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.

All need to continuously preserve these fine traditions of the Tatmadaw which has been serving the State defence duty and the public interests

The Tatmadaw has been serving the State defence duty and the public interests since the successive eras till today, and it will continuously serving it in the future. As Shan State (North) is a primary home to many ethnic people, officers, other ranks and families need to solve the difficulties of the region together with local ethnic people, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with officers, other ranks and families of Lashio Station at the hall of the military command headquarters yesterday morning.

In his address, the Senior General said all officers, other ranks and families have known that the Tatmadaw born together with the independence has been serving the duty of State peace and stability and solving the internal conflicts in successive eras while steadfastly safeguarding the life and property of the people. In shaping the nation to be peaceful and stable and developed, the history proves the efforts of the Tatmadaw in directly and indirectly fulfilling the requirements of the State and the people. Hence, all need to continuously preserve these fine traditions of the Tatmadaw.

The national cause is to focus on prosperity of the nation and food sufficiency. Two points for political trend to ensure firm genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democracy and build the Union based on democracy and federalism.
All need to continuously preserve these fine traditions of the Tatmadaw which has been serving the State defence duty and the public interests

FROM PAGE-1

Since outbreak of COVID-19 in the country, the Tatmadaw has made preparations and fulfills the needs of health staff, machinery and medical supplies as well as donated supplement nutritious foods to patients and companions as well as health staff at the hospitals and attended to the general needs till today. A lot of needs can be seen in all sectors such as management and economy during the five-year term of new democratic government after the 2015 election. Although the Tatmadaw suggested some points in the State defence, security and other sectors, military-civilian cooperation was weak.

All need to follow the provisions from the Constitution 2008 the entire people approved. Although there may be some weakness and needs in the Constitution, it features a large number of points to protect the State and the people.

It is necessary to carry out one point for national cause and two more points for political trend. The national cause is to focus on prosperity of the nation and food sufficiency. Two points for political trend to ensure firm genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democracy and build the Union based on democracy and federalism. The Tatmadaw accepts these points as the Our Three Main National Causes. The governing the country should not be princess or lords ruling. Only when the firm organizations and parties are to cooperate with each other will the nation enjoy peace and tranquility and development.

The Tatmadaw’s main duty is national defence, so it must try to become a capable Tatmadaw. As Shan State (North) is mainly inhabited by ethnic groups, Tatmadaw officers and other ranks and their families work together with those ethnic nationals to resolve the regional difficulties. No matter what duty they serve, hard and cooperative work with goodwill and correct attitude will pay off for regional progress.

Every Tatmadaw member voluntarily joined the Tatmadaw without anyone’s urging but with a sense of duty to protect the State and the people. So, they must serve their duty with strong conviction and commitment and try to become real Tatmadawmen. As daily duties mean promoting the capacity of individuals, their wisdom and initiative must be used to overcome any difficulty they may face after consideration.

As the reading power of an individual contributes much towards socio-economy, they need to read and train their children in order that they will not deviate from the path to education.

When the outbreak declines significantly and can be put under well control, education promotion measures will resume. Energetic efforts are being made for vaccinations, and it has been targeted to vaccinate up to 50 per cent of the population by this year end, said the Senior General.

Later, the Senior General and wife and party proceeded to the local military hospital in Lashio where he greeted the officers and other ranks receiving treatment, comforted them and presented foodstuffs.—MNA

1,702 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 19 September, total figure rises to 446,573

MYANMAR’s COVID-19 positive cases rose to 446,573 after 1,702 new cases were reported on 19 September 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 398,239 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 17,073 after 57 died.
A plan will be adopted to open an agriculture and veterinary institute or college in Lashio of Shan State (North): Senior General

Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing yesterday afternoon met with members of Shan State cabinet, officials from self-administered division and zones and officials at the hall of Shan State government branch in Lashio.

The Chief Minister of Shan State and officials reported on progress of regional development, control of COVID-19, arrangements for industrial zones and hotel zones in respective areas, enhancement of agriculture and livestock sector and health sector, and development of Lashio District.

