to 4,263.9 per day, up 5.6 percent from the previous week.

Pressure has been growing on the central government to

expand the state of emergency that currently covers Tokyo, Osaka and some other prefectures.

The alarming rise in infections has come amid the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus. Designated hospital beds in many prefectures are fully occupied.

Infectious disease experts have called for foot traffic in Tokyo to be cut by half from the level in early July, prior to the imposition of the current state of emergency in the capital, through measures such as limiting the number of visitors to underground food sections in department stores and shopping malls. — Kyodo ■



The number of coronavirus patients with severe symptoms across Japan totaled 1,563 as of Saturday, up 42 from the previous day and hitting a record high for the third straight day, the health ministry said Sunday. PHOTO: KYODO

NEWS IN BRIEF

Local gov't in India's Punjab makes COVID-19 full vaccination or negative report mandatory for entry into state

LOCAL government in the northern Indian state of Punjab Saturday ordered full COVID-19 vaccination certificate or negative reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) report mandatory for all those entering the state, officials said.

The order would come into force from Monday.

The state's chief minister has also directed that only fully vaccinated teaching and non-teaching staff, or those recently recovered from COVID-19, should physically teach in schools and colleges, with online learning option to remain available to all children. — Xinhua ■

Australia secures more COVID-19 vaccines amid lockdown in major cities

AUSTRALIA has acquired extra 1 million doses of coronavirus vaccine amid the country's major cities currently subject to a lockdown to battle outbreaks of COVID-19.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced the deal on Sunday, saying 1 million additional Pfizer doses will begin arriving in Australia from Sunday night after an agreement was reached with Poland.

"Earlier today, a plane left Dubai, having left Warsaw last night," he said in a press conference in Canberra on Sunday morning.

The 1 million doses will be targeted to Australians aged 20 to 39 years.

Following advice from the Chief Medical Officer Prof. Paul Kelly, 530,010 doses will be prioritized for express delivery to the 12 Greater Sydney local government areas where the COVID-19 outbreak continues to grow. — Xinhua ■

Share your real experiences of fighting COVID-19 with the people

MYANMAR people are facing the impacts in the third wave of COVID-19 and waiting for their turn to be victims of COVID-19 since 2020. So far, a total of 354,279 people have been infected by the pandemic, over 13,000 of who have died of the disease.

Most of the confirmed patients have healed their sufferings but it is sure that they would never forget such bitter experiences. While suffering from the disease, they faced various kinds of bitter sufferings. In fact, such bitter ones would be invaluable in the future.

Those recovered people should share their experiences with

If the people have doubt about their health conditions, they should receive medical checkup at the clinics or hospitals. They should seek consultation of medical specialists and follow their instructions strictly.

works. They should take a many-hour rest a day.

People need to encourage each other while fighting against COVID-19. They should take care not only of various diseases such as seasonal flu and DHF but also of COVID-19 pandemic. If the people have doubt about their health conditions, they should receive medical checkup at the clinics or hospitals. They should seek consultation of medical specialists and follow their instructions strictly.

Don't underestimate the impacts of COVID-19. But, don't too much fear it. COVID-19 will not totally disappear from the world. So, we have adequate capacity and immunity to overcome the attacks of COVID-19 in the future.



other people how to encounter the impacts of COVID-19, how to overcome challenges of the disease, and how to cure themselves to have recovery from the disease. They have to disseminate their experiences in suffering from the disease to the people through media. They have to share the actual experiences without any fabricated ones with other people. If so, people will have the accurate and true information from each other how to prepare their health.

The information shared with one after another must not be exaggerated. All the people need to disseminate the invaluable experiences. All the people must primarily abide by the health guidelines for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.

The people need to take oxygen from natural breezing, vitamins from vegetables and fruits as well as sunray, and proteins from meat and beans as well as soups. They have to eat nutritious foods for ensuring immune sufficiency to fight against the pandemic. If they have to take healthcare themselves, they can be free from danger of severe diseases. Moreover, they have to avoid heavy

Politics colours return to class in US universities grappling with Covid

In-person learning is back on the curriculum at universities in the United States this term after a pandemic-imposed hiatus but, like much else in the deeply divided country, how it plays out will depend largely on politics.

Mask mandates and proof of vaccination are compulsory on some campuses, while on others they are prohibited by local law, as states take starkly diverging approaches to rocketing Covid-19 infections, driven by the highly contagious Delta variant.

Around a fifth of the 4,000 colleges and universities surveyed by The Chronicle of Higher Education are requiring students or staff to have a vaccine – mostly in states that voted for Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election.

They include California behemoth UCLA, which in April declared that anyone who studies, works or lives on any of its many campuses in the liberal state will have to be “fully vaccinated against Covid-19 at least 14 days before the first day of class for the fall semester.”

And with the Delta surge threatening to take swaths of the

United States back to the darkest days of the pandemic, UCLA officials last month said everyone – regardless of vaccination status – will have to be tested weekly, and will have to wear a mask indoors.

Outlawed in Texas That is a far cry from deep-red Texas, whose Republican governor, Greg Abbott, has banned any publicly funded body from requiring such health measures.

Ideological opposition like that worries some at the University of Texas at Austin, where 51,000 students will be back in class later this month.

“I’m very nervous to return to campus,” said Jamie O’Quinn, a teaching assistant and PhD candidate in the sociology department.

“As far as I know, we are going to be required to return to teaching in-person classes, but students will not be required to be vaccinated,” she said. “Even though I’m vaccinated, with the Delta variant it still

feels incredibly unsafe.

“We’re all terrified – all of my friends, who are being forced to teach in person. We all talk about it all the time.”

At least a dozen US states prohibit public universities from requiring the Covid-19 vaccine.

