

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

Myanmar receives two new tugboats purchased from China

MYANMA Port Authority under the Ministry of Transport and Communications received two tugboats from Union Resources & Engineering Co., Ltd. (UREC) of China at Nanthida jetty of Yangon yesterday.

The two tugboats named Sin Min-1 and Sin Min-2 left for Yangon on 2 August from China and refilled at Singapore, and arrived at Nanthida jetty yesterday morning.

The tender to build new tugboats was invited with the permission of Ministry of Transport and Communications in accordance with the terms and conditions. The Yunnan based Union Resources & Engineering Co., Ltd. (UREC) won the tender at \$13.56 million and made agreement with Myanma Port Authority on 25 October 2019.

According to the terms of the contract, the two vessels were designed by Singapore-based Sea Tech Solutions International Pte., Ltd and constructed by Shunhai Shipyards Ltd. of Guangzhou Province.



Newly-arrived tugboats Sin Min-1 and Sin Min-2 are seen at Nanthida Jetty in Yangon. **PHOTO: KANU**

The tugboat is 34 metres in length, 11.6 metres in width with four metres of draught and also equipped with Japanese-made two Yumma engines with 2,500

HP. The vessels can drive 12 nautical miles per hour. Therefore, it can support the pull-push operations of international cargo ships. It took 18 months for constructing

the two tugboats and completed on 22 May 2021.

The Yangon port currently accommodates the ships with larger drafts than before. There-

fore, the use of better tugboats by Myanma Port Authority can serve the safe pull-push operations for international cargo ships.—Nyein Thu/GNLM

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Announcement for Aungbalay lottery ticket buyers

1. The State Lottery Branch of the Internal Revenue Department sells the lottery tickets for the public monthly and the lottery winners are announced the every first day of the month.
2. The government takes 40 per cent of lottery ticket sales, and 60pc is put into the prize pool.
3. Although there are some restrictions regarding the withdrawing of lottery prize money, the government grants up to K50 million prize money in a lump-sum while other prizes are issued in accordance with the regulations.
4. In order to distribute more lottery tickets and facilitate the claiming of prize money, the lottery prize will be increased to 70pc of total ticket sales and all the prize money can be claimed without any restrictions starting the 30th Aungbalay Lottery to be conducted on 1-9-2021.

*Internal Revenue Department
Ministry of Planning and Finance*

Medical supplies related to COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment imported daily



Cargo trucks are seen with loads of essential medical equipment and oxygen cylinders.

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 1,332 oxygen concentrators were imported in addition to 12 tonnes of masks, 3,360 oxygen storage containers, six oxygen plants, 150 oxygen concentrators, four tonnes of masks via airways at the Yangon International Airport. In addition, 68 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 9,281 oxygen storage containers, six oxygen plants, 2,698 home oxygen concentrators, 24,475 PPE suits and 87 tonnes of mask were imported through border trade points and

international sea ports.

A total of 1,233 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 72 tonnes of oxygen cylinders, 12 liquid oxygen storage containers, six oxygen distributors, 121,200 tonnes of oxygen storage containers, 32 oxygen plants, two oxygen refills, 11 oxygen generators, 80,337 home oxygen concentrators, 151,048 test kits, 546,665 PPE suits, 83 tonnes of gloves and 1,278 tonnes of masks have been imported by far in August.

Of 89 vehicles carrying liquid oxygen imported between 1 July and 18 August, 67 of them were distributed to Yangon, 15 to Mandalay, two to Bago, four to Mawlamyine and one to Thaton,

A vehicle carries oxygen cylinders.



A truck with oxygen containers is ready to start trip.



Cargo truck conveys full of medical supplies for the people.

respectively. Among 40 oxygen plants, 11 were transported to Yangon, five to Lashio, four to Bago, two to Pakokku, four to Mandalay, two to Hpa-an, two to Mawlamyine, three to Kyaukpadaung, two to Hpa-an, one each to Taunggyi, Thanbyuzayat, Magway, Dawei, Wakema, Myittha and Mogaung respectively.

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

The first priority of current government

Efforts must be made to increase number of agriculturists and breeders under the proper plans similar to economists, legal experts, technologists, engineers, medical doctors and nurses. Region and state chief ministers need to turn out the educated persons. Ensuring plentiful of educated persons is the first priority of current government.

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

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs attends Pledging Conference to support ASEAN's humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs attended the Pledging Conference to support ASEAN's Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar which was held via video conference yesterday afternoon, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The Pledging Conference was hosted by H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN, as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC), and was attended by H.E. Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam, and Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair to Myanmar, H.E. Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, H.E. Retno Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, H.E. Teodoro L. Locsin Jr., Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, H.E. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, H.E. Bui Thanh Son, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, H.E. Thongphane Savanphet, Deputy Foreign Minister of Laos' PDR and representatives from ASEAN Member States and its partners.

The Secretary-General of ASEAN explained about the provision of ASEAN's Humanitarian assistance to Myanmar which will be delivered through the ASEAN Co-



Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin joins pledging conference to support ASEAN's humanitarian assistance to Myanmar via video conference.

ordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), as per Point 4 of the Five-Point Consensus. He also explained that humanitarian assistance would be carried out in Myanmar through phases. In this regard, he explained that while Phase 1 of ASEAN's humanitarian Assistance in Myanmar would be focusing on provision of immediate needs for COVID-19, Phase 2 would be focusing on provision of broader humanitarian needs.

ASEAN Foreign Ministers and representatives from ASEAN Member States, partners and friends also discussed and exchanged views on the provision of humanitarian assistance to Myanmar, and ex-

pressed their keen interest to pledge and contribution of both cash and in-kind to Myanmar.

The Union Minister for Foreign Affairs extended his heartfelt gratitude to H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN for holding this Pledging Conference. He also extended his appreciations to all the participants for the pledges and contributions they had made to assist Myanmar. Union Minister also apprised the meeting that with a view to struggling against pandemic, Myanmar has established the Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 for better addressing the pandemic.

He then explained the meeting that Myanmar had

been given priority to carry out all the necessary measures for the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 which were indeed needed for the people of Myanmar. However, he explained that Myanmar is still in need of vaccines, medicines, medical equipment, supplies and other related items to contain the consistent spread of local transmission and high rate of infection.

The Union Minister further explained that heavy rain in July has caused flooding across many low-lying areas of Myanmar and that in some specific areas made Myanmar people more vulnerable. In this regard, he explained that while it was important to provide needs for COVID-19, provision

of necessary assistance to the flood affected victims such as essential needs, emergency shelter and proper health care and adequate medical supplies were also needed.

In conclusion, the Union Minister mentioned that the outcome of the Pledging Conference would be helpful for Myanmar its efforts to fight against the spread of COVID-19, including on the provision of needs for the flood affected victims.

He also expressed Myanmar's readiness and preparedness for swift and effective implementation and delivery of humanitarian assistance provided to Myanmar.

During the meeting, the States such as Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, European Union (EU) and New Zealand made pledges to donate cash amounted to USD 700,000, AUD 5 million and EURO 370,000. In addition, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, People's Republic of China and United Kingdom made pledges for in-kind contribution. Both pledges of contribution are through AHA Centre.

Together with the Union Minister, senior officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement also attended the Pledging Conference.—MNA

Gov't implements 3,143 water supply operations in 3,083 villages in 2020-2021 FY



Union Minister U Hla Moe discusses plans to supply drinking water to rural area.

EFFORTS are being made to enable the rural people to have better water in villages in accordance with the sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030, said Union Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Hla Moe yesterday.

He said the government is making strategic plans for rural water supply, environmental sanitation and personal hygiene. He then highlighted the rural water supply rate in 2014 and 2019 and lower water supply rate of Rakhine State and Ayeyawady Region.

He also pledged to cooperate with the relevant officials in various upgrade works like water distribution system, use of water meter system including educa-

tive programmes and research works.

Then, Director-General U Khant Zaw of Rural Development Department reported on some 35,850 water supply operations carried out from 2012-2013 FY to 2019-2020 FY.