Member of the State Administration Council Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Union Ministers U Tin Htut Oo, U Hla Moe, U Khin Maung Yi, Dr Thet Khang Win and U Min Thein Zan discussed opening of trade camps for resumption of border trade, smooth transportation, production of agriculture and livestock sectors, establishment of agricultural institute, distribution of pedigree animals, water and power supply, assistance for providing capitals to businesses, issuance of technologies and capital, formation of cooperative societies, controlling the illegal production of natural resources, fulfilment of health staff and medical aid, extension of work establishment at hospitals, uplift of health standard and upgrade of sport ground in Shan State.

In his speech, the Senior General pledged to fulfill the needs of agriculture and livestock sector, sports sector and boosting per-acre yield of tea and distribution of technique and quality strains reported in the meeting. As there are some 60,000 acres of tea plantations in Shan State, production of value-added tea products will create job opportunities for the local people and improve regional economy.

It is necessary to systematically use the inputs in the farms as agricultural measures need good quality stain, fertile soil, supply of water and good cultivation methods. High yield of crops will improve the socio-economic life of the local farmers.

It is necessary to ensure edible oil sufficiency.

It is necessary to ensure edible oil sufficiency. Oil palm plants are grown in Taninthayi Region whereas edible crops are grown in Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway and Ayeyawady regions and Shan State. Efforts must be made for increasing the per-acre yield of cotton to be able to cut the import volume of cotton.

(Excerpt from the speech to the meeting 2/2021 of the Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar made by Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 7-9-2021)
Regional development projects implemented in Kachin, Shan (North) States

UNION Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Hla Moe met the officials of Cooperative Department, Rural Development Department and Small Scale Industries Department in Kachin State on 18 September and in Shan State (North) yesterday.

During the visits, the Union Minister said the comprehensive rural development programmes are being implemented through cooperation with SMEs to promote the socio-economic status of rural people including infrastructure and cooperative sectors. It needs to work together with the affiliated departments under the same ministry in carrying out the regional development projects. The Rural Development Department should maintain the current momentum in implementing the projects.

The cooperative societies also need to conduct fundraising programmes in line with the law and desire of the members, and the development programmes should be for the grassroots. It needs to report the real situation in a timely manner.

Moreover, it should open the vocational trainings to provide the job opportunities to raise the incomes.

Then, the respective department heads reported on the regional development programmes.—MNA

Information Deputy Minister meets with IPRD department officials in Mandalay, Sagaing regions

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Ye Tint met with employees of the Ministry of Information in Sagaing and Mandalay Regions yesterday at the Department of Information and Public Relations in Mandalay.

At the meeting, the Deputy Minister discussed the current developments of the country and asked the staffs to perform their duties faithfully, and to enhance the information sector through appropriate reforms. He added necessary preparation should be made to improve the information and public relations activities and bring them back to normal as numbers of COVID-19 cases have declined and the stability and security of the country improved.

Today, some young people in the country are involved in destructive activities with little knowledge and thinking due to the mobilization of destroyers, therefore, it is necessary to increase the education of young people. The Prime Minister has allowed the Information and Public Relations Department to be expanded to make it more extensive under the amended constitution. Plans are underway to provide the staff with upgraded capacity building as soon as possible.

In the afternoon, the Deputy Minister met with the staff of the PyinOoLwin District and Township Information and Public Relations Departments and the retransmission station in PyinOoLwin.—Region IPRD

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.

Ministry of Health (2-8-2021)
Union Industry Minister inspects New Locomotive Assembling Factory (Nay Pyi Taw)

The Ministry of Industry organized the 3rd coordination meeting of Machine Supervisory Committee on 17 September.

Union Minister Dr Charlie Than stressed the necessary things regarding with the proposals to the committee.

Concerning the permission for procurement of materials to build five 1200 hp locomotives raised by Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Department of Myanma Railways under the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Union Minister inspected the New Locomotive Assembling Factory (Nay Pyi Taw) yesterday.

During the tour, the in-charge of the plant explained facts related to the factory, manufacturing and assembling processes of new locomotives.

The Union Minister then said he made an inspection tour to the plant for the motion to buy the needed equipment to build five 1500 hp Caterpillar locomotives tabled during the coordination meeting held on Friday.

The State Administration Council also instructed that the expired fuel tanker, carriage and vehicles of the Union organization and ministries should be repaired to use and it needs to systematically arrange in accordance with the procedures as quickly as possible if they cannot be repaired. The Machine Supervisory Committee sets the policy and directives to effectively use the machines including vehicles, trains, vessels and aircraft of the Union level organizations and ministries concerned.