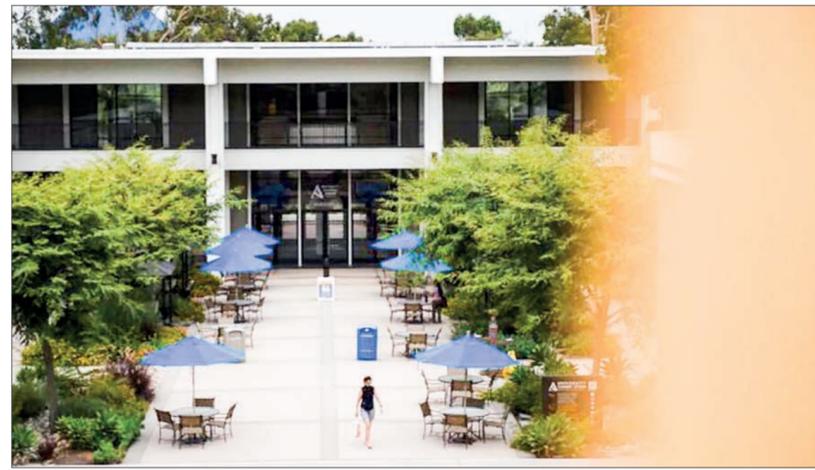
The University of South Carolina ran into problems when it tried to make mask-wearing mandatory in its buildings.

University leaders backed down this month after the attorney general for the staunchly Republican state said the measure lacked legal grounding.

‘Recipe for disaster’

Such politically inspired edicts seem to invite disaster, said the American College Health Association.

“Many of these restrictions directly contradict (national government) guidance,” the ACHA said in a statement. “State actions that prevent the use of established



University campuses will see a return to in-person learning across the United States this term, but the approach to dealing with Covid-19 is far from uniform. PHOTO: PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP

and effective public health tools at the same time as Covid-19 cases increase is a recipe for disaster.”

But those rulings are popular among some students, who see

mask mandates and vaccination requirements as infringing on their individual freedom.

A handful of students went to court to try to overturn an Indiana

University requirement that they be masked and inoculated. That effort failed, but other cases are pending, in Indiana and elsewhere. SOURCE: AFP

Childhood cancer care in Africa hit hard by pandemic

Nearly 30,000 children in sub-Saharan Africa are believed to have died from cancer during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO).



Nearly 30,000 children in sub-Saharan Africa are believed to have died from cancer during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO). Young patients receiving treatment at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital (KBTH), Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital is the premier tertiary healthcare facility in Ghana. PHOTO: KBTH/UN NEWS

Drastic measures to prevent coronavirus spread, and heightened focus by health systems on response, led to disruptions in other essential health services on the continent.

Cancer screening and treatment, including for childhood cancers, were hit especially hard. “Truly heartbreaking”

A WHO survey found screening was affected in 46 per cent of countries, while 13 per cent reported a more than 50 per cent disruption.

“We estimate that more than 28,000 children died of cancer in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020. This is truly heartbreaking as childhood cancers are curable if detected early and comprehensive care provided,” said Dr. Jean-Marie Dangou, Noncommunicable Diseases Programme Coordinator at the WHO Regional Office.

In Africa, the childhood cancer survival rate is around 20 per cent, compared to more than 80

per cent in high-income countries.

As early diagnosis improves chances of survival, WHO stressed that significant improvements can be made in the lives of children with cancer by identifying the disease early and avoiding delays in care.

The UN agency fears a significant backlog in screening and treatment due to the pandemic could lead to delayed diagnosis and treatment. This would put further strain on Africa’s overburdened medical resources and increase avoidable cancer deaths.

Improve early detection “Substantial investment in cancer prevention and care, including quality training of medical professionals, must be made if we are to avert cancer deaths and cases, especially among children, in our region,” said Dr. Dangou.

“As individuals, we must take the initiative to better understand the childhood cancer warning signs to improve early detection

and treatment.”

Naomi Otua from Ghana makes regular visits to her 10-year-old grandson, James, who lives in the Central Region of the country. On one of her trips, she noticed something was seriously wrong as the boy had jaundiced eyes and had lost a significant amount of weight.

James was eventually diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia, the most common form of childhood cancer. He is among the roughly 400,000 children and adolescents diagnosed with cancer every year globally.

James began chemotherapy, which he has continued for the past three months. “His condition has greatly improved,” said Ms. Otua, adding “I am very happy about that.”

Prohibitive costs

While 80 per cent of childhood cancers are curable, “this is dependent on early detection and progressive treatment,” ac-

ording to Professor Lorna Awo Renner, Head of the Paediatric Oncology Unit at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra, where James was treated.

Worldwide, most children with cancer live in developing countries like Ghana, but only around 20 per cent to 30 per cent receive treatment, often due to cost.

In Ghana, cancer treatment is not covered under the National Health Insurance Scheme. The average cost to treat childhood cancer is about \$1,000, and up to \$7,000 for leukaemia, which is far beyond the reach of many citizens.

“In Ghana, about 50 per cent of patients used to abandon treatment halfway due to lack of funds. However, this figure has been reduced to 15 per cent with support from a number of benevolent individuals and organizations,” said Professor Awo Renner.

SOURCE: UN



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 15 August 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 16 August, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Chin State, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region and Kachin, (Northern and Eastern) Shan, Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) mph. Wave height will be about (8-10) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