He said the department implemented 3,143 water supply operations in 3,083 villages in 2020-2021 FY while more than 31 million gallons of water was distributed to 2,317 villages that are suffering from shortage of drinking water during the summer, with 972 operations between 2016 and 2021. The department has facilitated water taps in 3,038 villages, water treatment at 163 villages and waste management in 4,193 villages. — MNA

Deputy Minister for IFER attends 40th Meeting of High-level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration

DEPUTY Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Than Aung Kyaw joined the Fortieth Meeting of High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (40th HLTF-EI) which was held via video conference on 18th August, 2021, and the senior officials as representatives from Foreign Economic Relations Department also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, HLTF-EI leaders exchanged views on the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control measures of ASEAN Member States, economic recovery outlook of the region, progress of the implementation of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), the priority economic deliverables (PEDs) of Brunei Darussalam

under its ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021, the strategic follow-up on the recommendations of the report of the Mid-Term Review of the AEC Blueprint 2025, finalization and adoption of the consolidated strategy of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), preparatory work for the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision, and the preparations for Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2022.

The Deputy Minister informed the meeting about the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control measures particularly for government's efforts to speed up vaccination, private sector cooperation in national vaccine programme, and the measures to facilitate the cross border import of COVID-19 related medicine and



Deputy Minister U Than Aung Kyaw participates in Fortieth Meeting of High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration via video conference.

medical equipment. In addition, he also explained the preparatory work to implement the Myanmar Economic Recovery Plan (MERP) and the follow up action of Myanmar on the implementa-

tion of ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework.

The meeting was chaired by H.E Gabriel Lim, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore. Deputy Minis-

ters and Permanent Secretaries who are HLTF-EI Leaders from ASEAN Member States, Deputy Secretary General from ASEAN Secretariat and representatives took part in the meeting.—MNA

2,878 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 18 August, total figure rises to 363,169

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 363,169 after 2,878 new cases were reported on 18 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 282,881 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 13,786 after 163 died. —MNA

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MoEE ensures continuous electricity transmission, power outage mitigation

THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy is making effort to reduce power outage and to transmit and distribute enough electricity for every household and quarantine centre during the stay-at-home period in the COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar.

The Ministry held a coordination meeting on the reduction of power shortages for the people yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Aung Than Oo said the ministry is making concerted effort to improve the stability of the power system and to supply full voltage and stable electricity, despite the power outages due to the weather, animals and trees. These power outages must be addressed in the

future with the goal of (never) power outages, he continued.

The Union Minister also added the challenges in collecting electricity bills due to the insufficient human resources in the ministry. Since the electricity bills are re-used for the electricity generation and distribution of the State, collecting the bill is the responsibility of the ministry's employees and paying for it is the duty of the people. He called on the employees to continue to work together to collect the electricity bill.

Officials from respective departments discussed the power outage at substations, the situation of power outage in each transformer in each township and measures to be taken to prevent it.—MNA



Union Minister U Aung Than Oo meets officials to discuss electrification plans and mitigation of power outage.

19 local cement plants produce up to 9 million tonnes of cement per year

UNION Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than presided over a virtual coordination meeting to increase production of cement yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union Minister said there

were cement plants in Thayet, Kyangin and Hpa-an townships until 2000. Currently, the country has 19 cement plants, and although they produce from seven million to nine million tonnes of cement per year, and

so, it has to import about one million tonnes of cement per year.

It should make efforts to produce cement, which is essential for the construction work, with minimal energy

consumption and to minimize the impacts on the environment and social interest. It also needs to meet the fixed standards.

The local cement millers should openly discuss regarding their difficulties in their

operations.

Then, the attendees to the meeting discussed the norms of the cement plants, market shares, fuel related matters and other arrangements not to affect the environment.—MNA

Former Nay Pyi Taw Mayor, Vice-Mayor, members of NDC face corruption charges

Former Mayor and Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Dr Myo Aung, Former Vice-Mayor U Ye Min Oo, former members of the committee U Min Thu and Daw Sabei Htwe were charged under Anti-Corruption Law yesterday.

According to the findings of the Anti-Corruption Commission, former Mayor Dr Myo Aung, during his tenure as the Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee, illegally allocated 20 acres of land in the economic zone in Dekkhinathiri ward for a person. He let the person build a one-storey house to live on 2.07 acres of land in Special Land Number (U-1002) in Yadanathiri ward in Ottarathiri Township at a price of 135 million kyats last year and paid

only K27 million in the first installment. Failure to pay the remaining amount of K108 million even though the house has been completed is an act of corruption by abusing authority.

He reportedly received K11 million in bribes from the person who was permitted to build a Civil Service Retirement Rental Housing project under the Myanmar Developer Association in Dekkhinathiri Township. He then spent K1 million on each of 11 NLD candidates running in the 2020 general election, which was absolutely an abuse of power during his political tenure. Former Mayor Dr Myo Aung also received K3 million from the former members of the Nay Pyi Taw Council to use to participate in the election

from Dagon Myothit (East) Township.

Due to his failure to comply with the order (1/2017) issued on 10 April 2017 and 126/(1)/8 on 4 May 2018 by the President Office in identifying 16 special plots of land in Ottarathiri Township, the State has lost more than K1,933 million.

In identifying the special plots of land, former Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Dr Myo Aung, former committee members U Min Thu and Daw Sabei Htwe, were involved in land preparation and plot preparation on private plots, which was not the responsibility for the Committee, costing K148 million in public funds.

Former Mayor Dr Myo Aung and

former Vice Mayor U Ye Min Oo allocated a total of 74.76 acres of land (44 land plots) in the economic zone in Dekkhinathiri Township to 19 people at a price of K50 million per acre, violating the provision of Section 29 of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Law, without submitting to the President Office. In this case, the State has lost 14,952 million kyats.

According to the Anti-Corruption Commission, the former Mayor and Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee, former Vice-Mayor U Ye Min Oo, committee member U Min Thu and Daw Sabei Htwe were charged under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption Law at respective township police stations yesterday.—MNA

Sale of toddy-palm chair declines in Kyaukpadaung



Traditional chairs made of toddy-palm are displayed at the wholesale centre to attract local and foreign travellers.

THE Indawkyay village in Kyaukpadaung Township is engaged in toddy-palm chair making business and the local people are manufacturing a lot of toddy-palm

chairs. But this year, the demand of toddy-palm chair has dropped significantly, said U Win Naing, a toddy-palm chair maker.

The Indawkyay village

is manufacturing toddy-palm chairs, palm tables and palm boxes. The village is located on Kyaukpadaung-Meiktila road and it is five miles far from Kyaukpadaung. The village col-

lects the toddy-palm yearly and is making many toddy-palm chairs. They are generating the family income from selling the toddy-palm chairs.

The toddy-palm chairs

from Indawkyay village are shown on the road. The local people visiting Bagan-Nyaung-U archaeological site stop their cars and buy the chairs when they go back to their places.

Last year, the toddy-palm chairs sold well. But this year, the sale of toddy-palm chairs has dropped significantly because there is a few numbers of local tourists.

The palm chair makers are buying the branches of toddy palm for K 50 per one to make the toddy-palm chairs.

Other materials such as hammer and nails are needed to make the toddy palm chairs. They sell a chair for K 4,500 for a normal chair and K 6,000 for a reclining one.

The price of toddy boxes depends upon the size and the design.

This year is one of the bad sales of the toddy palm chairs in Indawkyay village in Kyaukpadaung Township, U Kyaw Kyaw Naing explained.—Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM

Myanmar-Thai border trade up \$46 mln this FY

THE Myanmar-Thailand border trade has increased by US\$ 46 million and stands at \$3.4 billion between 1 October and 30 July this financial 2020-21, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The country's export to neighbouring Thailand reached \$2.3 billion while its import shared \$1.09 billion. Last year, the bilateral border hit \$3.36 billion.

Myanmar is carrying out border trade with the neighbouring country Thailand

through seven border checkpoints—Tachilek, Myawady, Myeik, Mawtaung, Hteekhee, Kawthoung and Meisei border areas respectively.

Myawady border trade accounted for the largest volume of trade with Thailand, followed by Hteekhee, according to the statistical report of the Myanmar Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar's exports to Thailand were primarily agriculture and livestock products, and imports from Thailand were mainly non-alcoholic bev-

erages, fabric and yarn, motorcycles and related parts, and construction materials.