It also needs to arrange to apply the machines produced by the factories and implement human resources development programmes. It should conduct trainings to maintain the techniques and make arrangements to add the train related subjects at the technological colleges and universities.

Then, the Union Minister inspected the new locomotives production processes. —MNA

Daily imports of anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products continue

The Ministry of Commerce is striving for enabling the people to have access to the essential medical supplies that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, by arranging continuous importation through trading posts, international airport and seaports with standard operation procedures.

On 19 September (Yesterday), anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products including oxygen plants and concentrators were transported by 12 vehicles of 10 companies.

A total of 800 empty oxygen cylinders, four oxygen plants, 412 oxygen concentrators for home use, 2,800 PPE suits, and 17 tonnes of masks were imported via Myawady, Muse, Chinshwehaw and Kanptee trading camps, seaports and the Yangon International Airport.

Four oxygen plants were transported to Mandalay, Amarapura, PyinOoLwin and Momeik respectively.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for better importation.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, facilitating the importation of essential medical supplies required in prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, as well as contact persons for inquiries can be reached through the Ministry’s Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA
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, ascended 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 from 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

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COVID-19 vaccination continues for IDPs in MraukU, Rakhine State

A total of 234 IDPs from Ngawswek Village IDP camp, Pysa Village IDP camp, Kalachang Village IDP camp, Dainggyi Village IDP camp and Ywahaung IDP camp were vaccinated yesterday morning at designated vaccination sites in respective villages. Ward Village Administrators and IDP camp officials collaborated to assist the officials from the Public Health Department during the vaccination process. People were screened before getting the vaccination under the COVID-19 rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Health, as well as monitored for about 30 minutes before the departure.—Khin Maung Tun (IPRD)/GNLM

200 companies struck off register due to absence of AR in Sept: DICA

A total of 280 companies was struck off the register this month as they fail to submit annual return (AR) on the online registry system, MyCO, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The DICA has notified any registered company which fails to submit its AR on MyCO to the company.

The DICA found that 200 companies failed to restore their statuses within six months of suspension under Section 430 (f) of Myanmar Companies Law 2017. The companies were suspended from 6 to 13 September respectively. Also, 500 companies were also struck off in July and August, according to the DICA’s notifications.

All registered companies need to file ARs on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

As per DICA’s report, more than 16,000 companies were suspended for failure to submit AR forms within the due date. Newly established companies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

The DICA has notified that any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A).

If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the company’s status is suspended. Companies can restore their statuses only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for AR fee, K100,000 for restoration of the company on the register, and K100,000 for late filing of documents, totaling K250,000.

If a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the registration, according to the DICA notice.

The registration and re-registration of companies on the online registry system, MyCO, topped more than 2,000 in the first half of this year. Earlier, MyCO received more than 1,000 applications from new companies every month.

At present, 100 per cent of the applicants are using the online registration platform, according to data provided by the DICA.—GNLM
SAGAING Region Agriculture Department was engaged in cultivation of tea cultivation in June 2021 and has finished 11,427 acres of tea plants in the current financial year 2020-2021, said U Win Hlaing Oo, head of region department.

“The tea plantation is commonly found in Homalin Township of Hkamti District. The local residents practice organic farming only and produce quality tea leaf. The tea leaf is mostly sent to Mandalay market. The region department and the growers are making concerted efforts to boost the yield of leaves, penetrate more markets and optimize packaging,” U Win Hlaing Oo elaborated.

The department has released the data on cultivation of tea plants—290 acres of tea plants in Mawlaik District, 9,175 acres in Hkamti District, 911 acres in Naga Self-Administered Zone, 487 acres in Katha District and 564 acre in Kawlin District in Sagaing Region.

The personnel from the respective township departments are providing technical assistance to increase the yield virtually and physically.—Lu Lay/GNLM
Preserve traditional culture of ethnic people for perpetual existence

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is home to more than 130 ethnic national people who have been preserving their traditional culture and customs since time immemorial. Although they preserve their traditions and cultural heritage as much as they can, some of these traditions are vanishing due to changes in lifestyles and modernization. Their ages and experiences are the best media to reflect the characteristics of various ethnic national people.

