

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 141, 2nd Waxing of Tawthalin 1383 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Tuesday, 7 September 2021

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.

Only when infection rate of the disease is controlled can the government manage economic, education and other tasks: Senior General



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the eleventh coordination meeting on prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 in Nay Pyi Taw on 6 September 2021.

EFFORTS must be made for effectively taking preventive, control and treatment measures of COVID-19 with momentum so as to carry out peace and stability tasks and construction tasks of the State to be able to reach the level of efficiently controlling the pandemic, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the

Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the 11th coordination meeting on prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 at the Bayintnaung Villa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

In his opening speech, the Senior General said the infection rate declines to some extent due to utmost efforts

through meetings with the formation of the central level for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 as of July when the third wave started. The globe faces over 221 million infected persons and some 4.6 million dead persons, the United States of America more than 40 million infected persons and India 33 million. Among ASEAN countries, In-

donesia was top with over four million infected persons and over 136,000 dead persons. Myanmar stands the sixth position in ASEAN countries with over 400,000 infected persons and some 15,800 deaths.

On 14 July, a total of 7,083 persons were infected among 21,352 persons who have undergone a medical examination, accounting for 33 per

cent. On 22 July, 6,701 persons of 17,235 persons were infected, accounting for 38 per cent. The infection rate exceeded more than 40 per cent on some days. The central committee arranged vaccinations for the people, purchase of vaccines abroad and distribution of protective equipment across the nation.

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Imports of anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical aids continue daily

THE Ministry of Commerce is making efforts to ensure people 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, arranging continuous importation on public holidays.

On 6 September (yesterday), anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products, including oxygen plants and concentrators, were imported by 14 companies and with the use of 35 vehicles, including two bowzers.

A total of 39 tonnes of oxygen (liquid) carried by two bowzers, one tonne of oxygen gas carried by one bowser, 3,285 empty oxygen tanks, five oxygen plants, 534 oxygen concentrators for home use, 88,070 sets of PPE suits, and 73 tonnes of masks were imported via Muse, Chinshwehaw, and Myawady trading posts and the Yangon International Airport.

Two vehicles carrying liquid oxygen were transported to Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw and one bowser carrying liquid oxygen to Pyay respectively.

Next, three oxygen plants

were transported to Yangon and one oxygen plant each to Lashio and Meiktila.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, facilitating the importations 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



Anti-Covid devices and medical supplies are daily imported through land borders and lorries transport them to the needed areas.

Speedboat service resumes for Sinbo-Myitkyina itinerary

THE Ngwe Ayar speedboat, which runs daily between Sinbo and Myitkyina in Kachin State, was shut down in July due to high COVID-19 transmission rates and resumed its journey from Sinbo to Myitkyina at 9:30 am yesterday.

For the speedboat service, the Sinbo-Myitkyina route will be operated weekly on Monday and the Myitkyina-Sinbo route will be operated weekly on Wednesday.

If the rate of COVID-19 in-

fection decreases, it will return to normal every day, officials said.

“At present, high-speed cruises are scheduled to operate only once a week.

“The number of trips between Sinbo and Myitkyina will be increased sooner or later to solve the problems of the local people's health and difficulties of the cargo associations,” said U Kyaw Hlaing, chairman of the Ngwe Ayar speedboat Association. —Myitkyina IPRD/ GNLM



For the speedboat service, the Sinbo-Myitkyina route will be operated weekly on Monday and the Myitkyina-Sinbo route will be operated weekly on Wednesday.

COVID-19 vaccinations continue in IDPs in An Township



Inoculation drive continues in IDPs in An Township in Rakhine State.



THE first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine was given to 1,140 people who are over the age of 18 in displaced camps in An Township, Rakhine State yesterday.

Healthcare workers also conducted the second round of vaccinations at the Shwe Ann Taung Hall in An Township yesterday.

Healthcare workers gave the COVID-19 jabs to 582 people, who are living in shelters at the Indoor Gymnasium.

Similarly, the second doses of the COVID-19 vaccines were given to 112 local people by town-

ship health workers following the COVID-19 immunization regulations.

The COVID-19 vaccination works were also conducted by members of the relief team led by Township Administrative bodies; U Shwe Aye, Deputy Township Administrator, staff from the Township General Administration Department, Department of Public Health, departmental officials, township firefighters, members of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, and volunteer support team members.

Before receiving the vacci-

nation, officials urged local people to clean their hands with hand sanitizer as per the COVID-19 disease prevention regulations.

The COVID-19 vaccines have been given to displaced persons and local people over the age of 18 from 2 to 6 September in An Township, officials said.

A total of 1,140 people has been vaccinated at the rate of two doses per person for 570 doses of Sinovac vaccination, and the second dose will be ongoing for the remaining 112 people, officials added. —Win Ei Mon (IPRD)/ GNLM

Need to upgrade the hospitals, establish the township, station and district hospitals

HE then stressed the need to upgrade the hospitals, establish the township, station and district hospitals by observing the figures of international hospitals and set up the ICU for other diseases. He also pleaded that the government will provide cash assistance in implementing these operations. The hospital staff, Tatmadaw and social organizations need to cooperate for these processes including the upgrade of hospitals and cleansing operations.

(Excerpt from the speech to the 9th coordination meeting on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities made by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 23-8-2021)

Only when infection rate of the disease is controlled ...

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The infection rate plunged to 10.37 per cent in early September. But some regions and states are facing a high infection rate. Over 30,000 persons have undergone medical examinations per day. In the ratio of infection, 193 infected persons per lakh were found in Kayah State with the highest rate, followed by Kachin State with 96 persons per lakh, Taninthayi Region with 84 persons per lakh, Shan State with 81 persons per lakh, Nay Pyi Taw 76 persons per lakh and Bago Region 72 persons per lakh. Some people are careless about the disease as it is breaking out for many months. They do not abide by the COVID-19 restrictions in some areas.

The government allows production processes and agriculture and livestock tasks

being made to produce foodstuffs. Some countries encounter high prices of foodstuffs due to a shortage of workers for the industries. Officials at different levels are to strictly supervise the COVID-19 disciplines in their regions without allowing the people for doing something by crowds.

With regard to the returning of Myanmar citizens working in neighbouring countries, the Senior General said: **“Our ethnics are working in neighbouring countries. This early this month, they wished to return home. We decided to call them back and order to do so. We share the future at home instead of working abroad. The government is a shade for all as well as the country. So, I ordered them to call them back home to share the sweet future. In the past,**



June to date, 2,680 from Laos via Tachilek and Kengtung. When they had undergone the COVID test, 123 persons were confirmed in positive cases, accounting for 8.32 per cent. Likewise, 271 persons who returned from Thailand were found infected, accounting for 1.48 per cent. If they were abroad, I could not consider their future. Last week when they arrived back in Myanmar, some of them kissed the ground and paid homage to it. Whatever it may be, I will call back our ethnic people to Myanmar. When we arranged to bring back Myanmar citizens from Malaysia by relief flight, some Myanmar persons cheated 17 other persons. They did not afford to return home. So, I ordered them to call them back under the State budget. The virus was found in some ten persons in the medical examination yesterday. These were positive cases. Some of them were in negative cases.

So, he said he would return home tomorrow by the earliest flight. He is our citizen. I urged officials to give treatment to the remaining persons. I mean our government does not abandon the citizens residing abroad. It was related to the COVID case. If they face other problems, they are invited to contact the Myanmar embassies. We will arrange for them without fail. They may come back home. It doesn't matter even if they make problems. I have kept patience over them. We have such a concept for ethnic affairs. So, I'd like to urge respective region and state governments to systematically deal with the health issue of ethnic people under fair management with patience for them similar to their relatives. If we do everything with goodwill, we can achieve success.