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

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 August, 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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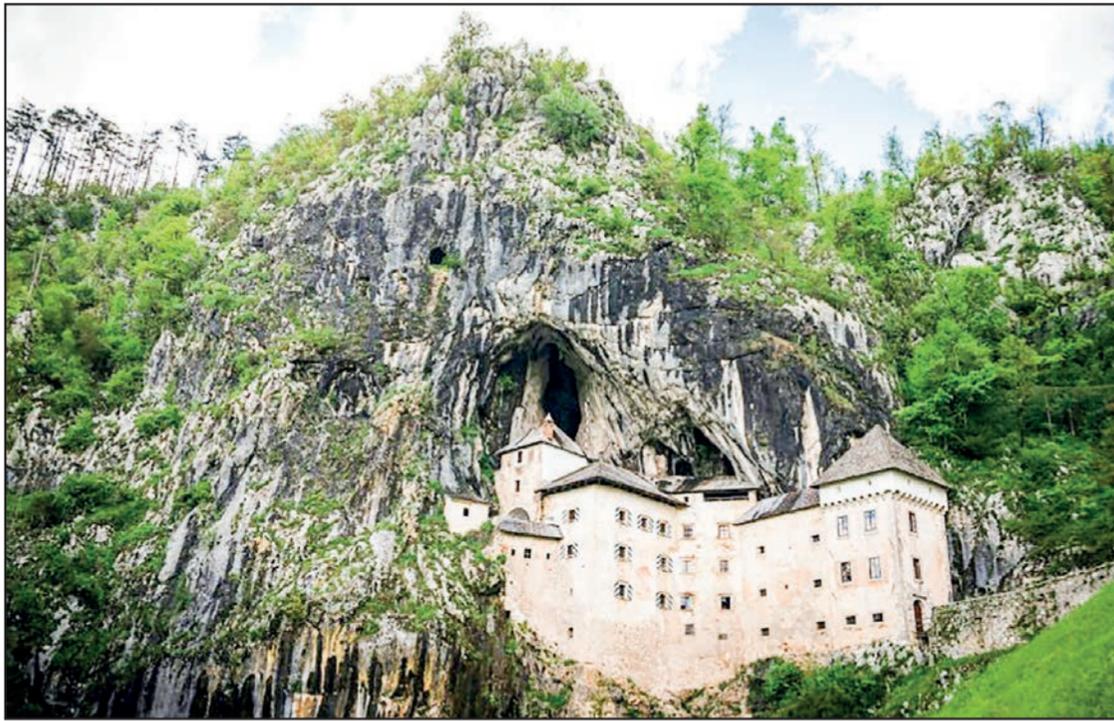
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Discovering Slovenia's underground labyrinths, one cave at a time



The medieval Predjama castle was built in a cave mouth to make access difficult and provide an escape route through a shaft in the rock face. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE grass flickered gently above a crack in the limestone and Ludvik Husu instinctively knew he had found what he was searching for: a new cave in Slovenia's dramatic Karst region.

The seasoned cave enthusiast, with more than 50 years' experience, told AFP that "the conditions were perfect... all the signs pointed to something beneath" as he felt the air current push up from below. The 63-year-old had come across a new, 60-metre (196-foot) deep limestone cave, a discovery that made the headlines this summer in a country that prides itself in

its 14,000 underground grottoes.

The tiny Alpine nation is unusually rich in caves, which are a major tourist attraction. One even houses an entire castle and another was used by the European Space Agency to help train astronauts.

Biological treasure trove

Perhaps best known is the Postojna cave system, the longest in Europe, unearthed by another amateur enthusiast two centuries ago. When local lamplighter Luka Cec decided to explore a hidden crack while scouting out the Postojna area

for a visit by Austrian Emperor Franz, he is reputed to have said that he had stumbled on "a new world... a paradise!" The Postojna system extends for 24 kilometres (15 miles) and has offered up valuable finds for biologists. Stanislav Glazar, a Postojna cave guide and speleology enthusiast, told AFP that more than 150 species have been discovered in the system. Among them is the *Proteus anguinus* or "little dragon", an ancient aquatic salamander that can live up to 100 years and was previously considered living proof that dragons had once existed.— AFP ■

No survivors of Turkey fire-fighting plane crash as floods kill 55

TURKEY battled disaster on two fronts on Saturday with eight people dying when a fire-fighting aircraft crashed and rescuers racing to find survivors of flash floods in the north that have killed at least 55. Ankara and Moscow announced that all eight people on the Russian plane had perished on the fire-fighting mission.

The air tragedy came just as Turkey was gaining control of hundreds of wildfires that killed eight people and destroyed swathes of forest along the scenic southern coast.

Scientists believe such natural disasters are becoming more intense and frequent because of global warming caused by polluting emissions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent condolenc-

es to his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan saying "the pain of this loss unites us".

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu added: "Condolences to our nation and to the Russian people. This heroic sacrifice will not be forgotten."

In Moscow, the defence ministry said five Russian servicemen and three Turkish citizens were on board the Russian Be-200 plane that went down around 1330 GMT.

Television footage showed a column of smoke rising from the remote mountainous zone in Turkey's south. Turkey's defence ministry issued a statement saying the aircraft on loan from Russia had taken off from Adana to help extinguish fires burning in Kahramanmaraş province. — AFP ■



Floods have left at least 44 people dead in Turkey. **PHOTO: IHH/AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Putin alarmed by 'unprecedented' natural disasters in Russia

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin on Saturday said the scale of natural disasters that have hit Russia this year is "absolutely unprecedented" as local officials ask for Moscow's help to tackle fires and floods.

A former skeptic of man-made climate change, the Russian leader called on authorities to do everything possible to help Siberians affected by the region's gigantic wildfires, as well as Russians living in the flood-hit south of the country. Speaking at a video conference with the leaders of the affected eastern and southern regions, Putin said he received daily reports on the climate situation in the country.— AFP ■

Japan braces for more rain after floods, landslides

JAPAN braced for further downpours on Sunday as rescuers sifted through flood and landslide damage after record rain that left at least three dead. Residents returned to check on their mud-covered homes in the southwest, where nearly two million people were advised to urgently seek shelter Saturday as rivers overflowed.

"So many logs tumbled down and crashed into this area" from nearby mountains, an elderly resident of Kanzaki in Saga prefecture told public broadcaster NHK.— AFP ■

Singapore zoo breeds first panda cub

A PANDA bred via artificial insemination was born in Singapore's zoo on Saturday, the first cub to be born in the city-state.

Jia Jia, the zoo's 12-year-old female giant panda, gave birth to the cub after she was inseminated with frozen semen from 13-year-old Kai Kai, Wildlife Reserves Singapore

announced on Sunday. After several failed attempts in previous years, the zoo's animal carers—working with experts from China—hoped the pandas would mate naturally but ultimately decided to use artificial insemination.

"Jia Jia's first pregnancy and birth of a cub is a signif-

icant milestone for us in the care of this threatened species in Singapore," said Cheng Wen-Haur, Wildlife Reserves Singapore's deputy CEO, in a press release.

"This is the result of good animal care, assisted reproductive science and sheer perseverance on the part of our staff coupled with valuable advice from the China panda experts."

The pandas are on a 10-year loan from China and arrived in Singapore in 2012. Panda reproduction—in captivity or in the wild—is notoriously difficult, experts say, as few of the animals get in the mood or, even when they do, do not know how to mate.