Between 2016-2017 FY and 2019-2020 FY (as of August), Thailand has been Myanmar's largest trade partner among the ASEAN states, followed by Singapore and Malaysia.

The bilateral trade between Myanmar and Thailand stood at \$ 3.26 billion in FY 2020-2021 (as of July), \$ 5.1 billion in FY 2019-2020, \$ 5.5 billion in FY 2018-2019, \$ 2.9 billion in mini-budget year of



Border gate between Myanmar and Thailand is crowded with vehicles and walkers.

2018 or transitional period from April to September this year, \$ 5 billion in FY 2017-2018, \$ 4.3 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, \$ 4.8 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, \$ 5.7 billion in the 2014-2015 FY,

\$ 5.6 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, \$4.7 billion in the 2012-2013 FY, and \$ 4.5 billion in the 2011-2012 FY, according to the Myanmar Ministry of Commerce.—ACM/GNLM

Oxygen generator plant starts functioning at Kalay Sitagu Cakkhudana hospital

AN oxygen generator plant at Sitagu Cakkhudana hospital in Kalay township, Sagiang region was made functional on 16 August, said U Htay Aung, member of working committee to set up the oxygen plant.

The construction of the oxygen plant project was started on 10 July 2021 and completely constructed 100 per cent on 15 August.

"We started operational

on a trial basis the day before yesterday. Then, we started functioning it after a successful trial run. The plant will generate 100 40-litre oxygen cylinders per day. We are pleased that we could provide the oxygen to public when they are facing hardship. The oxygen plant was established by initial donation from Sayadaw and members of the Sangha. We still need many donation

funds," he added.

To be able to construct the oxygen generator in Sitagu hospital in Kalay, the Kalay town Sitagu hospital made an initial donation of K 60 million and other domestic and international donors also contributed. The estimated cost of the project is K2.15 billion.

"Demand of oxygen in our Kalay town is very high. Many people have died from not hav-

ing access to oxygen. I don't think this pandemic will over in short time. Due to the high demand of oxygen in town, the oxygen generator plant needs to supply 800 40-litre cylinders daily to meet demand for the whole town. That is they reason why we have constructed the oxygen plant in Kalay town," said U Htay Aung.

Oxygen is the key to saving lives. There are people who

have died because they were struggling to breathe and no oxygen was available, he added.

A working committee to set up the oxygen plant was formed under the advice of the world missionary Sitagu Sayadaw on 11 July. Those who wish to donate the fund for oxygen plant can contact the working committee in Kalay township.—Lulay/GNLM

MIC gives nod to 45 foreign proposals this FY

MYANMAR has attracted foreign direct investment of more than US\$3.767 billion in the past ten months of the 2020-2021 financial year from 45 enterprises, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises and investments in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations has been inviting responsible businesses to benefit the country.

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) ensures to approve the responsible businesses by assessing environmental and social impacts. The commission is working together with the relevant departments to screen the projects.

In May, the UK-listed enterprise brought in large investments of \$2.5 million and became



Buildings of industries are mushrooming in Thilawa special Economic Zone in Yangon Region.

the top source of FDI in Myanmar in the past nine months, DICA's statistics indicated.

Japan stood as the second largest investor this FY with estimated capital of \$518.76 million from three projects, followed by Singapore investing \$428.336 mil-

lion in Myanmar.

Those enterprises listed from Brunei, China, Thailand, India, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, Marshall Island, Samoa, Hong Kong (SAR) and China (Taipei) also made investments this year.

Of 45 foreign enterprises permitted and endorsed by MIC and the respective investment committees between 1 October and 31 July of the current FY, 24 enterprises pumped FDI into the manufacturing sector. Electricity sector received six large

project and livestock and fisheries sector attracted six projects. Other service sector drew five projects while agriculture sector pulled two projects and one foreign enterprise each entered industrial estate and the hotel and tourism sectors.

The FDIs stood at \$6.9 million from 158 enterprises in the FY 2016-2017, \$6.119 billion from 234 businesses in the FY 2017-2018, \$1.94 billion from 89 projects in the 2018 mini-budget year, \$4.5 billion from 298 businesses in the FY 2018-2019 and \$5.689 billion from 253 businesses in the FY 2019-2020 respectively, the DICA's data indicated.

Those enterprises created over 96,000 jobs in the FY 2016-2017, 110,000 jobs in the FY 2017-2018, over 53,000 jobs in the 2018 mini-budget period, over 180,000 jobs in the FY 2018-2019 and 210,000 jobs in the FY 2019-2020 respectively.—MM/GNLM

Garlic price jumps on closure of Sino-Myanmar border post



Farmer is showering thriving garlic plantation.

THE price of garlic (Kyukok variety) imported by China is on the rise tracking the shutdown of the border post between Myanmar and China, Mawlamyine commodity depot stated.

The shortage of this garlic variety happened following the closure of the Sino-Myanmar border posts.

Consequently, the price hike occurred in the retail market, with exorbitant price of K5,100 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg).

The garlic price may vary

depending on the COVID-19 containment measures. The price of garlic (Kyukok variety) is primarily related to the permit of the border posts.

The price of garlic moved in the range of K1,900-K2,950 per viss on 1 July.

The market, however, sees a gradual rise in prices between K3,500 and K4,000 per viss.

The price stays on the upward trend on 18 July, ranging between K2,600 and K5,100 per viss depending on the different varieties.—NN/GNLM

Imports of petroleum products exceed \$1.7 bln in eight months

MYANMAR imported more than US\$1.77 billion worth of petroleum products in the past eight months (Oct-May) of the current financial year 2020-2021, as per the Myanmar Customs Department.

Normally, a monthly oil import is estimated at \$400 million, yet the oil importers are facing the pandemic induced container shortage problem in maritime trade and the banking restriction. Nevertheless, oil importers via land border can use informal payment Hundi system instead, said an importer.

At present, the domestic fuel oil price is still bullish as the heightened coronavirus restriction sparked oil demand concerns, coupled with Kyat depreciation.

The fuel oil was pegged at around at K620 per litre for Octane 92, K750 for Octane 95, K660 for diesel and K670 for premium diesel in early February 2021 in domestic retail market.

On 18 August, it rallied to

the highest of K1,105 for Octane 92, K1,125 for Octane 95, K1,050 for diesel and K1,055 for premium diesel, according to local fuel oil market.

Domestic oil price is positively related to global market and the dollar value. The soaring demand drives up the oil prices rally higher, with WTI slightly falling to \$66,393 per barrel.

Additionally, foreign exchange rate also affects the petroleum price. Kyat is weakening in the local forex market, with around K1,650 per dollar on 18 August. In mid-February, a dollar was worth only K1,430.

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.

In early June 2021, the Ministry of Electricity and

Energy notified the private sector of keeping the oil storage above 35 per cent of storage capacity of the tanks to avoid the possible discrepancy between demand and supply.

Last year, the domestic oil prices have declined starting from January owing to a fall in global oil prices. On 8 January 2020, oil prices were pegged at around K905 per litre for Octane 92, K995 for Octane 95, and K985 for diesel and premium diesel. Following the global market crashing, the domestic oil price plunged to more than 50 per cent in April against January's prices.

In late April 2020, the oil prices touched the lowest of K290-330 per litre for Octane 92, K430-455 for Octane 95, K435-465 for diesel, and K445-475 for premium diesel, according to the domestic oil market.

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

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Rebut spread of fake news and rumours for the people

FAKE news and rumours spread on various platforms of media, especially on Facebook of the social media on a daily basis. Hence, people need to analyze all items of information distorted as true news but really fake news and rumours.

An item of true information cannot immediately affect the society in disarray but one item of fake news or rumours can cause the collapse of society suddenly. However, the true news can ease tensions of the people gradually and bring happiness to them after they have realized the realities. On one hand, people condemn the fake news and rumours in addition to their sources when the true information comes out.