The Senior General noted that the outbreak of COVID-19 is very long. It is necessary

to carry out other tasks of nation-building endeavours. Efforts must be made for effectively taking preventive, control and treatment measures of COVID-19 with momentum so as to carry out peace and stability tasks and construction tasks of the State to be able to reach the level of efficiently controlling the pandemic. If so, the process leading to the vision will be smooth. As such, all are to continue their measures in a systematic manner.

Members of the State Administration Council, Union Ministers, deputy ministers, senior military officers and attendees reported on allotment of RT-PCR test machines to border gates in order to increase inspection over the returnees, plans to upgrade the ICU at hospitals, vaccination for setting the target groups comprising those from IDP camps, EAOs, disabled persons and those suffering from other diseases,

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The government allows production processes and agriculture and livestock tasks under the COVID-19 restrictions for earning income for the State through exportation. Myanmar does not face shortages of foodstuffs as efforts are being made to the production of foodstuffs. Some countries encounter high prices of foodstuffs due to a shortage of workers for the industries.

under the COVID-19 restrictions for earning income for the State through exportation. Myanmar does not face shortages of foodstuffs as efforts are

the government did not allow their returns. In my tenure, I call them back home. So, 11,315 ethnic people returned from China starting from 5

Only when infection rate of the disease is controlled ...

FROM PAGE-3

creation of contacts with ASEAN and dialogue partner countries to seek vaccines and medicines for COVID-19 and humanitarian aid, raising awareness for COVID-19 through daily newspapers, State-owned TV channels and radios in addition to private TV channels on findings of a variant virus of COVID-19, performing of spot checks in 66 townships in border areas in addition to 119 townships from stay at home programme, estimated production from the completed oxygen plants, and progress in conducting the research to produce vaccines with the use of traditional medicines.

In his response to the reports, the Senior General pointed out that it is necessary

to conduct systematic research to be able to produce vaccines for COVID-19 with the use of traditional medicines as COVID-19 will never disappear. The Senior General stressed the need to produce vaccines and medicines for the disease by researching Myanmar herbal plants. The pharmaceutical factories of the State and the Tatmadaw as well as private-owned one need to participate in the production of vaccines and medicines. Ministries need to coordinate with each other for production. A single trade post should not be set for the export of marine products, and other posts must be considered to arrange the export of products for a smooth process. As the export process is important, systematic collection of fishermen population to

be systematically vaccinated.

In the concluding remarks, the Senior General said: **“It is necessary to consider the long-term plans, especially for the health sector. Only when the people are wealthy, will they be longevity, work, learn and have job opportunities. If they are free from disease, job opportunities can be created and schools open. It is a great challenge for us. It is a prioritized task. So, I stressed the need to prioritize such tasks rather than other important projects. Not only ministries but the region and state governments must perform the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 as the top task. The Ministry of Health and the Directorate of Medical Services of**

the Tatmadaw become the frontline organizations. We cannot lessen anything. We must fulfil the necessary needs such as medicines and medical accessories. We must provide assistance for the health staff to dutifully do their tasks. Management and logistics measures must be taken. Not only the people but health staff must be healthy for carrying out the tasks. If so, those health staff can perform the vaccination. As such, all governments and different administrative bodies must emphasize the performance of the health organizations.”

Then, the Senior General stressed that people from rural areas and border areas have a misunderstanding over the health measures. So, it is nec-

essary to raise health awareness for them.

The Ministry of Health is primarily performing the vaccination process. Vaccines must be systematically stored not to lessening the potency. Not only medicines related to COVID-19 but the drugs for cancer and heart diseases must be imported as quickly as possible.

Arrangements must be made for vaccinating all the people without leaving the aged and chronic patients. It is necessary to explain the possibility of infection for non-vaccinated persons. Only when the infection rate of the disease is controlled, can the government manage economic, education and other tasks. Hence, officials need to strive for declining infection rates in their areas. —MNA

Vice-Chairman of State Administration Council Vice-Senior General Soe Win and party arrive in Novosibirsk of Russian Federation

THE delegation led by Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, currently in the Russian Federation, accompanied by Military Attaché Commodore Kyaw Soe Moe and officials, left Sheremetyevo Airport of Moscow in the morning of local standard time on 5 September for Novosibirsk. They were seen off at the airport by Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation U Lwin Oo and officials of the Russian Ministry of Defence.

The Vice-Senior General and party arrived at Tolmachevo Airport in Novosibirsk where they were welcomed by Head of Intelligence Department of No 41 Division Colonel Dimity V Menchov and officials. —MNA



SAC Vice-Chairman Vice-Senior General Soe Win and party are seen off at the Sheremetyevo Airport of Moscow by Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation U Lwin Oo and officials of the Russian Ministry of Defence.

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

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Union Industry Minister inspects running of factories in Bago, Magway regions

UNION Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than visited No. (1), Industrial Training Centre (Hsinde)-ITC in Pandaung Township, Bago Region on 3 September.

During the visit, the Union Minister instructed officials to prepare for the reopening of regular training courses, to regularly inspect and maintain teaching aids at the training centre to prevent damage, to provide trainees with skills, knowledge and attitude, to conduct pieces of training with “competency-based education and training system”. He inspected the teaching laboratories and workplaces. He also ordered respective officials to develop self-assessment re-

ports for each class.

Afterwards, the Union Minister arrived and inspected No (16) Heavy Industry (Hsinde), and instructed officials to strive to make factories work efficiently and to dutifully serve the assignments.

On 4 September, the Union Minister inspected No (23) Heavy Industry (Nyaungchehtauk) Factory (Nyaungchehtauk) and cordially met the factory staff. On 5 September, he toured No (17) Heavy Industry (Malun) in Minhla and the Soap Factory in Magway Region.

During his visit to the No (26) Heavy Industry in Thargara Industrial Zone, Yedashe Township, Bago Region, he inspected



the turbine plant that produces electricity and instructed offi-

cial to set priority plans for the production of required turbines

for townships and villages without electricity. — MNA

Union Education Minister inspects basic education schools in Nay Pyi Taw



UNION Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe, Deputy Ministers Dr Zaw Myint and U Zaw Win, and officials visited No. (2) Basic Education High School in Zeyathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The Union Minister and party met the school head and officials, teachers, students’ parents, and inspected the preparations for the reopening of the school.

During the visit, the Union Minister said it is necessary to use chemical laboratory equipment related to science subjects systematically and effectively, and damaged equipment will be reimbursed by the Ministry.

He also said to the teachers to constantly study improvement of the curriculum-related subjects they teach, during the long holidays.

Officials were urged to provide equipment required in science labs, computers, books and furniture for the library, school-level gymnasium, stadiums, football fields and runways.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party visited No (3), Basic Education High School in Pobbathiri Township, Pyi San Aung-Basic Education High School, and coordinated requirements in improving school character, teaching and management. — MNA

Import/export via maritime route run as normal

THE export-import processes of Myanmar are operated as usual via maritime routes.

Myanma Port Authority also runs the operations for the export products from the industrial zones, including marine products, and importation processes of the medicines and medical supplies daily without any delay.

Under the instructions of the government, the trade volume via the sea route was promoted.

Moreover, the government purchased two new tugboats for

the entry and exit of the international cargo ships at the Yangon port by the end of August.

Therefore, there will be a total of 43 cargo ships for the export and import processes of the country in September, according to the Container Vessel Schedule for September 2021 of Myanma Port Authority. —Nyein Thu/(MNA)GNLM

An aerial view of an overseas-going vessel in the Yangon River with a Yangon city landscape.



Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

Heartbeat quotes of officials and local people over progress of Magweza-Khaunglanphu road to Khaunglanphu

MINISTRY of Border Affairs implemented Magwaeza-Khaunglanphu Road project (65 miles and 4 furlongs) in Khaunglanphu Township of Putao District in Kachin State in respective FYs, and the project started in Khaunglanphu on 3 September.

These are the words of officials and residents: —

U Dipar Maung

Deputy Superintending Engineer
Progress of Border Areas and National
Races Department



We have constructed the Magwaeza-Khaunglanphu Road with four sections under the 5-year project in the 2016-2017FY. We paved 24 feet wide earthen road. The most difficult road sections are Nga Lone Dan-San Loot Chat Hill and San Loot Chat Hill-Ridam. We exploded the stone mountains and faced serious weather conditions at the peak of the mountain. We completed the 12 feet wide and 44 miles

long of the Ridam stone-paving road until 2021. The remaining 20 miles section will be conducted in the 2021-2022FY. We are very proud of paving the road directly to the Khaunglanphu.

U Pa Zal Phu

In charge of station
MRTV retransmission station



I am U Pa Zal Phu from No (3) Ward of Khaunglanphu. I am so happy that there is a one-way road to Khaunglanphu and I want to tell you something about the difficulties of the past. I lived here starting 2004-2005. The transportation was very bad and the rice and other commodities were also rare. It cost K180,000 per bag of rice. This price was very high. We did not have any extra money for a curry after using our monthly salary for rice. The high commodity prices were caused by transport difficulties. But now, the government

prioritizes the township for paving the road and the prices of rice including commodities decline. We can get a bag of rice at only 60,000 which was about K180,000 before. Therefore, we thank the government officials, companies and engineers. Due to the proper road transportation, we can get relief for our keeps. It takes 13 or 14 days to walk from Khaunglanphu to Putao township. But now, it is convenient for all the government employees, teachers and residents to travel to Putao easily.

U Da Khwam Pe Ram

Town Elder
No (4) Ward, Khaunglanphu



All the local people are happy that there is proper road transportation in Khaunglanphu Township. If there is no road in the next four or five years, the people might relocate in Putao. But now, the people do not want to move from here.

I took more than 10 days to walk from Khaunglanphu to Putao in the past. We found difficulties on the way if we run out of our rations. Now, we have proper road transportation and it can benefit our education, health and economy sectors of our region. We thank the government and officials of the company for paving the road. God bless you all.

U J Yaw Ye Se

Town Elder
No (3) Ward, Khaunglanphu



Khaunglanphu Township is located in a remote area and left behind in development sectors in previous years. However, there is road transportation and the people are very happy. I want to thank the heads of the country for paving the road in our region on behalf of our people. When there was no road, it took us more than 10 days to walk from Khaunglanphu to Putao. Now, we can make day-trip by motorcycle.

Due to the difficult access to road transport in the past, there were sick employees and people who died on the way to hospitals. Now, good road transport can improve our health and education sectors, and we can get foodstuff at cheap prices.

Although the township is a less populated area, all the people understand that the government makes effort for our regions according to their policy like there is no gap between urban and rural development levels and poverty reduction. Therefore, we thank the relevant government officials and the officials of the Ministry of Border Affairs for drafting the project including the construction company. I hope our region would gain development in education, health and social sectors starting now. — Khaunglanphu (IPRD)/GNLM



Watermelon in Magway sells well

WITH the extreme growth of watermelon in Gangaw Township in the Magway region, the watermelon started yielding and they are sold back within the region as well as in the border area.

The watermelons are sold especially in the Myanmar-India border checkpoint market and Kalay and Mawlaik townships in the upper Chindwin region. The local growers are making a good profit from watermelon cultivation because of high demand.

The residents from Saw, Yaw and Laungshay regions in Gangaw district are commonly cultivating seasonal fruits such as watermelon, muskmelon, potato, tomato and cabbage. The cultivation of seasonal fruits

are successful and sent to Haka township in Chin State and Tamu township in Myanmar-India border, Kalay and Mawlaik townships in the upper Chindwin region.

The watermelons are being sold well these days in some places such as Kalay, Chin Mountain and the upper Chindwin region. So, the locals are having watermelon as season fruit at the pagoda and school ceremonies.

Watermelons are priced at K700-K1,000 per piece depending upon the size. However, the watermelon fetched around K1,200 for a small-size one and K2,500 for a big one in Kalay, Tamu and Mawlaik markets in the Myanmar-India border market. — Kalay/GNLM



The watermelons are being sold well these days in some places such as Kalay, Chin Mountain and the upper Chindwin region.

Palm oil price exceeds by K600 per viss in over two months

THE price of palm oil has grown by K600 per viss in the domestic market in over two months, it is learnt.

Although the palm oil price on 1 July was only K3,200 per viss, whereas the prices rose to K3,800 per viss on 6 September.

The domestic palm oil price is related to the international price. The oil traders said that it has risen because of the rise in the foreign currency exchange rate.

The palm oil price stood at US\$1,035 per tonne in the foreign market in the first week of January. Then, the price rose to \$1,200 per tonne from \$1,180 per tonne.

However, Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association announced on 15 July statement

that oil consumers should not have to worry about cooking oil.

The association is also cooperating with the relevant departments and organizations to maintain price stability, prevent market manipulation, import the palm oil from foreign countries for self-sufficiency, distribute the edible oil at a fair price to the consumers and ensure that there will be no edible oil shortage in regions and states when there is a rise in imported oil prices.

The association is attempting to prevent undesirable oil-related incidents in Myanmar due to the impact of a worldwide pandemic. Besides, efforts are being made to import cooking oil during public holidays, to carry out oil extraction with the relevant de-

partment to maintain business, sufficient supply of cooking oil in the oil tanks and to distribute cooking oil to the retailers and wholesalers.

The import volume of palm oil during the pandemic is adequate for the domestic market's needs.

The association urged its member to have an adequate supply of oil during the pandemic.

The domestic consumption of palm oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the self-sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported from Malaysia and Indonesia. — NN/GNLM



Although the palm oil price on 1 July was only K3,200 per viss, whereas the prices rose to K3,800 per viss on 6 September.

Myanmar's foreign trade declines by \$6.98 bln this FY

MYANMAR'S foreign trade was worth US\$26.11 billion as of 20 August in the current financial year 2020-21, declining by nearly \$7 billion when compared to the same period that of last FY, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The foreign trade value was \$26.11 billion from 1 October to 20 August while the previous budget year saw \$33.1 billion in the same period. Thus, there was a decline of \$6.98 billion.

As Myanmar's foreign trade was \$33.1 billion in the last FY, export decreased by 18%, and imports decreased by 25% and trade volume decreased by 22%.

During the past ten months, Myanmar's export was worth over \$13.03 billion whereas the country's import was relatively low at \$13.08 billion.

In the first eight months of this FY, China topped the list of the 10 countries to which Myanmar exported goods most.

Myanmar exported goods worth US\$3,985.06 million to China, US\$2,091.81 million to Thailand, US\$673.87 million to Japan, US\$485.50 million to India, US\$434.67 million to the US, US\$261.71 million to Germany, US\$245.75 million to the UK, US\$233.48 million to Spain, US\$203.72 million to the Netherlands and US\$198.29 million to South Korea, according to the data from the Commerce Ministry.

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

2,555 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 6 September, total figure rises to 417,971

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 417,971 after 2,555 new cases were reported on 6 September 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 365,605 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 15,985 after 94 died.