Further complicating matters, the window for conception is small since female pandas are in heat only once a year, for about 24-48 hours.— AFP ■



Jia Jia was inseminated with frozen semen from 13-year-old Kai Kai. **PHOTO: WILDLIFE RESERVES SINGAPORE/AFP**

NEWS
IN BRIEF

'No jab, no job': Covid vaccines made compulsory for Fiji civil servants

A "no jab, no job" coronavirus policy went into effect in Fiji on Sunday, with unvaccinated public servants forced to go on leave as the Pacific nation joined a number of countries in imposing similar mandates. A stubborn outbreak of the highly infectious Delta variant that started in April ended a yearlong spell of no community transmission of Covid-19, and has overwhelmed Fiji's healthcare system with more than 40,000 cases. The government has argued that mandatory vaccinations are necessary to raise immunisation rates and end the outbreak. — AFP ■

Officials deeply concerned about steep rise in COVID-19 cases in Gaza

PALESTINIAN health officials on Saturday expressed their deep concern over the sudden increase of COVID-19 cases in the besieged Gaza Strip following months of relative stability.

Rami al-Abadla, director of infection control in Gaza's health ministry, said the ministry has noticed a worrying rise in the rate of COVID-19 infections and an increase of severe cases.

"This is a warning that we will enter a new wave of coronavirus, and the number of cases increased again due to the lack of the residents' commitment to the precautionary measures," al-Abadla said. — Xinhua ■

Poland sells 1 million Covid vaccines to Australia



Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison receives a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at the Castle Hill Medical Centre in Sydney on 21 February 2021. PHOTO: STEVEN SAPHORE / AFP

POLAND has sold one million Pfizer Covid vaccine doses to Australia as part of a "respon-

sible policy of solidarity", the Polish health minister said Sunday.

Health Minister Adam Niedzieski said that Poland's vaccine purchases "allow us to meet the needs of our citizens and support others in need".

Polish ambassador to Australia Michal Kolodziejski said: "In these tough times for our Australian friends, Poland has decided to share with Australia one million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, with immediate delivery". Poland has fully vaccinated around 55 per cent of its population, but the rate of vaccinations has slowed sharply in recent months and many vaccination centres have been closed due to low demand.

Opinion polls indicate that up to a quarter of Poles are either opposed to vaccination or hesitant about getting one. — AFP ■

Thousands demonstrate in Montreal against Quebec Covid vaccine passport

THOUSANDS gathered Saturday in the streets of Montreal to protest against the province of Quebec's Covid-19 vaccine passport, which will go into effect early next month.

Holding signs that said "Freedom!" and "We are not laboratory rats," the demonstrators, many of whom came with their families, paraded peacefully under a blazing sun in downtown Montreal. Quebecers wanting to eat at a restaurant, go to a bar, exercise at the gym or attend a festival will need to present proof of vaccination against the coronavirus beginning September 1,

under a measure introduced by the province earlier this week.

"It should be the choice of each person whether to be vaccinated. With the passports it is a means of forcing us" to get vaccinated, said Veronique Whalen, a 31-year-old who came with her family and said she doesn't normally attend protests.

"I'm here for my children, I'm afraid for them. It's discrimination," she said.

Other signs in the crowd read "Dictatorship," "The vaccine scam," and "Health apartheid," and were seen dotting the crowd alongside a number of

Quebec flags.

Several women held posters reading "My body, my choice," using the popular feminist slogan that is also associated with the abortion rights movement.

Some protests also wore a yellow star on their chest with "unvaccinated" written across it, in the fashion of the Star of David that Jewish people were forced to wear during the Holocaust.

Vaccination rates in the French-speaking province are high—84 per cent of Quebecers have received a first dose and 70 per cent are fully vaccinated.— AFP ■



Protesters march against Quebec's decision to impose a vaccine passport across the province in the Fall, in Montreal, Saturday, Aug. 14, 2021. Quebec will be implementing a vaccine passport system starting Sept. 1 to control access in settings with a high degree of contacts, such as festivals, bars, restaurants and gyms. PHOTO: THE CANADIAN PRESS/PETER MCCABE/AFP

Pandemic tests Florida governor's lofty political ambitions



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks holding his facemask during a press conference to address the rise of coronavirus cases in the state, at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, on 13 July 2020. PHOTO: CHANDAN KHANNA / AFP

FLORIDA Governor Ron DeSantis has clashed repeatedly with the media and his Democratic opponents over the coronavirus pandemic, which has seen a recent spike in the state -- a surge that some say could threaten his future presidential ambitions.

From the beginning the Republican refused to mandate mask-wearing while promoting a rapid re-opening of the southern state's economy and quickly dropping nearly all safety requirements for employers.

The governor became a rising star in the Republican Party with Florida's mortality rate remaining no worse than the national average (despite a high number of Covid-19 infections) and its economy also taking off.

But the recent sharp surge in Covid-19 appears to be taking away some of the governor's luster. Florida this month has broken daily hospitalisation records almost every day.

Despite mounting criticism, the governor has doubled down.

In the space of a few days, he threatened to withhold state funding from school districts requiring masks, tried in vain to prevent cruise lines from demanding passengers' proof of vaccination, accused the press of "hysteria" and tried to blame the outbreak on President Joe Biden. — AFP ■

Nearly 30% of Japan firms to boost investment for decarbonization

NEARLY 30 per cent of large companies across Japan plan to expand their capital investment in technologies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, a recent survey showed, reflecting global efforts to achieve a carbon-free society.

The survey conducted by the Development Bank of Japan showed 27 per cent of some 1,000 large companies, defined as those with 1 billion yen (\$9 million) or more in capital, will boost their investments in decarbonization, such as in electric vehicles-related technologies and renewable energy.

Manufacturers were particularly keen in increasing their decarbonization-related investments, with 46 per cent in the transport machinery industry and 43 per cent in the chemical industry saying they will do so.

The survey also found that about 33 per cent of the respondent companies see the global trend towards a carbon-free society as an opportunity to expand their businesses.