In fact, saboteurs do not have capability to shoulder to shoulder with State-builders in all aspects similar to the natures of the black and white as well as the darkness and lighting which are separable.

disorder of the State and the private sector. It is sure that those who spread the fake news and rumours would face reflection of their activities. The people who became victims of rumours will never satisfy with the acts of those unscrupulous persons. They are really destructionists of the nation. They don't have any positive attitude to appreciate the good things of the State-builders. In fact, saboteurs do not have capability to shoulder to shoulder with State-builders in all aspects similar to the natures of the black and white as well as the darkness and lighting which are separable.

Hence, all the people should broaden their horizons themselves so as to have the capacity for analyzing all kinds of information what is the right or what is the wrong.



China aims to balance COVID-19 control, economic growth

While imposing strict measures including mass testing and widespread travel restrictions to contain the latest Delta variant outbreak, China, the world's second-largest economy, has continued to drive economic growth.

THE Chinese mainland reported 24 locally transmitted confirmed COVID-19 cases on Saturday, with the majority in Jiangsu Province in eastern China, according to the National Health Commission. Jiangsu's Yangzhou has become the latest hotspot for this round of infections, logging 546 cases in total.

The recent COVID-19 resurgence first emerged in Nanjing, the provincial capital of Jiangsu, where several airport cleaners were found to be infected on July 20 during a routine test.

Chinese authorities have quickly clamped down on local flare-ups with measures like mass nucleic acid testing, targeted lockdowns, and travel restrictions, which has led to a distinct downward trend in new infections, as Nanjing, for example, has registered only one case in the past three days.

"The tightened measures will inevitably affect some people-intensive industries in the short run, but they are necessary for the long-term economic recovery," said Wu Chaoming, an economist with Chasing Securities, noting that China's economic recovery trend for 2021 is unchanged.

China's economy has staged a strong rebound, having grown 2.3 percent last year amid the fall-out of the coronavirus pandemic. Owing to the low comparison base and its consolidating recovery, the country's economy expanded 12.7 percent year on year in the first half of 2021.

According to Wu, although



Deliverymen wait to collect customer orders at a supermarket in Yongding District in Zhangjiajie, central China's Hunan Province, Aug. 5, 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA/CHEN SIHAN

the current Delta variant is highly contagious, its overall impact on China's economy may be more limited, because China is now experienced in containing the spread of the virus and can better coordinate control measures and economic development.

BALANCED APPROACHES

To combat the uptick in daily cases, both Yangzhou and Nanjing have conducted several rounds of mass nucleic acid testing and suspended all domestic flights, long-distance buses, and the opening of indoor entertainment venues and sports centers.

China has also implemented nationwide travel restrictions.

All 31 provincial-level regions on the Chinese mainland have urged citizens not to travel to medium- and high-risk areas or leave the regions where they live unless absolutely necessary.

But such strict measures have had only a limited impact on the lives of most Chinese people. "Our previous experience with fighting the epidemic has made us less panicked," said Wang Ying, who has not missed a day of work at an insurance company in Nanjing since the city saw a cluster of infections emerge.

"Earning wages is important for employees like me to support our families. I think the government has done a good job in bal-

ancing epidemic control and the operations of enterprises," Wang said.

Due to the temporary road traffic controls, Nanjing Changan Automobile Co., Ltd. initially had difficulty in delivering cars out of the city, but with the aid of local authorities, the company has successfully applied for traffic permits and shipped nearly 500 new energy vehicles.

In central China's Hunan Province, which reported over 100 confirmed COVID-19 cases in recent weeks, economic and social development have been similar-ly resilient. At popular shopping sites in downtown Changsha, the capital of Hunan, people queue up

in an orderly fashion to show their health and travel codes before entering shops.

In Hunan's Zhuzhou, the impact of the recent outbreaks on the normal production of enterprises is rather limited, as none of the industrial enterprises have been shut down in the city and over 94 percent of its major industrial enterprises have maintained normal operations, said Liu Hai-bin, director of the Zhuzhou municipal bureau of industry and information technology.

"China has always been seeking a balance and trying its best to control the epidemic locally to mitigate the impact on society and the economy, leaving extreme measures like city lockdowns as the last resort," said Yu Xin'an, vice president of the China Association of Regional Economy.

POSITIVE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

According to Yu, the impact of this latest round of Delta outbreaks on the national economy is limited and controllable, and the government has taken necessary actions to stem the virus spread while restoring normal social and economic operations at the earliest possible date.

To lessen the burden on enterprises, authorities in Jiangsu issued a notice on July 28 to help local firms in the procurement of raw materials, logistics and personnel exchanges. Financial authorities in Nanjing also proposed measures to increase credit and loan support to help firms ease capital turnover pressure.

SOURCE: Xinhua

Pfizer submits data for 3rd dose approval in US

Pfizer and BioNTech on Monday submitted preliminary clinical data to US health authorities as part of their effort to seek authorization for a third dose of their Covid-19 vaccine for all Americans.

Last week, the United States approved the booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines for people with weakened immune systems.

Pfizer and BioNTech presented the results of their Phase

One trial that evaluated the safety and efficacy of a third shot.

"The data we've seen to date suggest a third dose of our vaccine elicits antibody levels that significantly exceed those seen after the two-dose primary schedule," Albert Bourla, Pfizer's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, said in a statement.

"A booster vaccine could help reduce infection and disease rates in people who have previously been vaccinated and

better control the spread of virus variants during the coming season," said BioNTech Co-founder Ugur Sahin.

The companies plan to submit the same information to European authorities in the coming weeks.

The move comes despite appeals by the World Health Organization for a moratorium on booster shots to help ease the drastic inequity in dose distribution between rich and poor

nations. Israel has also begun administering third doses to its citizens.

An advisory committee of the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions, a top US healthcare agency, is slated to meet in late August to discuss the approval of a third dose of the vaccine for adults over 65, care home residents and health-care workers.

SOURCE: AFP



Pfizer Inc is an American multinational pharmaceutical and biotechnology corporation headquartered on 42nd Street in Manhattan, New York City. PHOTO: FLASH 90/AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 18 August 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 19 August 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Taninthayi Region, scattered in Magway Region, fairly widespread in Kayah, Kayin, Mon States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay Regions and Kachin, Chin, Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (6 -8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weak monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 August 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 August 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 August 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Flood Warning

(Issued at 14:00 hrs MST on 18-8-2021)

According to the (13:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Homalin is observed as about (4½) feet 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 Homalin Township to take precaution measure.

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Nuclear scientists hail US fusion breakthrough

NUCLEAR scientists using lasers the size of three football fields said Tuesday they had generated a huge amount of energy from fusion, possibly offering hope for the development of a new clean energy source.

Experts focused their giant array of almost 200 laser beams onto a tiny spot to create a mega blast of energy -- eight times more than they had ever done in the past.

Although the energy only lasted for a very short time -- just 100 trillionths of a second -- it took scientists closer to the holy grail of fusion ignition, the

moment when they are creating more energy than they are using.

"This result is a historic advance for inertial confinement fusion research," said Kim Budil, the director of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which operates the National Ignition Facility in California, where the experiment took place this month.

Nuclear fusion is considered by some scientists to be a potential energy of the future, particularly because it produces little waste and no greenhouse gases.

It differs from fission, a technique currently used in nuclear

power plants, where the bonds of heavy atomic nuclei are broken to release energy.

In the fusion process, two light atomic nuclei are "married" to create a heavy one. In this experiment scientists used two isotopes of hydrogen, giving rise to helium. This is the process that is at work in stars, including our Sun. "The NIF teams have done an extraordinary job," said Professor Steven Rose, co-director of the center for research in this field at Imperial College London. "This is the most significant advance in inertial fusion since its beginning in 1972."—AFP ■



National Ignition Facility. PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA/AFP

Hong Kong adds wildlife trafficking to organised crime law



With its busy port and transport links, Hong Kong has been thriving as a major transit point for illegal parts of endangered animals like elephants, rhinos and pangolins. PHOTO: AFP

HONG KONG passed a new law on Wednesday that classifies wildlife trafficking as an organised crime issue, a move welcomed by conservationists because it

will give law enforcement wider powers to combat the trade.

With its busy port and transport links, Hong Kong has been thriving as a major transit point

for illegal parts of endangered animals like elephants, rhinos and pangolins -- most of it headed for consumers in mainland China.