Operate agriculture and livestock tasks for fulfilling food supplies to people

PRICES of foodstuff and personal goods which are essential for all families are gradually increasing because of high manufacturing costs as restrictions are still imposed on all sectors starting from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fortunately, the high prices of goods cannot bring the condition of shortages of food supplies to the people at a dangerous level as Myanmar produces agricultural and livestock products as well as basic foodstuffs at home.

Not only local authorities but charitable organizations sell foodstuffs to the people and public service personnel in public areas of Yangon Region with the aim of enabling the people to have good food supplies.

The people need to work for their daily lives. Their productivity must benefit them as well as the whole country. Efforts for doing something must have the right to earn income. Overall, only when the country is wealthy, will it enable to powerfully fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

of thanks and provide necessary aid to farmers to improve the farming works.

Farmers can enjoy the fruits of agricultural tasks at first and then can earn income. As part of the food supply chain, the manufacturing of agricultural products helps the people have a better food supply process and contribute much to the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.

The people need to work for their daily lives. Their productivity must benefit them as well as the whole country. Efforts for doing something must have the right to earn income. Overall, only when the country is wealthy, will it enable to powerfully fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.



Experts warn imminent third wave of COVID-19 pandemic in India

With scars of the deadly second wave of COVID-19 still fresh in the minds of Indians, health experts have already warned about a third wave of the pandemic hitting the country in the upcoming months.

INDIAN Medical Association (IMA), the country's leading organization of doctors, warned in July that the third wave of the pandemic was inevitable and imminent, based on the global evidence available and the history of pandemics.

IMMINENT THIRD WAVE

The Indian government on Tuesday (Aug 31) reported 30,941 new cases in the last 24 hours, dropping from around 40,000 in the previous days.

Authorities have almost opened up markets and relaxed the restrictions imposed to curb the spread of infection. Educational institutions have also been reopened in most states.

Despite the relaxed restrictions, a panel under the Ministry of Home Affairs has warned that the third wave of COVID-19 may hit India between September and October. The panel has recommended that the federal government should step up the inoculation drive significantly to tame the imminent surge in infections.

In its report to the Prime Minister's office, the panel has underscored a critical need of paediatric facilities, including doctors, staff, and equipment like ventilators and



A health worker collects a swab from a man during a COVID-19 test in New Delhi, India, on 6 Nov 2020. PHOTO: PARTHA SARKAR/XINHUA/FILE

ambulances, adding that the available infrastructure was "nowhere close" to the requirement if the need arose.

"STAGE OF ENDEMICITY"

Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist of the World Health Organization (WHO), recently told a news portal that COVID-19 in India may be entering "some kind of stage of endemicity where there is a low or moderate level of trans-

mission going on".

"We are not seeing the kinds of exponential growth and peaks that we saw a few months ago," Swaminathan said.

The scientist added that while it is possible that a large number of children could get infected in the third wave, they are unlikely to fall seriously ill. She mentioned specifically that there is no need to be panic on this score although it is advisable to be prepared for

more infections in children.

"We can take from the sero-survey and what we learnt from other countries that while it is possible that children could get infected and transmit, children luckily have very mild illness most of the time and there is a small percentage (of children) that get sick and get inflammatory complications," she said, adding that children's death rate will be "much much less" than the adults.

THE WAY OUT

A report by a group of experts with the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) said if the current vaccination rate of 7.6 per cent does not go up, India can witness 600,000 cases per day in the third wave.

But if the government's proposal to increase this rate by five times to 10 million doses per day comes to fruition, India will see only 25 per cent of the cases seen in the second wave during its third wave peak, it added, saying that vaccination is the only way out.

Last week India's federal health minister said that 50 per cent of India's eligible population (currently above 18) had received their first jab of the vaccine.

The country's drug regulator has also approved Zydus Cadila's vaccine for children above 12, but the drive is yet to begin.

PREPARATIONS IN PLACE

Vinod Paul, member of the National Institution for Transforming India, recently said that in the upcoming surge of COVID-19, there will be a hospitalization rate of 23 per cent.

Paul, who is also heading the COVID-19 task force of the federal government, warned that in

September, India can witness a staggering 400,000 to 500,000 daily infections and has asked the federal government to prepare 200,000 ICU beds.

State governments are taking precautions ahead of the possible third wave to hit India during September and October.

In the hardest-hit state of Maharashtra, the local government has decided to appoint 1,200 doctors by 5 Sept the state's Health Minister Rajesh Tope said.

Tope added that the state will increase production of oxygen to 2,000 metric tons per day from 1,200-1,300 metric tons, and will have granted primary health care centers 500 more ambulances by Sept. 30, adding to the existing 500.

In Gujarat, authorities have set up 15,000 paediatric oxygen beds.

"The need of the hour is to prepare for the third wave if and when it hits the nation," the NIDM report highlighted. "India's second wave of COVID-19 and the challenges posed have been alarming and need strong policy interventions at all levels with immediate, short, and medium- to long-term priorities, in order to be best prepared for the third wave."

SOURCE: XINHUA

COVID jabs not recommended for healthy 12-15 year olds in UK

BITAIN'S vaccine advisory body announced Friday that coronavirus vaccines for healthy children aged between 12 and 15 should not be recommended.

The Joint Committee on Vaccine and Immunization (JCVI) provided the assessment, saying the COVID jabs should not be recommended to those in this age group on health grounds alone, but the body has advised the government to look at "wider issues" including the impact of the virus on schooling.

The decision on healthy children was based on concerns over an extremely rare side effect of the Pfizer vaccine which causes

heart inflammation, according to the BBC.

As children are at such low risk from the virus, the JCVI decided that vaccination would offer only "marginal gain" and, therefore there was "insufficient" evidence to offer mass vaccination to this age group.

However, children aged 12 to 15 with blood cancers, sickle cell disease, type 1 diabetes, congenital heart disease, poorly-controlled asthma and other serious respiratory conditions, should be offered a vaccine, advised the JCVI assessment.

The JCVI has already announced the most at-risk children in this age bracket who have un-

derlying health conditions, including chronic major heart, lung, kidney, liver and neurological conditions, should have the jabs.

BBC reported that a group of 150,000 children with conditions such as severe neurodisabilities, Down's syndrome and severely weakened immune systems as well as those living with vulnerable adults are already eligible for the vaccine.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) said the chief medical officers in Britain's four nations will provide further advice on the vaccination of young people in this age group following the assessment provided by the JCVI.

The independent medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), has approved the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for those aged 12 and over after they met strict standards of safety and effectiveness.

More than 88 per cent of people aged 16 and over in Britain have had their first dose of vaccine and more than 79 per cent have received both doses, the latest figures showed. To bring life back to normal, countries such as Britain, China, Germany, Russia and the United States have been racing against time to roll out coronavirus vaccines.

SOURCE: XINHUA



A health worker administers a dose of the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine at Pride Park in Derby, Britain. PHOTO: AFP



MYANMAR Daily Weather Report (ISSUED at 7:00 pm Monday 6 September 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure area has formed over the Northwest Bay and adjoining Westcentral Bay of Bengal off South Odisha—North Andhra Pradesh coasts still persists. Monsoon is weak to moderate over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and strong elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 7 September 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Magway Region, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Taninthayi Regions and Kayah, Kayin States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Yangon, Ayeyawady Regions and Kachin, Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40) mph. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (9-12) feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts and (5-7) feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Taninthayi Region.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 September 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 September 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 September 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FLOOD Bulletin (ISSUED at 8:00 hrs MST on 6-9-2021)

Flood condition of Ayeyawady River
ACCORDING to the (07:30)hrs MST observation today, the water level of Seiktha at Ayeyawady River has exceeded by about (½) foot above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (2) days.