All traditions and culture which reflect the lives and characters of various ethnic national people are in the same value. So, they all should serve each other to preserve the valuable traditions and culture for perpetual existence in the land of Myanmar.

IN an industrial unit on the outskirts of Taipei chefs are plating quality meals quickly delivered to many located in now empty shopfronts of Mango Tree and Coca chains, had to pivot her family’s 45-strong restaurant: welcome to the world of “ghost kitchens”.

Even before the pandemic sent an earthquake through the global restaurant trade, the “Americanization” of commercial kitchens was well underway, but because culture and traditions are based on concepts, lifestyle and nature of their forefathers. So, new generation youths need to preserve their culture and traditions even if they want to taste moderately.

It is no need to compete for the traditions and culture among the ethnic people. All traditions and culture which reflect the lives and characters of various ethnic national people are in the same value. So, they all should serve each other to preserve the valuable traditions and culture for perpetual existence in the land of Myanmar.

Antibodies from original strain COVID-19 infection don’t bind to variants: study

However, those antibodies don’t bind well to newer variants, finds a new study, published in the journal Nature Communications.

**PEOPLE infected with the original strain of the virus that causes COVID-19 early in the pan- demic produced a consistent antibody response, making two major groups of antibodies to bind to the spike protein on the virus’s outer surface. However, those antibodies don’t bind well to newer variants, a study of the University of Illinois (UI) found. The researchers published papers about COVID-19 patients for data about the sequence of the antibodies they produced. They focused on antibodies against the spike protein, the part of the virus that binds to receptors on hu- man cells to infect them. The spike protein is the target of most vaccines. They found that many anti- body sequences converged into two main groups, indicating a consistent human immune re- sponse to the virus. The researchers studied the convergent antibodies’ abil- ity to bind to several variants and found that they no longer bound to some. The finding has implications for the ability of new variants to infect people who contracted earlier versions of the virus, as well as for the continuing efficacy of vaccines and the design of possible vac- cine boosters, said study leader Nicholas Wu, a UI professor of biochemistry.**

“Even though this antibody response is very common with the original strain, it doesn’t really interact with variants,” said Wu. “That, of course, raises the concern of the virus evolving to escape the body’s main antibody response. Some anti- bodies should still be effective – the body makes antibodies to many parts of the virus, not only the spike protein – but the particular groups of antibodies that we saw in this study will not be as effective.”

The researchers said they would like to conduct similar studies characterizing antibody responses to Delta and other variants, to see whether they also produce a convergent response and how it differs from the original strain. The findings are published on the journal website on Friday, have been published in the journal Nature Communications.

**SOURCE: Xinhua**

**Antibodies from original strain COVID-19 infection don’t bind to variants: study**

**Ghost kitchens’ boom in Asia as pandemic sparks huge demand**

Research group Euromonitor estimates there are some 7,500 cloud kitchens now operating in China and 3,500 in India – compared to 1,500 for the United States and 750 for Britain.

EN an industrial unit on the outskirts of Taipei chefs are plating meals that will never be served in a restaurant: welcome to the world of “ghost kitchens”.

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**Myanmar Daily Weather Report**

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 20 Sep- tember, 2021**

Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi, Regions and Kayin, Northern Shan, Hakha, Kayin, Mon State and scattered in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Chin State. Degree of certainty is (90%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar Waters. Wave height will be about (4-6) feet and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of increase of rain in Taninthay Region and Kayin, Mon State.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20 September, 2021:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20 September, 2021:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (90%).

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20 September, 2021:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (90%).
SpaceX all-civilian orbital crew completes historic mission

FOUR SpaceX tourists returned to Earth safely on Saturday after spending three days in space, successfully concluding the first orbital mission in history with no professional astronauts on board.

Four SpaceX tourists returned to Earth safely on Saturday after spending three days in space, successfully concluding the first orbital mission in history with no professional astronauts on board.

Iceland's volcanic eruption the longest in half a century

IT will be six months on Sunday that the volcanic eruption currently mesmerising spectators near Reykjvik first began, making it the longest Iceland has witnessed in more than 50 years.

The first lava began spewing out of a fissure close to Mount Fagradalsfjall on the evening of March 19 on the Reykjanes peninsula to the southwest of Reykjavik. And the ensuing spectacle -- ranging from just a slow trickle of lava at times to more dramatic geyser-like spouts of rocks and stones at others -- has become a major tourist attraction, drawing 300,000 visitors so far, according to the Icelandic Tourist Board.