On Wednesday lawmakers added illicit wildlife smuggling to the city's Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance, putting the trade on a par with drug and human trafficking.

The law, initially designed to combat the city's triad organised crime gangs, contains wide investigatory powers for the police and heavier sentences for those convicted.

Courts also have broader powers to confiscate the proceeds of organised crime.

Wildlife seizures have reached new peaks in the past two years, including a record 8.3 tonnes of pangolin scales as well as 2.1 tonnes of ivory, according to a legislative filing.—AFP ■

Earthquake, storm and floods: no relief in sight for Haiti as toll rises

THE death toll from a 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti has risen to 1,941, the Caribbean nation's civil protection agency said Tuesday, as a tropical storm brought torrential downpours on survivors already coping with catastrophe.

More than 9,900 people were wounded when the quake struck the southwestern part of the Caribbean nation on Saturday, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) to the west of the capital Port-au-Prince, according to the updated toll.

With more than 60,000 homes destroyed and 76,000 damaged, the United Nations' children's agency UNICEF said that more than half a million children have been affected by the disaster.

In the coastal town of Les Cayes, residents began building makeshift shelters on a football field despite lashing winds and pouring rain as Tropical Storm Grace passed over the country.

So few structures remained standing that people had to relieve themselves in city streets,

according to Magalie Cadet, 41, who only had a shower cap to protect against the rain.

Aftershocks continued to rock the ground in Les Cayes days after the quake, further terrifying the residents.

"Yesterday evening, I took shelter near a church, but when I heard the ground shake again, I ran to return here," said Cadet.

The government has declared a month-long state of emergency in the four provinces affected by the quake.—AFP ■

One dead as France battles Riviera inferno

HUNDREDS of firefighters struggled for a third day Wednesday to contain France's worst wildfire of the summer near the glitzy Riviera resort of Saint-Tropez which has left one person dead and forced thousands of residents and tourists to flee.

The blaze has scorched some 5,000 hectares in a region known for its forests, vineyards and fauna since it broke out in the Plaine des Maures nature reserve on Monday evening.

The fire "had not spread" during the night but "that does not mean it is under control," said the fire service spokesman for the Var region, Franck Graciano. "We will carry out the same basic work as yesterday by dropping water on the critical places," he said.

The local authorities in a statement said one person had died, the first confirmed fatality from this wildfire. The statement did not give the person's identity or say how they had died.

Twenty-two people have

been lightly injured, including 19 who inhaled toxic fumes, the authorities said. Five members of the fire brigade have also been lightly injured.

Some 1,200 firefighters were deployed, some using high-pressure hoses and water-bombing planes and helicopters to control the flames.

High temperatures and strong winds forced local authorities to evacuate around 7,000 people from homes and campsites, the Var prefecture said Tuesday, many to the safety of municipal buildings and schools. Among them were 1,300 people staying at a campsite in the village of Bormes-les-Mimosas down the coast from Saint-Tropez. Other fled the village of La-Garde-Freinet, but there were no new evacuations overnight, the fire service said Wednesday.

"We started smelling the smoke around 7:00 pm, then we saw the flames on the hill," said Cindy Thinesse, who fled a campsite near Cavalaire on Monday evening.—AFP ■



Water-dropping planes and helicopters were used to control the flames. PHOTO: AFP

Japan: Prolonged virus step likely to delay solid economic recovery



Japan's economic recovery is likely to remain sluggish in the July-September period, as the resurgence in domestic coronavirus infections is expected to lead to parts of the country remaining under a state of emergency for the next few months, analysts say. **PHOTO: AFP**

JAPAN'S economic recovery is likely to remain sluggish in the July-September period, as the resurgence in domestic coronavirus infections is expected to lead to parts of the country remaining under a state of emergency for the next few months, analysts say. Some analysts say the econ-

omy is unlikely to return to its pre-pandemic size by the end of 2021 as projected by the government, following the release Monday of figures showing real gross domestic product increased at an annualized pace of just 1.3 per cent in the April-June period.

Responding to a survey released Thursday by the Japan Center for Economic Research and conducted over an eight-day period through Aug. 6, 36 private-sector think tanks forecast average GDP growth of an annualized 2.55 per cent in the July-September period, down sharply from the 4.90 per cent increase projected a month earlier.

The downgrade reflects the state of emergency issued in Tokyo in mid-July, which was then expanded to four more prefectures earlier this month, asking

eateries to stop serving alcohol and close early and for people to refrain from unnecessary outings.

Fully covering the period of the Tokyo Olympics, held with almost no spectators from July 23 through Aug. 8, the emergency, the fourth so far issued, is currently scheduled to end on Aug. 31.

But the number of daily new virus cases nationwide has kept increasing, topping 20,000 on Friday to log a record high for the third straight day. "The emergency will be probably extended to around October," said Keiji Kanda, a senior economist at the Daiwa Institute of Research. "That means, most of the July-September period will be under the state of emergency, and economic growth in the quarter will be very slow."—Kyodo ■

Is India ready for third wave of COVID-19?

EVEN though India is easing its restrictions amid a sharp drop in new COVID-19 cases, the threat of a third wave looms large, as experts predict another wave might hit the country by the end of August but say it will be less brutal.

Daily new COVID-19 cases across the country dropped from a peak of more than 400,000 in May to over 25,000 at present.

The caseload will rise slowly instead of significantly, and the third wave will not be as chaotic

as the second one, if the Delta variant remains dominant and no new variant has emerged, experts have said.

"I don't think that we will see a third wave which will be as bad as the second wave," said Randeep Guleria, director of India's premier health institute All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, adding that children would be "more susceptible" because they were not being vaccinated.

PREVENTIVE MEAS-

URES URGED
With cities lifting restrictions and normal life resuming across the country, the best defense against the coronavirus is still the public's awareness of strictly following COVID-19 preventive measures.

India's health officials have urged people to wear face masks, wash hands and maintain social distancing, and people embarking on "revenge travel" have been strongly criticized. —Xinhua ■



Last week, India's federal health ministry approved the allocation of over 971 million U.S. dollars -- 50 per cent of the federal government's share in the emergency response package announced in July -- to states to prepare for the possible COVID-19 third wave. **PHOTO: AFP**

The boy band bringing joy and local pride to Hong Kong



The occasion is an appearance by Edan Lui, one of the 12 members of local band Mirror who have taken Hong Kong by storm, who has arrived to promote an animated kids' movie screening in local theatres. **PHOTO: AFP**

IN the middle of a Hong Kong shopping mall, hundreds of people are excitedly screaming and chanting. But this is not a recent democracy protest. Instead the crowd has gath-

ered for the latest boy band frenzy sweeping the troubled city, where many are desperate for both a happy escape and a source of local pride.

The occasion is an appearance by Edan Lui, one of the 12 members of local band Mirror who have taken Hong Kong by storm, who has arrived to promote an animated kids' movie screening in local theatres.

A glass-shattering scream erupts as he takes the stage and the placard-waving crowd goes wild. Among the excitable fans was Chan Yuk-kwai, 74, who decided not to tell her daughter that she would be spending her Saturday trying to catch a glimpse of a man her grandson's age.—AFP ■

Bangladesh signs MoU to manufacture China's Sinopharm COVID-19 inactivated vaccine

BANGLADESH is all set to start locally manufacturing China's Sinopharm COVID-19 inactivated vaccine as an agreement on co-production of the Chinese jab was signed via video with relevant authorities.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between China's Sinopharm Group, Bangladesh's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Incepta Vaccine Ltd., a leading local vaccine manufacturing company, on Monday afternoon.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming said that the successful signing of the MoU will be a successful model for cooperation between China and South Asian countries. He emphasized that vaccine cooperation requires full mobilization and joint efforts from the government and enterprises.

Bangladeshi Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque said the signing of the agreement is a new milestone in China-Bangladesh's relationship. The minister expressed the hope that the local production of the Chinese vaccine will be started as soon as possible. For his part, Bangladeshi Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said it is a historic day for Bangladesh and China-Bangladesh friendship.—Xinhua ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Auto factories push US industrial higher than expected in July

AMERICAN auto assembly lines continued working last month, pushing industrial production above analysts' expectations, according to Federal Reserve data Tuesday.