ACCORDING to the (07:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Hinthada at Ayeyawady River has exceeded by about (½) foot above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (3) days.

ACCORDING to the (07:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Zalun at Ayeyawady River has exceeded by about (8) inches above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (3) days.

Flood condition of Ngawun River
ACCORDING to the (07:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Ngathaingchaung at Ngawun River has exceeded by about (1) inch above its danger level. It may remain above its danger level during the next (1) day.

Advisory

IT is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Seiktha, Hinthada, Zalun and Ngathaingchaung townships, to take precaution measure.

Families slam 'corrupt' Russia at MH17 crash trial

THE families of 298 people killed in the shooting down of flight MH17 over Ukraine in 2014 demanded justice from Russia on Monday as they testified in the Dutch trial of four suspects.

People who lost close relatives in the crash of the Malaysia Airlines plane said they could not truly say goodbye to their loved ones until those responsible had been brought to book.

International investigators say a Russian-made missile fired from territory in eastern Ukraine held by pro-Moscow rebels brought down the Boeing 777, but Russia has denied all involvement.

Ria van der Steen, who lost her father Jan and stepmother Nell, said she was quoting from



Presiding judge Hendrik Steenhuis (R) points as he and other trial judges and lawyers view the reconstructed wreckage of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, at the Gilze-Rijen military airbase, southern Netherlands, on 26 May 2021. Judges inspect wreckage of flight MH17 as part of criminal trial of four suspects. **PHOTO PETER DEJONG / POOL / AFP**

the Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "They are lying,

we know they're lying and they know that we know that they're

lying."

"I am full of feelings of revenge, hate, anger and fear," said Van der Steen, who was the first to testify.

"I know they are dead and I will not see them again, but I can't put an end to this process of saying goodbye, certainly not until those who are responsible for their deaths are found to be guilty for what they have done."

Russian nationals Oleg Pulatov, Igor Girkin and Sergei Dubinsky, and Ukrainian citizen Leonid Kharchenko are all being tried in absentia for murder. Only Pulatov has legal representation.

Australian Vanessa Rizk whose parents Albert and Maree were travelling back on the doomed plane from a Europe-

an holiday, said the perpetrators "deserved punishment for their heinous actions."

"How would the perpetrators feel if it was their loved ones? How would (President Vladimir) Putin and his corrupt Russian government answer that," she said via livestream from Australia.

Her brother James echoed her theme, saying their parents had become victims of a conflict they had no part in.

"The misinformation from Russia, the lack of involvement from Russia, and their denials baffles me," he said.

Around 90 relatives, both from the 196 Dutch victims of the crash as well as those from Australia and Malaysia, are expected to address the court in the coming days.— AFP ■

Ethiopia Airlines says weapons seized in Sudan 'legal'

ETHIOPIAN Airlines said Monday its transport of weapons to Sudan was a "legal and commercial" shipment of hunting guns, after reports the cargo had been confiscated by the authorities in Khartoum.

Sudan's SUNA news agency had said Sunday that the weapons were seized by customs and an investigation launched after they were flown in on an Ethiopian Airlines passenger flight.

SUNA quoted officials as saying the weapons had originally been sent from Russia to Ethiopia in May 2019 and were held by authorities there for two years.

"There are suspicions that they were meant to be used in anti-state crimes, to impede the democratic transition, and prevent transition to civilian rule," SUNA reported.

Sudan has been undergoing a rocky transition since the April 2019 ouster of president Omar al-Bashir following mass protests against his rule.

But Ethiopian Airlines, the biggest carrier in Africa, said it had full documentation to prove the legality of the shipment including a

letter from Sudan's foreign ministry.

"Ethiopian Airlines' shipment of weapons to Sudan is a legal and commercial transportation of hunting guns with all proper documents of the shipper and the consignee," it said in a statement.

It said the guns had been held by security authorities in Addis Ababa for a long time for verification, and that the recipient had sued the airline in a Sudanese court to either deliver them or pay almost \$250,000 compensation.

Relations are frosty between Khartoum and Addis Ababa, with the two countries at odds over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile and Ethiopian farmers' use of a fertile border region claimed by Sudan.

Last month Sudan recalled its ambassador to Ethiopia, saying Addis Ababa had spurned its efforts to broker a ceasefire in the Tigray conflict. Tens of thousands of refugees from the 10-month war in the northernmost region of Ethiopia have been crossing the border into Sudan.— AFP ■

Taliban pledge safety for humanitarian workers: UN



Workers and volunteers load a shipment of humanitarian aid to be sent to Afghanistan at Bahrain International Airport on Muharraq Island, near the capital Manama, on 4 September 2021. **PHOTO: MAZEN MAHDI / AFP**

THE Taliban on Sunday pledged to guarantee the safety of humanitarian workers and aid access in Afghanistan in a meeting with the UN humanitarian chief in Kabul, a UN spokesman said.

Martin Griffiths was in the Afghan capital on Sunday for several days of meetings with Taliban leadership amid a looming humanitarian disaster in the country newly under the control of the hardline Islamists.

"The authorities pledged that the safety and security of humanitarian staff, and humanitarian access to people in need, will be guaranteed and that humanitarian workers — both men and women — will be guaran-

teed freedom of movement," a statement from UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Griffiths reiterated in the meeting that the humanitarian community was committed to delivering "impartial and independent humanitarian assistance," the statement added.

He also called on all parties to ensure the rights and safety of women, both those contributing to aid delivery and civilians.

Women's freedoms in Afghanistan were sharply curtailed under the Taliban's 1996-2001 rule.

The Taliban delegation, led by the group's co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, thanked

UN officials for the "promised continuation of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people" and assured them "of cooperation and provision of needed facilities," according to a statement posted on Twitter by Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen.

The UN says Afghanistan is mired in a humanitarian crisis affecting 18 million people, or half the population.

Even before the Taliban's lightning offensive that ousted the Western-backed government on 15 August, Afghanistan was already heavily aid-dependent — with 40 per cent of the country's GDP drawn from foreign funding.— AFP ■

‘Freedom Tower’ - the skyscraper symbolizing New York’s resilience

IT is the skyscraper that replaced the Twin Towers in New York’s skyline. Inaugurated in 2014, the One World Trade Centre has become a symbol of resilience after the horror of 9/11. Commonly referred to as the “Freedom Tower,” it is America’s tallest building at 1,776 feet (541 meters) and an emblem of the US economic capital.

From its conception, the tower had to testify to New York’s durability — looking to the future despite the tragedy — according to one of its architects, Kenneth Lewis. As harrowing as the images were of the Twin Towers collapsing to the ground on 11 September, 2001, no one questioned replacing them with another skyscraper, situated right next “Ground Zero.”

For the architects at SOM, which builds skyscrapers around the world, it was an opportunity to realize concepts that they had been thinking about for years.



Aerial view of the World Trade Centre (C) in New York City on 5 August 2021. PHOTO: KENA BETANCUR / AFP

“We were thinking it’s the beginning of the millennium, we were thinking that this had to be the next generation of buildings, both in terms of safety, as well as environmental impact,” recalled Lewis.

Evacuation time

Among the most nightmarish images from 9/11 are those of people jumping to their deaths from the towers to escape the blaze.

The architects launched

ideas about how to evacuate people other than from the stairs. Inventors came back with a giant chute, and a zip wire, with a parachutist demonstrating the latter, Lewis remembers. — AFP ■

Iran ‘strongly’ condemns Taliban offensive on Panjshir Valley

IRAN on Monday “strongly” condemned the Taliban’s military offensive against holdout fighters in Afghanistan’s Panjshir Valley, as the Islamist group claimed it had taken control of the area. “The news coming from Panjshir is truly worrying,” Iran’s foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters. “The assault is strongly condemned.”