Iceland’s sixth volcanic eruption in 20 years is already longer than the preceding one in Holuhraun, in the centre-east of the island, which lasted from the end of August 2014 until the end of February 2015. “Six months is a reasonably long eruption,” volcanologist Thorgvaldur Thordardottir told AFP. The lava field that has formed this time has been christened “Fagradalshraun” -- which can be translated as “beautiful valley of lava” -- and takes its name from nearby Mount Fagradalsfjall. Almost 143 million cubic metres of lava have been spewed out so far. — AFP

Thousands march in France against traditional hunting ban

Protesters, pictured here in Redon, are up-in-arms against a ban on traditional techniques such as hunting with nets or bird cages. PHOTO: AFP

THOUSANDS of hunters marched in France on Saturday to defend “rural values” and traditional bird hunting which the country’s top administrative court has banned.

In the medieval town of Mont-de-Marsan in southwest France, authorities said at least 13,000 people protested to the sound of hunting horns and fire-crackers.

Wearing bright orange -- the colour of hunters’ jackets -- the demonstrators marched under driving rain. Further up in Brittany, a protest also took place in Redon, and others were planned elsewhere.

“I’m sick of seeing my culture fall to pieces. They’ve already eradicated my language, Gascon, now it’s the traditional hunts,” said Eric, a 47-year-old who likes hunting and fishing, in Mont-de-Marsan. He said he was fed up with “the Taliban of Paristan”, referring to decision-makers in the capital.

The State Council in August banned traditional hunting techniques popular in the southwest of France and other parts of the country, such as hunting with nets or bird cages, in line with a 2009 EU directive. That followed the banning of glue hunting in June. Activists say that 150,000 birds die annually in France from non-selective hunting techniques such as glue traps and nets at a time when Europe’s bird population is in free-fall. But Myriam, the wife of a hunter and a fan of bullfighting, said she wanted to “pass on these traditions” to the younger generations. — AFP

Kuwait marks World Cleanup Day

People participate in a beach cleanup campaign at a beach in Jahra Governorate, Kuwait, on 18 September 2021. Kuwait marks World Cleanup Day on Saturday by organizing a coastal cleanup campaign to raise environmental awareness and shed light on threats to the environment. PHOTO: XINHUA

KUWAIT marks World Cleanup Day on Saturday by organizing a coastal cleanup campaign to raise environmental awareness and shed light on threats to the environment. PHOTO: XINHUA

“Six embassies participated along with the UN office and different organizations and sponsors who decided to distribute food, drinks, and tools,” she said. “We help people to be aware of environmental issues, where every week we organize a cleanup campaign to clean different areas, beaches, deserts, and islands,” she said.

“We are here with the UN team to raise awareness, collect trash, and show our solidarity as a commitment to environmental protection,” the UN Acting Resident Coordinator Hideko Hadzialic said.

“I hope that in the future we will have a proper facility to sort out and dispose recyclable and non-recyclable trash, so that Kuwait can enjoy a cleaner environment,” she told Xinhua. — Xinhua
EXHAUSTED nurses in the Philippines are struggling to care for patients as colleagues contract Covid-19 or quit a profession that was dangerously understaffed even before the pandemic.

The country is enduring a record rise in infections, fuelled by the Delta variant, with the health department reporting a nursing shortage of more than 100,000—forcing those left to work long hours for little pay on often precarious short-term contracts.

“They are tired and burned out,” nursing director Lourdes Banaga, at a private hospital south of Manila, told AFP. “At the start of the pandemic we had almost 200 nurses,” said Banaga, director for nursing services at the Lipa Medix Medical Center in Batangas province. “By September that will reduce to 63.” Ofﬁcials ﬁgure shows 75,000 nurses are working in public and private Philippine hospitals but roughly 109,000 more are needed.

The pandemic has exacerbated a pre-existing lack of nurses in the Philippines.

| New York Philharmonic marks ‘homecoming’ after pandemic cancellations |

Friday’s concert by the New York Philharmonic was a ‘homecoming’ for musicians limited to live streams, one-off and outdoor shows for more than a year. PHOTO AFP

FOLLOWING 556 days of pandemic-inflicted cancellations and unconventional concerts, the New York Philharmonic opened its new season Friday, a “homecoming” for musicians limited to live streams, one-off and outdoor shows for more than a year.