By region, there are investment plans for solar power generation in Tokyo and surrounding areas and for offshore wind power generation in the Tohoku region in northeastern Japan, as well as investment in electric vehicle batteries in the western



Nearly 30 per cent of large companies across Japan plan to expand their capital investment in technologies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, a recent survey showed, reflecting global efforts to achieve a carbon-free society. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Japan region of Shikoku.

Among the challenges facing companies in decarboniza-

tion efforts, some 45 per cent said they were concerned by development costs. — Kyodo ■

Multi-billion-dollar reconstruction projects await in post-war Libya

ECONOMIST Kamal Mansouri expects Libya's reconstruction drive to be one of the biggest in the Middle East and North Africa.

He estimates "more than 100 billion dollars" are needed to rebuild Libya, which has been gripped by violence and political turmoil since dictator Moamer Kadhafi was toppled in a 2011 uprising.

Former colonial power Italy,

neighbouring Egypt and Turkey are tipped to be awarded the lion's share of reconstruction deals.

In the capital Tripoli, dozens of rusted cranes and unfinished buildings dot the seafront, testimony to hundreds of abandoned projects worth billions of dollars launched between 2000 and 2010.

After Kadhafi's overthrow, Libya fell under the control of a complex, ever-shifting patch-

work of militias and foreign mercenaries backing rival administrations.

While Turkey has supported the Tripoli government, eastern-based strongman Khalifa Haftar, who battled but failed to seize the capital, has had the backing of Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt.

But a UN-backed ceasefire was agreed last October, paving the way for the establishment in March of an interim administration. The new government led by Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah is tasked with organising presidential and parliamentary elections in December if a legal framework is agreed on time.

Courted by business teams

The new administration has been courted by Western and regional leaders who have visited Libya with large business delegations in tow. — AFP ■



Libya's oil and gas wealth make it a potential bonanza for foreign construction firms as it makes up for a decade of lost investment. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

As variant delays return to offices, many in US don't mind

WHEN Romain Daubec and his wife Monica left San Francisco last summer for Denver, Colorado, they thought their telework hundreds of miles from their offices would last no more than a half-year. But the stunningly rapid spread of the Delta variant of Covid-19 has them settling in for a new way of life that now, they say, feels more "natural." Across the United States, a growing number of companies are delaying their employees' return to the office out of concern over the new wave of disease. But like the Daubecs — he is French, she is American — more and more people across the country have settled in for a second year of telework — willingly this time, with little desire to return to the office, content and comfortable with their new personal and professional lifestyle. — AFP ■

Japan animation industry sales fall 1.8% in 2020, 1st drop in decade

SALES in Japan's animation production industry fell 1.8 per cent on year in 2020, the first drop in a decade, as hit movies such as the record-breaking success of the film on the blockbuster "Demon Slayer" manga series failed to offset the pandemic impact, according to a credit research firm.

The industry's sales totaled 251.1 billion yen (\$2.3 billion) last year, down from a record 255.7 billion yen in 2019, Teikoku Data-bank said in a recent survey report.

In the movie business, the industry had smash-hit "Demon Slayer—Kimetsu no Yaiba—The Movie: Mugen Train," which became the highest-grossing film in Japanese box-office history with more than 40 billion yen in revenue. — Kyodo News ■

Lebanon army deploys at pumps as bank chief firm on ending fuel subsidies



Lebanon's army has deployed at gas stations to stop fuel hoarding in the country after the central bank's decision to stop fuel subsidies sparked panic in the crisis-hit country. **PHOTO: AFP**

LEBANON'S army seized fuel from gas stations on Saturday to curb hoarding amid crippling shortages, as the central bank chief stood firm on his decision to scrap fuel subsidies.

Compounding the country's crisis, a top private hospital said it may have to close due to power outages caused by shortages of diesel, warning this could cause hundreds of deaths.

Lebanon is grappling with a financial crisis branded by the World Bank as one of the planet's worst since the 1850s.

Foreign currency reserves are fast depleting, forcing the central bank to scale down fund-

ing for imports in an effort to shore up the little money Lebanon has left. The Lebanese pound has lost more than 90 percent of its value on the black market, and 78 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. On Wednesday central bank chief Riad Salameh said he would scrap fuel subsidies to ease pressure on fast-depleting foreign reserves.

His decision sparked panic, with huge queues forming outside bakeries and petrol stations as Lebanese struggled to stock up. Salameh told a radio station Saturday he would not back down. — AFP ■

Even in rarefied world of French cuisine, you gotta Insta

IT was a shockwave in the world of French cuisine.

Jean Imbert, best known for winning a reality TV show and hobnobbing with stars, replaced the most decorated chef in the world, Alain Ducasse, at one of the finest restaurants in Paris.

The announcement in June that Imbert, 40, would take over the illustrious Plaza Athenee, was met with much harrumphing and pursing of lips among the fusty corners of the French culinary world.

“It’s like getting a rocker to perform at the Opera de Paris,” one “expert des grands tables” told Challenges magazine. But for many of France’s top chefs, it is hardly a surprise.

“A chef that stays in the kitchen, who isn’t ‘Instagrammable’, reaching out to the public, is no longer in the race. Restaurants can’t survive without publicity. There are so many of us,” Christian Le Squer, head chef at the three Michelin-starred Le Cinq at the George V hotel in Paris, told



Chef Jean Imbert became a red carpet regular after his TV win. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

AFP: Le Squer, 58, learned this lesson from the best: he was assigned to train Imbert during his winning performance on Top Chef, the phenomenally successful TV competition, in 2012.

He gave him tips of the trade, and Imbert returned the favour by helping Le Squer set up his Instagram account.

Ducasse may have had more Michelin stars than anyone in the world, “but he perhaps didn’t find his audience on Instagram,” said Le Squer.— AFP ■

NEWS

IN BRIEF

Flower trade booms as love blooms on Chinese Valentine’s Day

YUNNAN Province, China’s main supplier of flowers, reported robust sales in the run-up to this year’s Qixi festival, or the Chinese Valentine’s Day, on Saturday. The Kunming International Flora Auction Trading Center has traded over 80 million stems of fresh cut flowers since Aug. 3, when the region’s major flower auction market started to prepare for Qixi, compared with over 40 million in the same period last year, said Ni Wentao, deputy head of the center’s auction branch. The center saw a new daily record on Tuesday, with 9.31 million flower stems transacted, Ni said. A large supply, a short stocking period and stable prices are the main features of the Qixi flower market this year, said Zhang Tao, head of the center’s logistics branch. — Xinhua ■

Dollar dominance back on agenda in DR Congo

DR Congo has revived a long-standing dream of promoting the national currency and sidelining the dollar to regain control over key economic levers.