Iran, the region’s dominant Muslim Shiite power, had until now refrained from criticising the

Taliban since the Sunni group seized Kabul on 15 August. The Taliban on Monday claimed victory in the mountainous Panjshir area, with a spokesman declaring “our country is completely taken out of the quagmire of war”, three weeks after the Islamists captured the capital.

But the National Resistance Front (NRF) — made up of anti-Taliban militia and former Afghan security forces — said its fighters were still present in

“strategic positions” across the valley, and that they were continuing the struggle. “On the question of Panjshir, I have insisted on the fact that it be resolved by dialogue in the presence of all the Afghan elders,” Khatibzadeh said. “The Taliban must equally respect their obligations in terms of international law, and their commitments,” he added, affirming that “Iran will work to put an end to all the suffering of the Afghan people in favour

of establishing a representative government for all Afghans”. Alluding to Pakistan, Khatibzadeh said Iran condemned “all foreign interference” in Afghan affairs.

“We would like to inform our friends, and those who might make the strategic error of entering Afghanistan with different intentions, that Afghanistan is not a country which accepts the enemy (or) the aggressor” on its soil, Iran’s foreign ministry spokesman added. — AFP ■

Six Palestinians escape Israeli jail, including top ex-militant



A member of the Israeli security forces watches a Palestinian man cross through the Al-Jalama checkpoint, located north of the West Bank town of Jenin, on 6 September 2021, after the Israeli army closed the checkpoint following the break out of six Palestinians from an Israeli prison. PHOTO: JAAFAR ASHTIYEH / AFP

SIX Palestinians escaped Monday from a prison in northern Israel through a tunnel dug beneath a sink, triggering a massive manhunt for the group that includes a prominent ex-militant, officials said.

At roughly 3:00 am (0000 GMT), locals near the Gilboa Prison spotted “suspicious figures” and alerted the authorities, said a statement from the Israel Prison Service.

The IPS confirmed the escapees included Zakaria Zubeidi, a prominent militant leader from the flashpoint city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank.

He was the former head of

the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades and a well known figure among Palestinians and Israelis.

A large search operation was immediately launched involving police, the army and special forces, according to statements from the IPS and police.

Sniffer dogs and aerial assets were used in the search and checkpoints set up in the surrounding area. The army said its forces were “prepared and deployed” in the West Bank as part of the operation.

The prison service released video that appeared to show a narrow tunnel dug beneath a sink. — AFP ■

In Covid-swamped Texas, patients die stranded in rural clinics

DANIEL WILKINSON survived two tours of duty in Afghanistan but died of gallstones, deteriorating slowly as his under-equipped doctors looked on helplessly.

Wilkinson, 46, lived only 90 minutes by car or 30 minutes by helicopter from Houston, renowned for its top-flight hospitals. The problem is the Texas health care system has been utterly overwhelmed by people suffering from the Delta variant of the coronavirus.

In this wealthy state, 14,700 people were hospitalized as of 1 September just below a record set in January as a winter Covid wave wreaked havoc across America.

“In the previous surges, we kept a little over 750 patients. Right now we’ve been running between 820 and 850 patients, so the hospitals are quite full,” said Roberta Schwartz, executive vice president of Houston Methodist Hospital, which is actually a group of hospitals.

Things are so bad that a conference room at one of the facilities is being used to treat patients.

So rural health facilities are being forced to keep patients they are not equipped to care for — like Wilkinson.

He was admitted August 21 to the only hospital in his county, a block from his home in the town of Bellville, population 4,000.

The clinic did not have the equipment to remove his gallstones, so it tried to organize a transfer by helicopter to another hospital.

“Our staff and our physician worked nonstop for over six hours trying to get him that transfer to a tertiary care center anywhere,” said Daniel Bonk Fache, the CEO of Bellville Medical Center.

“Our emergency room doctor at that time actually went on Facebook trying to get him transferred,” said Bonk Fache. — AFP ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Climate action cannot wait for pandemic to end, medical journals warn

GLOBAL warming is already affecting people's health so much that emergency action on climate change cannot be put on hold while the world deals with the Covid-19 pandemic, medical journals across the globe warned on Monday.

"Health is already being harmed by global temperature increases and the destruction of the natural world," read an editorial published in more than 220 leading journals ahead of the Cop26 climate summit in November.

Since the pre-industrial era, temperatures have risen around 1.1 degrees Celsius (34 degrees Fahrenheit).

The editorial, written by the editors-in-chief of over a dozen journals including the Lancet, the East African Medical Journal, Brazil's Revista de Saude Publica and the International Nursing Review, said this had caused a plethora of health problems. — AFP ■

Tokyo's daily COVID cases below 1,000 for 1st time since mid-July

TOKYO confirmed 968 daily coronavirus cases on Monday, marking the first time since July 19 the count has fallen below 1,000, but concerns persist over the rapid spread of the highly contagious Delta variant.

The daily figure was down significantly from the 1,853 cases confirmed Sunday, although infection numbers tend to be lower on Mondays as fewer hospitals and clinics are open on weekends.

The seven-day rolling average in Tokyo, which has been under the latest COVID-19 state of emergency for nearly two months, stood at 2,414 per day, down 34.9 per cent from the previous week. The number of coronavirus patients with severe symptoms increased by three from the previous day to 267. — Kyodo News ■

Social cost of 2019's plastic more than GDP of India



A man collects washed-up plastic items from a beach in Goa on 20 October 2020. PHOTO: AFP

THE pollution, emissions and clean-up costs of plastic produced in 2019 alone could be \$3.7 trillion, according to a report released Monday by wildlife charity

WWF, warning of the environmental and economic burden of this "seemingly cheap" material.

There is increasing international alarm over the sheer vol-

umes of fossil-fuel based plastics entering the environment, as microplastics have infiltrated even the most remote and otherwise pristine regions of the planet.

In its report, WWF said societies were "unknowingly subsidizing" plastic, with their estimates for the lifetime costs of 2019 production equivalent to more than the gross domestic product of India.

"Plastic appears to be a relatively cheap material when looking at the market price primary plastic producers pay for virgin plastic," said the report *Plastics: The cost to society, environment and the economy*, produced for WWF by the consultancy Dalberg.

"However, this price fails to account for the full cost imposed across the plastic life cycle."

It estimated that unless there was concerted international action, a projected doubling of plastic production could see costs rocket by 2040 to \$7.1 trillion. — AFP ■

Crews work to contain oil spill in Gulf after Ida's passage

WORKERS have deployed containment booms and skimmer devices as they attempt to contain a sizable oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico discovered after Hurricane Ida roared through the area, the US Coast Guard said Sunday.

The spill is in waters off Port Fourchon, Louisiana — near where Ida made landfall — in a region that is a major hub of the US petrochemical industry.

An oil slick now extends more than a dozen miles through the warm waters of the Gulf but has yet to reach shore, the Houston Chronicle reported.

The Coast Guard in Loui-

siana said it had been informed of a spill in that area and was responding, but provided few details.

Talos Energy, a Texas firm specializing in offshore oil and gas exploration, has dispatched clean-up vessels and divers to the site. The company, which had operated in the area of the spill until 2017, insisted that its equipment was not the cause of the leak.