After enduring months of crisis, the Phil, one of America’s oldest musical institutions, re-opened its subscription season with a program featuring Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4, Anna Clyne’s “Within Her Arms,” Aaron Copland’s “Quiet City” and George Walker’s “Antilogs.”

The pandemic forced the famed symphony orchestra to cancel its 2020-21 season, resulting in more than $21 million in lost ticket revenues.

Hundreds of people queued outside Alice Tully Hall in Manhattan’s Upper Westside in evening wear, showing mandatory proof of vaccination in order to gain entry for the night of orchestral music.

Catherine Colson arrived with friends ahead of what she anticipated would be “a memorable night of phenomenal music.”

“It was a really long year. I feel rejuvenated,” she told AFP. “It’s like a rebirth in a way.”

Adam Bahlin said he wanted to attend opening night to “celebrate the city and the arts.”

“It’s been so long.”

‘Feels like a homecoming’

On top of the challenges presented by Covid, the Phil is homeless: the orchestra’s longtime base, David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, is in the middle of a major $550 million renovation.

— AFP

| Coughs and lethargy: Lions, tigers at Washington zoo catch Covid |

SIX lions and three tigers at the National Zoo in Washington have tested positive for Covid-19 and are undergoing treatment after falling ill, the zoo said Friday.

“Last weekend, animal keepers observed decreased appetites, coughing, sneezing and lethargy” in six African lions, a Sumatran tiger and two tigers from Siberia, who all tested positive for Covid in preliminary tests, the zoo said in a statement.

Results of tests to confirm the diagnosis are expected in a few days.

The sick cats are being treated with anti-inflammatories and anti-nausea medication, as well as antibiotics to ward off pneumonia.

People who visit the zoo are not at risk because of the distance between them and the felines, and no other animals have shown signs of infection, the zoo said.

The bout of sickness comes as several US zoos including the one in Washington announced Tuesday the launch of a vaccination campaign for animals susceptible to Covid-19.

Primates in several zoos have become infected. Several gorillas at the zoo in Atlanta tested positive last week. — AFP

PHOTO: AFP

Two lions at the Washington zoo on 24 July 2020. PHOTO: AFP

Two lions at the Washington zoo on 24 July 2020. PHOTO: AFP

The pandemic has exacerbated a pre-existing lack of nurses in the Philippines. PHOTO: AFP

The “chronic understaffing” is the Philippines. — AFP
HK voters turn out for first elections under revamped electoral system

Greece inaugurates its first ‘closed’ camp for asylum seekers

Notre-Dame de Paris finally ready for restoration

Merkel party learns to campaign again as election looms

At least two dead in blasts in Afghanistan's Jalalabad: Taliban

Greece on Saturday inaugurates the first of five new “closed” migrant camps, opposed by rights groups who say the strict access measures are too restrictive.

Barbed wire fencing surrounds the new camp on the island of Samos which is also installed with surveillance cameras, x-ray scanners and magnetic doors.

The EU has committed 276 million euros ($326 million) for the new camps on Greece’s five Aegean islands – Leros, Lesbos, Kos, Chios as well Samos – that receive most of the migrant arrivals by sea from neighbouring Turkey.

An official from the health department of Nangarhar Province told AFP that three people were killed and 18 were wounded.

SO far we have reports of two killed and up to 20 wounded,” said the Taliban official, who asked not to be named, and said that a patrol vehicle was targeted.

“WOMEN and children were among the injured,” he said.

An investigation was under way to establish the extent of the damage and the cause of the explosions, he added.

The attacks are the first deadly blasts since the American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

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VOTEHS began to arrive early Sunday morning at the polling stations across Hong Kong to cast their ballots for the 2021 Election Committee Subsector Ordinary Elections, the first polls under the city’s new electoral system.

The voting hours at five ordinary polling stations and one dedicated station run from 9 am to 6 pm.

Shortly after 9 am, the polling station at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai was already packed with the first batch of voters.