The Democratic Republic of Congo’s economy became informally “dollarised” several decades ago under the dictatorship

of Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko, whose chaotic rule bred four-digit inflation.

Today, the Congolese franc and the US dollar co-exist, but the greenback remains massively dominant. The dollar is used in major contracts, business transactions and the bank accounts of the well-heeled, and even

accepted by shopkeepers and in cash machines.

“The US dollar is the common currency, just as English is the common language,” said a vendor in “Le Chateau”, the nickname for a small street in Kinshasa’s business district studded with the umbrellas of money-changers. — AFP ■

Big Tech rolls on as investors shrug off regulatory pressure



Apple’s market value has risen above \$2 trillion despite pressure to loosen its grip on its increasingly important App Store. Apple’s Senior Vice President of Retail Deirdre O’Brien during an Apple special event in Cupertino, California. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

PRESSURE is rising on Big Tech firms, signaling tougher regulation in Washington and elsewhere that could lead to the breakup of the largest platforms. But you’d hardly know by looking at their share prices.

Shares in Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Google parent Alphabet have hovered near record highs in recent weeks, lifted by pandemic-fueled surges in sales and profits that have helped the big firms

extend their dominance of key economic sectors.

The Biden administration has given signs of more aggressive regulation with appointments of Big Tech critics at the Federal Trade Commission. But that has failed to dent the momentum of the largest tech firms, despite tough talk and antitrust litigation in the United States and Europe, with US lawmakers eyeing moves to make antitrust enforcement easier.— AFP ■

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Amendment to the Open Tender No 3/2021

1. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines announced the invitation for open tender regarding the sale of 5008.574 Metric Tons, (21) Lots of Cathode Copper by US dollars. The tender opening date was on 21.7.2021 and 30.7.2021, which is part of the public holidays and so, the tender opening date was postponed to 20.8.2021 by advertising in the state-owned newspapers.

2. However, the tender has been rescheduled to open on 20.8.2021, which is now included in the extended public holidays, so the tender opening date will be re-schedules as follows:
(a) Closing date and time of tender: 27.8.2021 (14:00)
(b) Opening date and time of tender: 27.8.2021 (15:00)

3. For any further detailed information, it is requested to contact the telephone numbers: 067-3409378 and 067-3409372, Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Tender Committee
Department of Mines

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NAKSKOV MAERSK VOY.NO. (130S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NAKSKOV MAERSK VOY.NO. (130S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-8-2021** 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.

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PRESIDIO VOY.NO. (064N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PRESIDIO VOY.NO. (064N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING PTE., LTD.

Death toll in massive Haiti quake jumps to 724: govt

THE death toll in Haiti's powerful earthquake jumped to over 700 on Sunday as crews desperately dug through collapsed buildings for survivors in the Caribbean nation still reeling from its president's assassination. In Les Cayes, as in other hard-hit cities on the southwestern peninsula, most of the population spent the night sleeping outdoors in front of their houses -- or what remained of them -- amid fears of new aftershocks.

The streets there were filled with the grinding sounds of heavy equipment lifting debris from collapsed buildings, as well as the quieter sounds of people pulling away rubble by hand in desperate searches for the missing.

"Thanks to God and also to my phone, I'm alive," said Marcel Francois, who was rescued from his collapsed two-story home in hard-hit Les Cayes. His younger brother Job Francois said a



Rescuers are racing against the clock to find survivors in the rubble of buildings destroyed by the quake, including the remains of the Manguier Hotel in Les Cayes. **PHOTO: AFP**

desperate-sounding Marcel had called to say, "Come save me, I'm under the concrete' ... He told me he couldn't breathe, that he

was dying." The neighbors and Job spent hours freeing him and his 10-year-old daughter from the heavy debris. But at least 724 peo-

ple were killed in the 7.2-magnitude tremor that struck Saturday about 100 miles (160 kilometers) to the west of the densely populat-

ed capital Port-au-Prince, which was devastated in a massive 2010 quake. Some 1,500 buildings were destroyed and over 5,000 damaged, trapping hundreds under rubble and leaving at least 2,800 people injured, the country's civil protection agency said in an update.

Rescuers face new pressure as Tropical Storm Grace approaches, raising fears of torrential rainfall and flash floods from late Monday, according to the US National Weather Service.

The United States and other nations have pledged to help Haiti cope with this latest disaster.

USAID head Samantha Power tweeted Sunday that her agency had deployed a 65-person urban search and rescue team -- equipped with "specialized tools, equipment & medical supplies" -- to join an earthquake disaster response team already in Haiti. — AFP ■

Hong Kong group behind huge democracy rallies disbands

THE Hong Kong protest coalition that organised record-breaking democracy rallies two years ago said Sunday it was disbanding in the face of China's sweeping clampdown on dissent in the city.

The dissolution comes as China remoulds Hong Kong in its own authoritarian image and purges the city of any person or group deemed disloyal or unpatriotic. The Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF) was a major player in the months of democracy protests that convulsed Hong Kong in 2019. But the group said Beijing's subsequent crackdown on democracy supporters and a de facto ban on protests had left it with little future.

"All member groups have been suppressed and civil society is facing an unprecedented severe challenge," it said in a statement announcing why it



Demonstrators stage a protest in Hong Kong on 28 June 2020, against looming national security legislation to be implemented by the mainland Chinese government. **PHOTO: KYODO**

was disbanding.

Its remaining HK\$1.6 million (\$205,000) in assets would be donated to "appropriate groups", the statement added. The 2019 protests began in response to a deeply unpopular law that would have allowed

extraditions from the semi-autonomous city to authoritarian mainland China.