Though vehicle manufacturers continue to struggle with a global shortage of crucial semiconductors, they nonetheless shortened or canceled their typical July factory shutdowns, the Fed said. That helped to account for a surprise 0.9 percent jump in industrial output last month, was more than analysts had forecast and well above June's 0.2 percent growth. Manufacturing output rose 1.4 percent, about half of which was due to a 11.2 percent jump in the motor vehicles and parts sector, according to the report.

Despite the gains in the sector, the Fed said motor vehicle production was about 3.5 percentage points below its peak in January of this year. —AFP ■

Watchdog halts Tsuruga nuclear safety assessment after data tampering

JAPAN'S nuclear regulator said Wednesday it will pause its safety assessment of a central Japan reactor in response to the operator having tampered with key geological data related to a fault underneath the facility, putting in doubt its restart after a 10-year shutdown.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority said it will stop its evaluation of the No. 2 unit at the Tsuruga nuclear power plant in Fukui Prefecture until it confirms the operator, Japan Atomic Power Co., has improved the management of data like that which was changed to make the fault appear less active. "Reliability of documentation is necessary to evaluate whether an operator's assessment (of faults and other aspects) is appropriate," said NRA Chairman Toyoshi Fuketa at a meeting, criticizing Japan Atomic Power for not following best scientific practice in compiling documents.—Kyodo ■

Suga asks business lobby to reduce commuters amid virus resurgence

PRIME MINISTER Yoshihide Suga asked Japan's largest business lobby Wednesday to help reduce the number of commuters through telework as the increasingly rampant novel coronavirus puts a strain on the country's medical system.

Meeting Masakazu Tokura, chairman of the Japan Business Federation known as Keidanren, at its office in Tokyo, Suga said "Telework is an effective countermeasure. It may be difficult for some businesses to implement, but I ask for cooperation."

Tokura responded that he will notify Keidanren members of the request with a view to slashing the number of commuters by 70 percent.

Tokura told reporters after the meeting that he urged Suga to make "antibody cocktail" treatment widely available, to which Suga responded he would do so.

The treatment, in which COVID-19 patients are adminis-



Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga asked Japan's largest business lobby Wednesday to help reduce the number of commuters through telework as the increasingly rampant novel coronavirus puts a strain on the country's medical system. PHOTO: KYODO

tered casirivimab and imdevimab intravenously, lowers the risk of hospitalization or death by about

70 percent, according to overseas clinical trials. The meeting was held as Japan sees an unprece-

dent rise in coronavirus cases nationwide due to the highly contagious Delta variant.—Kyodo ■

China sifts opportunity from ashes of US Afghan project



Chinese state-run media branded the Taliban's victory as an indicator of the US' failure in Afghanistan. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

CHINA'S overtures to the Taliban indicate a bid to extract maxi-

mum benefit from the dramatic collapse of the US project in Af-

ghanistan.

But Beijing will remain watchful of the hardliners now running the show in Kabul, especially as Afghanistan borders China's eastern Xinjiang province, home to the Muslim-majority Uyghurs, analysts say.

Around a fortnight before the Islamists seized power in a lightning offensive that stunned the world, Foreign Minister Wang Yi hosted a Taliban delegation in Beijing.

And just one day after the Taliban entered Kabul, China said it was ready to deepen "friendly

and cooperative" relations with Afghanistan.

While Beijing says it has no desire to direct any future political settlement in Kabul, it appears to have scented opportunity to press its Belt and Road interests as the US pulls out.

- Pragmatism prevails -

As power transitions to the Taliban, Beijing has a few key demands, said Hua Po, an independent political analyst in Beijing.

"The first is to protect China's investments and ensure security of Chinese nationals," he says.—AFP ■

UK inflation slows but expected to rise again



Analysts say inflation in Britain will likely rise again this year. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

BRITAIN'S annual inflation rate slowed sharply last month as clothing retailers slashed prices in the pandemic-hit sector, official data showed Wednesday, but economists warned it will likely rise again. The Consumer Prices Index stood at 2.0 per cent in July, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

The rate had soared in June to a near three-year peak of 2.5 per cent as prices had accelerated on easing coronavirus restrictions.

"Inflation fell back in July

across a broad range of goods and services, including clothing, which decreased with summer sales returning after the pandemic hit the sector last year," said ONS statistician Jonathan Athow. Last month's slowdown was partly due to the clothing sector, where price growth stood at 1.7 per cent after a 3.0-per cent bounce in June. Inflation has nevertheless been propelled higher since March when the UK government began a phased lifting of coronavirus restrictions.—AFP ■

Sri Lanka's Hambantota industrial park speeds ahead with new investments

The low hum of excavators and dump trucks echoes across 228.5 hectares of land belonging to the Hambantota International Port's (HIP) industrial park, as contractors scramble to complete ground leveling for a 300 million U.S. dollar tire factory.

Sri Lanka's southern district of Hambantota is mostly known for its sprawling paddy fields, peacocks and ruins from the ancient Kingdom of Ruhuna. But the sound of heavy machinery signals the impending arrival of modern manufacturing, which the government hopes will transform the district into an industrial powerhouse and commodities trading hub.—Xinhua ■

Facebook moves to block Taliban's WhatsApp accounts

Facebook said Tuesday it was blocking WhatsApp accounts linked to the Taliban after the radical Islamic group seized control of Afghanistan and sought to use the messaging service to help it govern. "The Taliban is sanctioned as a terrorist organization under US law and we have banned them from our services under our Dangerous Organization policies," a Facebook spokesperson told AFP. The Facebook move shut down a WhatsApp hotline the Taliban had set up to receive complaints about violence and looting, according to the Financial Times. A WhatsApp spokesperson said in an email to AFP that the company is required to follow US sanctions. "This includes banning accounts that appear to represent themselves as official accounts of the Taliban. We're seeking more information from relevant US authorities given the evolving situation in Afghanistan," the company said.—AFP ■

BTS producer becomes South Korea's best-paid employee

THE producer behind K-pop sensation BTS was the highest-paid employee in South Korea in the first half of this year, reports said Wednesday, outranking some of the country's richest business leaders.

The trailblazing septet have reached global superstardom with their single "Dynamite" entering the Billboard Hot 100 at number one last year, making them the first South Korean act to top the US chart.

They are credited with generating billions for the South Korean economy, and last year their label HYBE made a high-profile stock market debut.

Kang Hyo-won, the chief producer of several of the group's megahits including "Blood Sweat & Tears", "DNA" and "Idol", made more than 40 billion won (\$34.2 million) in the January to July period, a regulatory filing by his agency HYBE showed.

That made Kang, 37 and also known as Pdogg, the top paid staff member at any listed South Korean company in the first half of the year, reports said.

His wages were around 38 million won, but Kang also earned 39.9 billion won from stock options and 111 million won in incentives, according to



South Korean boy band BTS perform during the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards. PHOTO: MTV/AFP

his company.

In second place was Chung Mong-koo, the honorary chairman of South

Korean auto giant Hyundai Motor Group.

Chung, 83, earned 30.2 billion won, mostly in sev-

erance pay from Hyundai Mobis, the automaker's parts and service arm.

— AFP ■

Australia's Qantas to make vaccines mandatory for staff

AUSTRALIAN airline Qantas said Wednesday it would make Covid-19 vaccines mandatory for staff, as the company bids to get planes back into the skies.

The national carrier is one of the first major Australian firms to mandate vaccines for employees, saying the rule would also apply to its budget offshoot Jetstar.

Pilots, cabin crew and airport staff must be fully vaccinated by November 15, with other staff members given until March 31 next year.

"Having a fully vaccinated workforce will safeguard our people against the virus but also protect our customers and the communities we fly to," Qantas CEO Alan Joyce said in a statement.

Qantas' new rule comes after Australia's conservative government said it would not make vaccines mandatory but would leave businesses to implement their own policies. The airline said a staff survey found 89 percent were willing to be vaccinated or already had been, while 4 percent were unwilling or unable.— AFP ■



Australian airline Qantas said Wednesday it would make Covid-19 vaccines mandatory for staff, as the company bids to get planes back into the skies. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of Lier Chemical Co.,ltd have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name "ROYAL GOLDEN CITIZEN CO.,LTD", to new distributor name "THU KHA MAHAR AGROCHMICAL CO.,LTD". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Thu Kha Mahar Agrochemical Co.,Ltd. Ph-09797915818.