The other polling stations at venues including the Kowloon Park Sports Center, Sha Tin Town Hall, Tuen Mun Town Hall and Tsuen Wan Princess Alexandra Community Center also saw a steady arrival of voters who lined up outside the stations in an orderly manner.

Before entering the polling stations, many people took photos with the banners at the entrance to memorize this special occasion.

Meeting the media after inspecting the polling station in Wan Chai, Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor said that today’s elections, the first under the revamped electoral system, are of great importance and will lay a good foundation for the upcoming elections for the Legislative Council and the Chief Executive.

Noting that the expanded Election Committee will reflect a broader representation of different sectors in society, Lam said she is confident that the committee will represent the city’s overall interest and help the city to better integrate into the nation’s overall development.

The focus until now had been on making the cathedral safe before restoration work could begin, which included the strenuous task of removing 40,000 pieces of scaffolding that were damaged in the blaze.

— AFP

With Germany’s Christian Democrats (CDU) trailing in the polls ahead of an election next week, grassroots party members are resorting to an activity that had almost become redundant under Angela Merkel: campaigning.

On a medieval square in the northern city of Bremen, CDU leader and conservative chancellor candidate Armin Laschet takes the stage at a campaign rally to the rousing sounds of “Eye of the Tiger” from Rocky III.

With the CDU and the CSU, its Bavarian sister party, staring down the barrel of possibly their worst election result in post-war Germany on September 26, Laschet needs all the pumped-up motivation he can get.

The centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) are currently leading in the polls, with the conservatives in a position they have become unaccustomed to after 16 years of Merkel: second place.

“I didn’t expect it to be so close,” says Hans-Georg Friesch, a longtime CDU activist in Bremen. “Laschet doesn’t have the advantage of already being well-known. He’s had to make himself known.”

“Coming after Merkel is the problem,” agrees Kerstin Eckardt, head of a local CDU group.

“We are starting from scratch. We have to convince people.”

“This time it’s a real campaign. It’s not taken for granted like it used to be,” adds a fellow party member.

— AFP

Double barbed wire surrounds the 12,000 square metre camp on the island of Samos.

PHOTO:  AFP/FILE

Election Committee candidates arrive at the polling station in Wan Chai.

PHOTO:  FELIX WONG/SCMP/XINHUA

Christian Democratic Union party leader and candidate for Chancellor Armin Laschet speaks on stage during a rally in Bremen, northern Germany on 16 September 2021.

PHOTO:  AFP

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— AFP
Faction politics wane in LDP leadership race as nat’l vote looms

The four candidates running in the presidential election of Japan’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party attend a Japan National Press Club-sponsored debate in Tokyo on 18 September 2021. The four (from L) vaccination minister Taro Kono, former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, former communications minister Sanae Takachih and Seiko Noda, executive acting secretary general of the LDP – are vying for the post currently held by Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga. PHOTO: POOL / KYODO

THE outcome of Japan’s ruling party leadership race to choose the successor to Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has become increasingly unclear as four senior lawmakers have joined the race, raising the possibility of a runoff.

But one thing is certain. Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers are under greater pressure to heed public opinion on who should succeed Suga than play by faction rules.

The House of Representatives members’ term expires on Oct. 21, meaning whoever among the four contenders wins majority votes will become the new LDP president – and hence prime minister – to lead the party and its coalition partner Komeito into a general election in the fall.

That aspect has made many LDP lawmakers – particularly younger ones who have yet to build strong bases in their constituencies – seek to install a popular leader especially at a time of the COVID-19 pandemic, and break from control of intra-party factions.

Suga, for example, was elected LDP president last year after major factions, such as the 96-member group led by former Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda, the largest of the seven factions, threw support behind him even though he does not belong to a faction himself.

“The LDP must consider how the public would see the party,” said Etsushi Tanifuji, a professor emeritus of political science at Waseda University, alluding to traditional LDP politics in which faction leaders effectively have determined who becomes the party president.

— Kyodo

Putin’s party set to retain parliament majority after polls

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin’s party was set Sunday to retain a majority in parliament on the last day of three-day elections in which most Kremlin critics were barred from the ballot.

The vote comes in the wake of an unprecedented crackdown on the opposition this year, with Russian authorities jailing Putin’s best-known domestic foe Alexei Navalny and banning his organisations as “extremist”.