But they soon morphed into calls for greater democracy and police accountability after huge crowds were dispersed with tear gas and rubber bullets.— AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

3 Cabinet members visit Yasukuni shrine, PM Suga sends offering

THREE members of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's Cabinet on Sunday visited Yasukuni shrine, seen by some as a symbol of Japan's past militarism, as the country marked the 76th anniversary of the end of World War II while Suga sent an offering. Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, education minister Koichi Hagiuda and World Expo minister Shinji Inoue separately went to the Shinto shrine in central Tokyo, which honors convicted war criminals along with millions of war dead.— **Kyodo** ■

Zambia opposition leads early vote count, incumbent cries foul

ZAMBIA'S main opposition candidate was leading Saturday in partial results for a tight presidential election while incumbent leader Edgar Lungu cried foul in three provinces.

Following a high turnout in Thursday's vote, Hakainde Hichilema, 59, was ahead of Lungu, 64, in about 40 percent of the constituencies announced so far, even as EU observers said campaign conditions had been "unequal" and favoured the incumbent.

This is the third time Hichilema has challenged Lungu in what analysts said would be a closely-fought election amid growing resentment about rising living costs and crackdowns on dissent in the southern African country.— **AFP** ■

Lebanon fuel tank explosion kills 20, overwhelms hospitals

AT least 20 people were killed and nearly 80 others injured when a fuel tank exploded in northern Lebanon Sunday, burning crowds clamouring for gasoline in the crisis-hit country. The tragedy overwhelmed medical facilities and spurred a search for the missing, heaping new misery on a nation already beset by an economic crisis and severe fuel shortages that have crippled hospitals and caused long power cuts.

"Our teams have transported 20 dead bodies ... from the fuel tanker explosion" to hospitals, the Lebanese Red

Cross said on Twitter.

It added that 79 other people were injured during the blast, which took place in al-Talil in the northern region of Akkar.

The official National News Agency said that a container of fuel that the army had confiscated—part of an effort to stop suppliers from hoarding amid the shortages —had exploded. It said the blast followed scuffles between "residents that gathered around the container to fill up gasoline" overnight.— **AFP** ■



The site of the overnight fuel tank explosion in Lebanon's northern region of Akkar - the remains of the tank are visible to the left. **PHOTO: AFP**

Denuclearization would bring prosperity in Northeast Asia: Moon

SOUTH KOREA'S President Moon Jae In said Sunday achieving permanent peace and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula would contribute to the prosperity of Northeast Asia.

"Division is the biggest obstacle blocking our growth and prosperity and simultaneously is a tenacious barrier to permanent peace," Moon said in a ceremony commemorating the end of Japanese colonial rule 76 years ago.

"Although unification may take some more time, we can create a Korean Peninsula model in which the two Koreas coexist and contribute to the prosperity of Northeast Asia as a whole through denuclearization and permanent peace," said Moon.

In the 68 years since the 1950-1953 Korean War ended with an armistice, the two Koreas have technically remained in a state of war.

Inter-Korean communica-

tion lines were restored in late July after a 13-month-long shutdown, hinting at an improvement in ties. North Korea, however, has not taken part in regular talks with South Korea through the hotlines since Seoul started a joint drill with Washington on Tuesday.

In his last speech for Liberation Day, with his presidency ending next May, Moon also emphasized his country is always open for talks with Japan, not only on issues of historical tension but also on measures to respond to global issues such as the coronavirus pandemic and climate change.

"For historical issues that need to be rectified, we will resolve them through actions and practices that are consistent with universal values and the standards of the international community," Moon said.

The president said he hopes



File photo shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (L) and South Korean President Moon Jae In crossing the inter-Korean border hand-in-hand at the border village of Panmunjeom in the Demilitarized Zone on 27 April 2018. PHOTO: KOREA SUMMIT PRESS POOL/KYODO

to see Seoul and Tokyo set an example of the cooperation that is expected between neighbors, and overcome difficulties wisely.

Bilateral ties have sunk to the lowest in decades after South Korea's top court in 2018 ordered

Japanese firms to compensate South Koreans who were forced into labor during the Japanese colonial era.

Relations were chilled further due to a feud over export controls in 2019.—Kyodo ■

Japan foreign minister heads to Mideast to talk security, Afghanistan

JAPANESE Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi left Tokyo on Sunday for a trip to the Middle East including Iran and Israel, two countries that recently underwent changes in government.

The 10-day trip comes at a time when the democratic leadership of Afghanistan is teetering as Taliban insurgents tighten their grip on much of the country, a development that has stoked concerns about a potential spillover of instability across the region.

Motegi will also visit Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Turkey and Qatar to discuss regional security issues as well as the response to the coronavirus pandemic,



Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi holds a press conference in Tokyo on 10 August 2021. PHOTO: KYODO

according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Motegi's trip to the Middle East is the first since

last October, when he visited Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He has stressed the importance of building relationships of trust with the new governments of Iran and Israel, two key powers in the region that carries strategic importance to Tokyo due to it being a major source of oil. Earlier in the month, anti-U.S. hard-liner Ebrahim Raisi took office as Iran's president, vowing to pursue a nuclear program and calling for the lifting of international sanctions on Tehran. Motegi is expected to call on Iran to resume dialogue with U.S. President Joe Biden given bilateral nuclear talks have been stalled since June.

Among topics likely to be on the table is an attack on a tanker owned by a Japanese firm and operated by an Israeli company last month off the coast of Oman.

The United States and Britain suspect Iran's involvement in the incident. Motegi's visit is also timed to come soon after Israel's first change of power in 12 years in June when Naftali Bennett was sworn in as prime minister following the resignation of Benjamin Netanyahu. Motegi initially considered visiting Iraq as well, but the COVID-19 situation there has prevented him from doing so, according to the ministry.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

In Sudan, Tigrayans fear the worst as bodies wash up in river

IN an east Sudan town, Tigrayan Gabratansay Gabra-khristos panics whenever his phone rings: it could be grim news of yet more bodies washing up on the banks of a river bordering Ethiopia. Gabratansay says he has been receiving such phone calls since late July, when Sudanese villagers found the first corpse floating down the Setit River, known as the Tekeze in Ethiopia. Since then, he says, a stream of calls has followed, bringing news of even more gruesome discoveries of bloated and deformed bodies with bound hands and severe wounds.—AFP ■

Nicaragua editor detained in latest move seen to target president's critics

A TOP editor of Nicaraguan daily La Prensa was jailed Saturday after police raided the newspaper, making him the latest of dozens of critics of President Daniel Ortega to face arrest. Juan Lorenzo Holmann was taken to a Managua jail, allegedly to sign documents, his cousin and fellow journalist Carlos Fernando Chamorro said on Twitter.