The response team "identified a non-Talos owned 12 (inch) pipeline displaced from its original trench location, which appears to be bent and open ended," the company said in a statement. — AFP ■



This National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/GOES satellite handout image shows an oil slick off the coast of Louisiana after the passing of Hurricane Ida on 1 September 2020. PHOTO: HANDOUT / NOAA/GOES / AFP

European banks active in tax havens despite scandals: survey

EUROPEAN banks have not reduced their presence in tax havens, despite several scandals that have revealed the dubious practices multinationals use to avoid taxes, according to a study published on Monday.

Europe's leading banks each year book 20 billion euros (\$24 billion), or 14 per cent of their total profits, in 17 territories with particularly favourable tax regimes, said a report by the EU Tax Observatory, which is housed at the Paris School of Economics.

That percentage has remained stable since 2014 when a wave of revelations, such as

Lux Leaks and Panama Papers, exposed the tax practices used by companies and high-wealth individuals to avoid tax.

"Despite the growing importance of these issues in the public debate and in the political world, European banks have not significantly reduced their use of tax havens," the report said.

The Observatory, which is headed by Berkeley University professor and tax expert Gabriel Zucman, reviewed data published by 36 financial institutions over the 2014-2020 period, with a special focus on big banks HSBC, Deutsche Bank,

and Societe Generale.

"We observe a diversity of situations: for HSBC, the bulk of haven profits come from just one haven (Hong Kong), while in other cases multiple tax havens are involved," it said.

HSBC was tipped as a leader of these practices with more than 62 per cent of its pre-tax profits booked in tax havens between 2018 and 2020, compared to 49.8 per cent for Italy's Monte dei Paschi, which came in second place.

Standard Chartered rounded out the podium.

To be sure, both HSBC and Standard Chartered are

— while domiciled in London — leading Hong Kong retail and commercial banks. HSBC derives the vast majority of its profit in Asia, with China and Hong Kong the major drivers.

Germany's Deutsche Bank and NordLB come in fourth and fifth.

The report identifies 17 states and territories as preferred destinations, including the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Jersey and Guernsey, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Macau, Panama and the EU member states of Malta and Luxembourg. — AFP ■

Panasonic-Sojitz venture launches new smart home sales in Indonesia

A joint venture between Panasonic Homes Co and Sojitz Corp has launched the sale of 18 new housing units equipped with state-of-the-art air management technology in a smart town being developed in suburban Jakarta.

The announcement by PT PanaHome Deltamas Indonesia came as the smart town project, undertaken by the two Japanese companies, is proceeding in the Kota Deltamas industrial area in Bekasi,

West Java Province. Eight of the units are scheduled to be completed by the end of the year and are eligible for a tax break.

The 18 are part of one of four smart-home clusters being promoted under the project called SAVASA, planned through 2030. It involves a 37-hectare area for a total capacity of around 2,500 housing units to accommodate about 10,000 inhabitants.

Panasonic's air management system that will

go with the new houses automatically controls air conditioner and ventilation operations and can reduce PM2.5 particles and other contaminants indoors to a great extent, according to PT PanaHome Deltamas.

Users can also monitor PM2.5 and carbon dioxide levels by using a Panasonic app while managing temperature and humidity with mobile devices, it said.

Wulang Nur W., co-general manager of PanaHome Deltamas,

said people are spending more time at home due to the coronavirus pandemic, and the change "has brought additional attention to indoor air quality as they are now also concerned with the air they breathe."

The joint venture was established in 2017 by local subsidiaries of Panasonic Homes and Sojitz to develop residential and commercial complexes under the Deltamas smart town scheme. — Kyodo News ■



Photo shows an image of completed smart homes under the smart township project in the Kota Deltamas industrial area in Bekasi, West Java Province. PT PanaHome Deltamas Indonesia has launched the sale of 18 housing units with a state-of-the-art air management system. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Tokyo stocks close higher on political upheaval



A man walks past an electronic quotation board displaying the closing share prices of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo on 3 September 2021. PHOTO: AFP

TOKYO stocks closed higher on Monday with investors remaining buoyant over unpopular Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's announcement that he will not stand for re-election.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index ended up 1.83 per cent, or 531.78 points, at 29,659.89, while the broader Topix index gained 1.28 per cent, or 25.77 points, to 2,041.22.

"Gains were supported by speculation about new economic stimulus" that could be announced by the Japanese government under a new prime minister, Daiwa Securities said in a commentary.

Suga said Friday he will not run in his ruling party's upcoming leadership vote, throwing open the race for the next premier of the world's third-largest economy.

"Last week, foreign investors returned to buy Japanese stocks, judging that the Liberal Democratic Party will

avoid a drubbing in the general election, after Prime Minister Suga said he will step down," said Masayuki Kubota, chief strategist of Rakuten Securities.

The news had also prompted a positive reaction from the Tokyo market on Friday, with the Nikkei index ending more than two per cent higher.

The dollar fetched 109.81 yen in Asian trade, against 109.73 yen in New York on Friday.

Mobile phone carrier KDDI jumped 3.64 per cent to 3,669 yen and SoftBank Corp rose 1.02 per cent to 1,535.5 yen on speculation that political pressure on them to cut phone fees would ease with the departure of Suga, who has pushed the issue.

Renewable energy company Renova climbed 15.43 per cent to 4,900 yen on prospects that green energy policy led by Suga will continue under a new leader. — AFP ■

German industrial orders reach record high

GERMAN industrial orders climbed to a new high in July, official data showed Monday, as the economy continued its strong recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

The indicator rose 3.4 per cent on the previous month to reach its "highest level since the beginning of the time series in 1991", when it began after the reunification of Germany, according to federal statistics agency Destatis.

Orders were up 24.4

per cent compared with July last year, when the effects of pandemic-related shutdowns were still being felt acutely.

Compared with February 2020, the month before pandemic restrictions were imposed in Germany, orders were up 15.7 per cent, the agency said.

The previous high point had been reached in December 2017, well before the pandemic.

The rise in the indicator was driven by

orders from abroad. These were up 8.0 per cent compared with the previous month, while domestic orders fell by 2.5 per cent.

The record was achieved despite global shortages in components, such as semiconductors, timber and plastics, limiting production in key sectors for the German economy.

Carmakers including Volkswagen have scaled back production of their vehicles in re-

sponse to the limited supply of computer chips, a crucial component in both conventional and electric vehicles.

The result was a "positive surprise", said LBBW bank economist Jens-Oliver Niklasch.

Commenting on the sharp difference between foreign and domestic demand, Niklasch added "the whole world needs German goods, but Germany cannot deliver." — AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PRESIDIO VOY.NO. (066N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PRESIDIO VOY.NO. (066N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **7-9-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Lack of TV time spoils Tokyo Paralympics' big opportunity

TELEVISION coverage of the Paralympics has introduced many relatively unknown athletes and sports to Japanese viewers during the stay-at-home summer of 2021.

But not all Para sports were equal when it came to television coverage of the games, and banning spectators from the Tokyo Paralympics did not help the obscure and unique disability sports get the air time many would argue they deserve.

The more popular sports like athletics and swimming were broadcast live, starting with the qualification rounds, during the 24 Aug. - 5 Sept. games, but niche sports without Japanese medal contenders like powerlifting and taekwondo were absent.

"It's disappointing, to say the least. It must be hard for the ath-



Photo taken with a fisheye lens shows a Paralympic three agitos monument in front of the National Stadium in Tokyo on 24 August 2021, ahead of the Tokyo Paralympic opening ceremony later in the day. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

letes," said Japanese powerlifter Hajime Ujio, who placed sixth in the men's 72-kilogramme competition. Powerlifting is effectively a bench press competition, of which there is no Olympic equivalent. Athletes compete in different

weight categories and some Paralympians have been known to surpass able-bodied bench press world records. "Many people don't understand the charm or depth of the sport.— Kyodo News ■

Mothers feeling greater stress during pandemic: private survey

MOTHERS raising children are feeling more stress due to the coronavirus pandemic than men or women without kids as the health crisis has limited their opportunity to go out and chat with other mothers, according to a private survey released Monday.