In the lead-up to this weekend’s vote, all of his top allies were arrested or had fled the country, with anyone associated with his groups kept from running in the parliamentary and local polls scheduled to close at 8:00 pm Sunday.

“These essentially aren’t elections. People in effect have no choice,” 43-year-old businessman

Recent surveys showed fewer than 30 per cent planned to vote for the ruling United Russia Party. PHOTO: AFP

Putin’s party was set Sunday to retain a majority in parliament. PHOTO: POOL / KYODO

— AFP

Israel recaps last two prison-break fugitives

ALL six Palestinian fugitives who escaped a high-security Israeli jail through a tunnel dug under a sink are back in custody, after the Israeli army said Sunday it had recaptured the last two.

The inmates, who were being held for attacks against the Jewish state, became heroes among many Palestinians when reports emerged they had burrowed out using tools as basic as a spoon.

The full weight of Israel’s security anseral was deployed to catch them, including aerial drones, checkpoints on roads and an army mission to Jenin where many of the men grew up.

The massive manhunt lasted almost a fortnight, with four of the six recaptured last week.

In a tweet on Sunday, the Israel Defence Forces said the last two had surrendered “after being surrounded by security forces that acted precisely based on accurate intelligence”. — AFP

Iran looks east after China-led bloc OKs entry

Iran on Saturday hailed its acceptance into a China and Russia-led bloc, which also includes India, promotes itself as an antidote to crippling Western sanctions.

“It is a strategic and diplomatic success,” said ultraconservative President Ebrahim Raisi following his return home on Saturday.

The eight-member SCO group, created two decades ago and which also includes India, promotes itself as an antidote to Western dominance.

The bloc’s decision on Iran comes with negotiations at a standstill on bringing Washington back into a 2015 nuclear accord. Then president Donald Trump withdrew from the deal in 2018 and reimposed sweeping sanctions. — AFP
THE ASEAN Football Federation has confirmed the fixtures for the 2020 ASEAN Suzuki Cup, which has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The tournament is normally scheduled for the end of 2020, but has been postponed this year due to the pandemic.

However, the 2020 ASEAN Suzuki Cup will be held from 5 December 2021 to 1 January 2022. The competition will be divided into two groups of five teams, while the semi-finals and finals will be held in two rounds. Host country for the tourney will then be selected according to the pandemic situation and nine teams, including Myanmar, will be able to compete directly from the final stage. According to the ASEAN Football Federation, group matches will be held from 5 to 19 December, first leg of the semi-final on 22 and 23 December, second round on 25 and 26 December; first round of the finals on 29 December and the final second round on 1 January 2022 respectively.

Defending champion Vietnam, including Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Cambodia and Laos will compete in the group stage.

Timor-Leste and Brunei, who have the lowest rankings, will play for the qualifier to join the group stage. The group stage draw ceremony will be held online on 21 September (Tuesday) and further details will be announced at the same time.

Led by head coach Antoine Hey, Myanmar team will take time to prepare for the tournament, which will take between one and two months.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

**Mane scores 100th Liverpool goal in Palace stroll**

SADIO Mane scored his 100th Liverpool goal as the Senegal star inspired a 3-0 win against Crystal Palace that sent his side top of the Premier League on Saturday.

Mane’s milestone strike came in his 224th appearance for the Reds, breaking Palace’s rear-guard action late in the first half at Anfield. Egypt forward Mohamed Salah and Guinea midfielder Naby Keita netted in the second half to move Jurgen Klopp’s team three points clear of second-placed Manchester City.

Liverpool forward Sadio Mane. It was fitting that Mane should make it to his century against Palace as he set a new Premier League record for the most consecutive games a player has scored against one opponent. It was the ninth successive match that Mane had netted against Palace. More importantly for Klopp, Mane already has four goals this term, suggesting he is ready to put last season’s disappointing personal campaign behind him. After Liverpool’s lacklustre, injury-hit defence of the Premier League title, they are back in the groove in the chase to regain the trophy from Manchester City—AFP

**Inter crash six past Bologna to move top of Serie A**

INTER Milan bounced back from midweek Champions League disappointment on Saturday with a 6-1 hammering of Bologna which moved the reigning champions top of Serie A.

Simone Inzaghi’s side were sucker-punched in the last minute by Real Madrid in Wednesday’s single-goal defeat but made no mistake this time at the San Siro.