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	Mahar Fighter	Thiamethoxam 50% WG	P2021-5229

Change of Name

The daughter of U Zaw Hpone Naing, Aye Khin Khin Hpone (National ID No.13/TaKaNa(Naing)332123; Passport No.MF208290) to be called as Shwe Wutt Yee Hpone @ Aye Khin Khin Hpone.

Shwe Wutt Yee Hpone

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V SEA MASTER VOY.NO. (131S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SEA MASTER VOY.NO. (131S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-8-2021 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (216N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (216N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-8-2021 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINES

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Canada won't recognize Taliban government in Afghanistan

CANADA does not intend to recognize a Taliban government in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Tuesday, explaining that Ottawa continues to view the group as a terrorist organization.

"Canada has no plans to recognize the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan," Trudeau said.

"They have taken over and replaced a duly elected democratic government by force. And... they are a recognized terrorist organization under Canadian law."

On Monday, the United States said that it would only recognize a Taliban government in Kabul if it were to respect the rights of women and shun terrorists.—AFP ■

Taliban co-founder back in Afghanistan

THE Taliban's co-founder returned to Afghanistan Tuesday following the group's stunning takeover of the country, hours after they told government staff to return to work -- though residents reacted cautiously and few women took to the streets.

Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar's arrival from Qatar -- where he has spent months leading talks with the United States and then Afghan peace negotiators -- crowns a stunning comeback for the Taliban after being ousted 20 years ago.

Significantly Baradar, now deputy leader of the group, chose to touch down in Afghanistan's second biggest city Kandahar -- the Taliban's spiritual birthplace and capital during their first time in power.

He landed hours after evacuation flights from Kabul's airport restarted after chaos Monday when huge crowds mobbed the apron, with some people so desperate they clung to the fuselage of a US military plane as it rolled down the runway for take-off.—AFP ■

'I fear for my Afghan sisters'

NOBEL Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai on Tuesday wrote "I fear for my Afghan sisters" in an op-ed published in The New York Times in the wake of the Taliban's stunning takeover.

"We will have time to debate what went wrong in the war in Afghanistan, but in this critical moment we must listen to the voices of Afghan women and girls. They are asking for protection, for education, for the freedom and the future they were promised," Yousafzai, 24, wrote. "We cannot continue to fail them. We have no time to spare."

Yousafzai, long an advocate for girls' education, survived a Pakistani Taliban assassination attempt when she was just 15 years old when the militants shot her in the head in rural northwest Pakistan.

Since then the Oxford graduate has become a global figure promoting education for girls. The Taliban took effective control of Afghanistan on Sunday when president Ashraf Ghani fled and the insurgents walked into Kabul with no opposition.—AFP ■

Berlin calls on NATO to learn lessons from Afghanistan



Germany's defence minister on Tuesday urged NATO to learn lessons from its Afghanistan mission -- slammed as a "debacle" by critics, as allies struggled to pull off a difficult evacuation operation from the capital, Kabul. PHOTO: UNSPLASH/AFP

GERMANY'S defence minister on Tuesday urged NATO to learn lessons from its Afghanistan mission -- slammed as a

"debacle" by critics, as allies struggled to pull off a difficult evacuation operation from the capital, Kabul.

Speaking ahead of an emergency meeting of NATO ambassadors, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer told German broadcaster ZDF "there's a lot that we have to work on within NATO".

"The question for us will be to what extent are we willing to carry the consequences for this, and to what extent we are prepared to take measures that up to this point we have left to the Americans," Kramp-Karrenbauer said.

NATO ambassadors are meeting on Tuesday to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, where Western allied forces are seeking to accelerate their evacuation operations.—AFP ■

Defiant Afghan ex-VP vows new fight with Taliban

AFGHANISTAN'S defiant vice president made one thing clear as the Taliban seized control of the capital following the collapse of his government — he will not surrender.

It appears he has retreated to the country's last remaining holdout: the Panjshir Valley northeast of Kabul.

"I won't disappoint millions who listened to me. I will never be under one ceiling with Taliban. NEVER," he wrote in English on Twitter on Sunday, before going underground.

A day later, pictures began to surface on social media of the former vice president with the son of his former mentor and famed anti-Taliban fighter Ahmed Shah Massoud in Panjshir — a mountainous redoubt tucked into the Hindu Kush.

Saleh and Massoud's son, who commands a militia force, appear to be putting together the



Taliban fighters patrol a market in Kabul. PHOTO: AFP

first pieces of a guerilla movement to take on the victorious Taliban, as fighters regroup in Panjshir.

'Resist with all our might'

Famed for its natural defences, the valley never fell to the Taliban during the civil war of the 1990s, nor was it ever conquered by the Soviets a decade earlier.

"We will not allow the Taliban to enter Panjshir and will resist with all our might and power, and fight them," one resident told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Such a battle would be the latest in Saleh's long struggle against the Taliban as a onetime insurgent turned spy chief and later vice premier.—AFP ■

New island discovered south of Tokyo after submarine volcano erupts

A new island has been discovered near Iwoto Island located around 1,200 kilometers south of Tokyo after a submarine volcano began erupting late last week, the Japan Coast Guard said Monday.

The new island is C-shaped, with a diameter of approximately 1 kilometer. It was discovered after the volcano some 50 km south of Iwoto in the Ogasawara Islands in the Pacific Ocean start-

ed erupting on Friday.

The Japan Meteorological Agency has issued warnings about smoke and large ash deposits in nearby waters as an active eruption is expected to continue.

The coast guard found the newly formed island when it observed the eruption from the air on Sunday, according to the weather agency. Pumice created

by the volcanic activity was also found by the coast guard floating across a 60-km area in a north-west direction.

New islands have been confirmed in the area in 1904, 1914 and 1986, with all of them having submerged due to erosion by waves and currents.

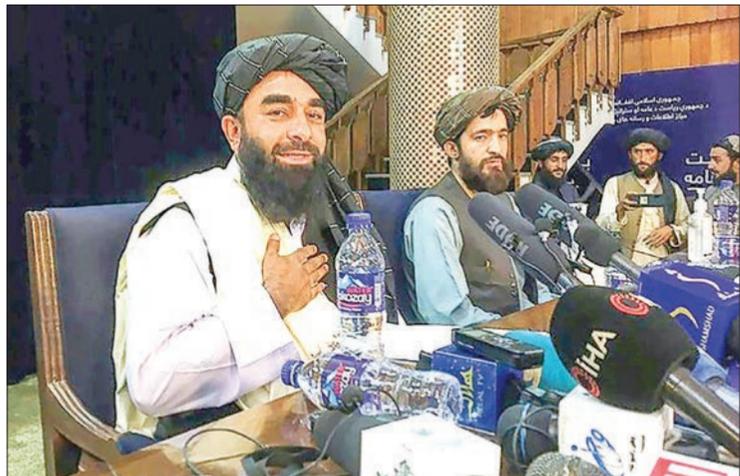
The one found in 1986 sank after about two months, according to the coast guard.—Kyodo ■



Photo shows eruption at a submarine volcano near Iwoto Island, located around 1,200 kilometers south of Tokyo on Aug. 15, 2021.

PHOTO: JAPAN COAST GUARD/KYODO

Taliban pledge to be 'different', as Afghans flee



The Taliban are pledging to rule differently from their last stint from 1996-2001. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Taliban have offered a pledge of reconciliation, vowing no revenge against opponents and to respect women's rights in a "different" rule of Afghanistan from two decades ago.

The announcements came on Tuesday night shortly after the return to Afghanistan of their co-founder, crowning the group's astonishing comeback after being ousted by a US-led invasion in 2001. With huge concerns globally about the Taliban's brutal human rights record -- and tens of thousands of Afghans still trying

to flee the country -- they held their first press conference from Kabul. "All those in the opposite side are pardoned from A to Z," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told foreign and local reporters, revealing his identity for the first time. "We will not seek revenge." Mujahid said the new regime would be "positively different" from their 1996-2001 stint, which was infamous for deaths by stoning, girls being banned from school and women from working in contact with men.