Hours later, police confirmed Holmann's arrest, saying in a statement that he was being investigated for customs fraud and money laundering. They said the case was being turned over to authorities "for prosecution and to determine criminal responsibilities."—AFP ■



President Ashraf Ghani's government appears to be left with few options -- either prepare for a bloody fight for Afghanistan's capital, or capitulate to the Taliban. PHOTO: AFP

Taliban race closer to complete Afghan takeover

THE Taliban raced closer to a complete military takeover of Afghanistan Sunday after capturing more major cities, leaving only the isolated capital Kabul for them to conquer.

The insurgents took control of the key eastern city of Jalalabad on Sunday, just hours after the seizing the northern anti-Taliban bastion of Mazar-i-Sharif—extending an astonishing rout of government forces and warlord militias achieved in just 10 days.

"We woke up this morning to the Taliban white flags all over the city. They entered without fighting," said Jalalabad resident Ahmad Wali, confirming a claim on social media made by the Taliban.

President Ashraf Ghani's government appeared to be left with few options as the Taliban effectively surrounded Kabul—either prepare for a bloody fight for the capital or capitulate.

On Saturday he sought to project a semblance of authority with a national address in which he spoke of "re-mobilising" the military while seeking a "political solution" to the crisis.

But the loss of Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad are huge back-to-back blows for Ghani and his government.

It left the Taliban -- who have fighters less than an hour's drive from Kabul —holding all the cards in any negotiated surrender of the capital.—AFP ■

Myanmar women's squad to join Asian Cup Qualifiers in Lebanon



Myanmar women squad consists of veteran players and newcomers ahead of the Asian Cup Qualifiers to be held in Lebanon. **PHOTO: MFF**

GROUP D matches for the 2022 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers in which Myanmar national women's team will play in September in Lebanon.

Myanmar is falling in the Group D with host Lebanon, UAE and Guam. Only the top teams from the group will advance to the next stage.

The group matches are scheduled to take place from 13 to 25 September, with the Myanmar

team playing the host Lebanon team in the opening match.

After the qualifiers, the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 will be hosted in India in early 2022.

Hosts India, top three teams in the 2018 tournament, defending champions Japan, Australia, China and eight winning teams from the qualifiers will battle for the next stage.

The Myanmar women's team is building with veteran

players plus newcomers from U-16 and U-19 teams. U Tin Myint Aung, Myanmar women's team head coach, has been training players from 30 preliminary squads since early July.

The Myanmar women's team is set to compete in the 2022 Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) and international competitions, including the Asian Cup, said Myanmar Football Federation officials.—GNLM

Man. United, Chelsea display Premier League title credentials with dream starts

MANCHESTER UNITED enjoyed a dream start to the Premier League season as Bruno Fernandes scored a hat-trick in a 5-1 thrashing of Leeds in front of 73,000 at Old Trafford, while Chelsea swept aside Crystal Palace 3-0 on Saturday. Over 300,000 fans are expected to attend the opening weekend of the season with full crowds restored following the easing of coronavirus restrictions.

United were inspired by a raucous atmosphere as Fernandes and Paul Pogba combined to blow away Marcelo Bielsa's men. Fernandes walked away with the match ball, but Pogba was just as impressive as the Frenchman produced four assists for the Portuguese's first two goals and second-half strikes from Mason Greenwood and Fred. "I can't remember the last time that happened," said Solskjaer on Pogba's quartet of assists.

"Paul's got that quality and, when you've got runners willing to make runs and create space for others, it opens up."



High-five: Bruno Fernandes scored a hat-trick in Manchester United's 5-1 win over Leeds. **PHOTO: ADRIAN DENNIS / AFP**

Luke Ayling's stunning strike early in the second-half briefly brought Leeds level, but it was another Old Trafford trip to forget for them after also being thrashed 6-2 last season.

"To have lost the way we lost cannot be described as just a blip," said Bielsa.

Chelsea cruise

After seeing United display their title credentials, European champions Chelsea dispatched Palace in Patrick Vieira's first

match in charge of the Eagles with ease to make their own case.

Marcos Alonso's free-kick and Christian Pulisic's scuffed finish gave Thomas Tuchel's men a commanding 2-0 lead before half-time. Centre-back Trevoh Chalobah then marked his Premier League debut with a long-range strike to round off the scoring. Elsewhere, Rafael Benitez went a long way to quieting his doubters at Everton as the Toffees came from behind to beat Southampton 3-1. —AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

- To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

- To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

- To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
- To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Pliskova upsets top seed Sabalenka, faces Giorgi in Montreal final

WIMBLEDON finalist Karolina Pliskova rolled into the final of the WTA hardcourt tournament in Montreal on Saturday with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over top seed Aryna Sabalenka.

The win was a repeat for the fourth-seeded Czech, who defeated her Belarus rival in three sets two months ago in their All England Club semi-final.

Pliskova will fight for the Montreal title against Italy's Camila Giorgi, who needed a deciding set to see off Australian Open quarter-finalist Jessica Pegula 6-3, 3-6, 6-1. Pliskova lost to Giorgi last month in the third round of the Tokyo Olympics.

"It's an amazing feeling to be in another final," Pliskova said. "I was super-solid today

"I did what I needed to win. I used my brain and played smart. She was missing a bit too much, I'm quite happy with the performance." Pliskova broke Sabalenka four times and saved two of the three break points she faced. Sabalenka, who flung her racquet in disgust in the second set apologized for any unprofessional behavior later on Instagram. Pliskova fired 10 aces for a total of 267 this season, putting her within touching distance of Sabalenka's tour-leading 270.

The Czech won her 39th match of the season, top of the table on the WTA. But even though she has won 12 of her past 13 matches, she's seeking her first title of the season.—AFP ■