"If the question is based on

ideology, and beliefs, there is no difference... but if we calculate it based on experience, maturity, and insight, no doubt there are many differences," Mujahid told reporters. He also said they were "committed to letting women work in accordance with the principles of Islam", without offering specifics. A spokesman for the group in Doha, Suhail Shaheen, told Britain's Sky News that women would not be required to wear the all-covering burqa, but did not say what attire would be acceptable.—AFP ■

US steps up Kabul evacuation, says Taliban pledged 'safe passage'

THE White House said Tuesday the Taliban had promised that civilians could travel safely to the Kabul airport as the US military stepped up its airlift for Americans and Afghans fleeing the Islamist group.

Some 3,200 people have been evacuated by the US military so far, a White House official said, including 1,100 on Tuesday alone --

US citizens, permanent residents and their families on 13 flights.

Earlier Tuesday, the White House had said that 11,000 US nationals remain inside the country, including diplomats, contractors and others, most waiting to be evacuated after the Taliban takeover. Washington wants to complete the exodus before its August 31 withdrawal deadline, and thou-

sands of US soldiers were at the airport as the Pentagon planned to ramp up flights of its huge C-17 transport jets to as many as two dozen a day. "Now that we have established the flow, we expect those numbers to escalate," said the White House official who gave the updated evacuation figures Tuesday and who spoke on condition of anonymity.—AFP ■



A US Air Force C-17 is seen loaded with some 640 Afghans fleeing Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover. **PHOTO: US AIRFORCE/ AFP**

Escorted by Taliban: India's midnight evacuation from Afghanistan

OUTSIDE the main iron gate of the Indian embassy in Kabul, a group of Taliban fighters waited -- armed with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenade launchers.

Inside the compound were 150 Indian diplomats and nationals -- growing increasingly nervous as they watched news of the Taliban tightening their grip on the capital, which they took a day earlier without a fight.

Their position was a precarious one. Pakistan has long been the Taliban's biggest supporter, using the country for so-called strategic depth in never-ending battles -- real and diplomatic -- with arch-rival India.

India in turn, strongly backed the government that took over when the Taliban were ousted, earning them hatred and enmity from the hardline Islamist group. But the Taliban fighters out-

side the Indian embassy weren't there to extract revenge, but rather to escort them to Kabul airport, where a military aircraft was on standby to evacuate them after New Delhi decided to shut its mission.

As the first of nearly two dozen vehicles drove out of the embassy late on Monday, some of the fighters waved and smiled at the passengers -- an AFP correspondent among them.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cambodian court jails union leader for two years over border comments

A Cambodian court on Wednesday jailed outspoken union leader Rong Chhun for two years on incitement charges relating to comments about the country's border, the latest legal case activists say is aimed at cracking down on opposition voices.

Rong Chhun, the leader of the Cambodian Confederation of Unions, was arrested in July last year after accusing the government of "irregularities" over the demarcation of the eastern border with Vietnam.

The demarcation process at the Cambodia-Vietnam border has for years been a lightning rod for controversy, fuelled by strong anti-Vietnamese sentiment in the kingdom.

Rong Chhun, who has been in pre-trial detention since his arrest last July, had said that a newly agreed borderline encroaches on some locals' farmland.—AFP ■

Families of Egypt death row Islamists face agonising wait

After surviving the bloodshed when Egyptian security forces killed some 800 people in a sprawling Islamist protest camp in 2013, 12 Muslim Brotherhood members are on death row waiting to be hanged.

For their families, it is an agonising wait, knowing their loved ones could be executed at any moment, without warning, having exhausted all avenues of appeal. Brothers Mahmud and Adam, who spoke to AFP on condition their real names not be used for fear of repercussions, said their inability to do any more to exonerate their father was a constant source of anxiety.—AFP



Indian nationals prepare to board an Indian military aircraft to be evacuated after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. **PHOTO: AFP**

Yushin Okami wants to get new challenge against Aung La N Sang

FORMER two-division ONE World Champion Aung La N Sang “The Burmese Python” is on the comeback trail, and thus another ONE Championship star fighter Yushin Okami of Japan is making a challenge against the Burmese Python via his social media.

On 30 July, the Myanmar sports icon knocked out Brazilian hulk Leandro Ataides at ONE: BATTLEGROUND in Singapore and took a step closer toward reclaiming the middleweight ONE belt.

Following the victory, Aung La told ONE Championship commentator Mitch Chilson that he was willing to fight anyone next.

There are few athletes who have recently caught Aung La N Sang’s attention including Japanese fighter Yushin Okami.

The Japanese mixed martial arts legend Yushin Okami announced on Twitter that he was moving up from the welterweight division to the middleweight division and that his aim was a matchup with “The Burmese Python.”

And after Aung La N Sang’s victory on 30 July, Okami doubled down on the challenge.



Japanese Mixed Martial Arts legend Yushin Okami. PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

“I have been eagerly awaiting a fight with him since the day I decided to move up to middleweight,” Okami tweeted. “Since then, nothing has changed in my mind. Aung La N Sang, I will beat you.”

The Myanmar sports icon wasted no time in responding.

“It would be an honour to share the ONE Championship Circle with you,” Aung La N Sang tweeted back. “But I don’t think you will beat me.”

With the challenge accepted, the two then exchanged pleasantries.

“Congrats on your win,”

Okami tweeted. “I look forward to fighting you in the Circle Cage. The results will be there.”

And with that, Aung La N Sang replied with nothing but kind words.

“Thanks,” he wrote. “Big fan of you and it will be an honour.”

“This bout has not been made officially by ONE Championship’s matchmaking committee, but it has certainly excited the organization’s global fan base. Stay tuned to ONEFC.com for more updates on this development,” ONE Championship officials commented. —GNLM

Halep earns injury comeback win; Gauff to face Osaka

SIMONA Halep earned her first victory since last May’s calf injury pause as the three-time finalist defeated Magda Linette 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 on Tuesday at the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Masters.

American teenager Coco Gauff lined up a contest with second seed Naomi Osaka through

a 6-1, 6-2 hammering of Hsieh Su-Wei.

On a day when rain forced a reorganisation of the afternoon and evening schedule, women’s top seed Ashleigh Barty and Olympic gold medalist Alexander Zverev never made it onto court.

Halep only returned to the

Tour last week in Montreal, losing in the opening round. She remained confident that progress was not far away after her injury in Rome three months ago.

The Romanian defeated her Polish opponent for a second time, taking just over two hours.

“It was a strong match. In my opinion, both of us played really well,” the 29-year-old said. “Maybe the rain delay helped me a little bit to find energy. I was a little bit stronger physically and mentally in the third set.

“It means a lot, I’m really happy to win. It’s always important to have victories when you come back from an injury.

“This was the first time in my life that I’ve had this kind of problem, and I didn’t really know how to manage it. But I’m happy to be back, happy to play pain-free. I’m just trying to build my confidence back.” —AFP ■



Simona Halep of Romania plays a backhand during her match against Magda Linette of Poland during the WTA/ATP Cincinnati tournament in Ohio. PHOTO: 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.

Ronaldo rubbishes ‘disrespectful’ reports of Madrid move

CRISTIANO Ronaldo on Tuesday blasted reports that he was trying for a return to Real Madrid, hours after coach Carlo Ancelotti also said he was not going to take the Juventus forward back to Spain.

In an Instagram post, Ronaldo said that his “story at Real Madrid has been written”, although he did not explicitly say that he was not looking for a way out of Juve.

He said that such talk was “disrespectful” to both him and “to all the clubs involved in these rumours, as well as to their players and staff”. “There

have been frequent news and stories associating me with a number of clubs in many different Leagues, with nobody ever being concerned about trying to find out the actual truth,” Ronaldo added.

“I’m breaking my silence now to say that I can’t allow people to keep playing around with my name. I remain focused on my career and in my work, committed and prepared for all the challenges that I have to face.”

Ronaldo has been the subject of a series of rumours about his future this summer.—AFP ■