Of the 5,640 people in their 20s to 70s covered in the poll by Meiji Yasuda Life Insurance Co, 65.3 per cent said they are feeling stressed, with 59.2 per cent of them being men and 71.3 per cent women. Among women with one or more children, the ratio stood higher at 73.8 per cent.

Asked about the cause of their stress, with multiple answers allowed, 62.9 per cent

of respondents cited "restrictions on outings" while 54.9 per cent said they are "worried about infection."

Among mothers, 59.0 per cent said it is stressful that they "have less chance to meet people," higher than the 47.3 per cent who felt the same among respondents as a whole.

The results "showed that we are approaching the limits of restraint in our lives," said Yuichi Kodama, a chief economist at the company. For full-time housewives, the situation "tends to be more stressful than for those who go out for work."

The online survey was conducted between 14 and 27 July.— Kyodo News ■

Money, money, money: ABBA return to UK singles chart

FOR the first time in 40 years, ABBA are heading back to Britain's top 10 singles chart after thrilling fans with plans for a new album and virtual concert.

Two singles released by the Swedish group from their upcoming album "Voyage" sit at numbers six and seven, based on preliminary CD and vinyl sales and on streaming data, the Official Charts Company said on Sunday.

"I Still Have Faith In You" ranks higher thanks to more

physical sales so far, while "Don't Shut Me Down" is Britain's most downloaded song this week. Both songs have been streamed over 500,000 times.

The full chart comes out next Friday, and the tracks will mark ABBA's first appearance in the UK top 10 for singles since "One Of Us" in December 1981, according to the company.

ABBA have notched up over 400 million album sales over 50 years despite parting ways in 1982 and resolutely resisting all

offers to work together again — until now.

The band announced their comeback on Thursday. The album is due to be released on 5 November, and the London gig featuring their digital avatars is expected in May 2022.

ABBA are not the only throwback in this week's UK top 10. Elton John features as a lead artist for the first time in almost 20 years with "Cold Heart (Pnau Remix)", a collaboration with Dua Lipa. — AFP ■



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 2 October 2012 Madame Tussauds waxwork models of Swedish pop group Abba are displayed at a roller disco in the Renaissance Room in London. There will be something in the air in east London on Thursday, 2 September as Swedish superstars Abba are to break decades of silence with news on a new musical collaboration. **PHOTO: ADRIAN DENNIS / AFP**

Spain's 'Fallas' festival returns after pandemic pause



A man takes images of a falla during the Fallas festival in Valencia on 2 September 2021. In Valencia, yesterday's deluge of water disturbed the organization of the Fallas, the major festival in the region featuring parades of floats and giant cardboard sculptures, postponed from March to September due to the pandemic. **PHOTO: JOSE JORDAN / AFP**

VALENCIA'S "Fallas" festival wrapped up with fireworks and the burning of colourful sculptures on Sunday after returning to the eastern Spanish city following a pandemic-induced hiatus.

The five-day festival is traditionally held in March but was cancelled last year as the Covid-19 pandemic swept Spain. This year, officials postponed the start of the UNESCO-recognised event until 1 September. It was the first time that the festival was suspended since the end of Spain's 1936-39 civil war. Each year, residents make hundreds of colourful puppet-like sculptures — some as big as a four-storey building — out of

wood, plaster and papier-mache for the festival. Called "ninots", the sculptures depict fairytale characters and cartoonish effigies of politicians and celebrities.

One ensemble from this year's event was inspired by the hit Spanish Netflix series "Money Heist". It depicted several people wearing red overalls and Salvador Dali face masks like the main characters in the show. The ninots are displayed in the streets of the Mediterranean city and then burned on the last day of the festival — in a bonfire called the "Cremà" — in a centuries-old tradition honouring St Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters.— AFP ■

New Zealand lifts lockdown, barring virus-hit Auckland

NEW ZEALAND will mostly lift its Covid-19 lockdown this week, with only the country's infection epicentre Auckland to remain under strict stay-at-home orders, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Monday.

About three million New Zealanders will no longer be under stay-at-home orders as of Tuesday overnight, and schools will reopen on Thursday for the first time in three weeks, Ardern said.

But she added that Auckland, where the country's Delta-variant outbreak emerged late last month, will remain in hard lockdown for at least another week as the virus was not yet contained in the city of two million.

Ardern said there had been positive progress bringing case numbers down, but the highly transmissible Delta variant was a "game changer" that meant

Auckland's restrictions could not be relaxed too soon.

"We've done so well to bringing this outbreak under control, level four (hard lockdown) restrictions are working but the job is not done," she said.

"We're within sight of elimination but we can't drop the ball."

New Zealanders outside Auckland will move to alert level two on the country's four-tier coronavirus response system.

It means stay-at-home orders are lifted, but the freedoms enjoyed before the Auckland cluster emerged — when domestic life in New Zealand was near-normal — will not be fully restored.

Indoor social gatherings will be restricted to 50 people, with mandatory mask wearing and tracer-app scanning in many venues.

The outbreak ended a six-



This picture shows an empty highway during a nationwide covid-19 lockdown in Wellington on 18 August 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

month run without local transmission in New Zealand, which had been one of the world's last Covid-free zones and won wide-

spread praise for its pandemic response.

A woman in her 90s on Saturday became the first person

to die with Covid-19 in New Zealand since February, bringing the country's pandemic death toll to 27. — AFP ■

Blinken heads to Qatar on Afghan crisis mission



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken boards an aircraft as he departs Washington, DC from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, on 5 September 2021, to travel to Doha, Qatar and Ramstein, Germany. **PHOTO: AFP**

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken headed Sunday to Qatar on his first trip since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan as he seeks a united front with allies shaken by the chaos.

Qatar, a major US military base, has been the gateway for 55,000 people airlifted out of Afghanistan, nearly half the total evacuated by US-led forces after the Taliban's stunningly swift victory amid a US withdrawal.

Blinken will then head Wednesday to the US air base of Ramstein in Germany, a temporary home for thousands of Afghans moving to the United States, from which he will hold a virtual 20-nation ministerial meeting on the crisis alongside German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas.

Blinken said that in Qatar he will "express our deep gratitude for all that they're doing to support the evacuation effort" and meet rescued Afghans as well as US diplomats, who have relocated functions from the shuttered embassy in Kabul to Doha.

He will also speak to the Qataris about efforts alongside Turkey to reopen Kabul's ramshackle airport—a pressing priority that is necessary for flying in badly needed humanitarian aid and evacuating remaining Afghans.

The Taliban have promised that they will keep letting Afghans leave if they want to — one of the key issues that US allies expect to discuss in the talks in Germany. — AFP ■

Philippines lifts lockdown in capital as virus surges

THE Philippines will lift a stay-at-home order in the capital Manila this week as it trials "granular lockdowns", an official said Monday, in a bid to rein in coronavirus cases and revive the economy.

More than 13 million people in the national capital region — the country's economic heartland — have been in lockdown since 6 August amid record infections fuelled by the hyper-contagious Delta variant.

The move to ease restrictions from Wednesday comes

after nationwide daily cases exceeded 20,000 for the past three days — double the number at the start of the latest lockdown — straining hospitals as they grapple with a nurses shortage.

"Localized lockdowns will be piloted in Metro Manila," said presidential spokesman Harry Roque, explaining that a household, building or street could be targeted.

"It will be literally a complete lockdown if you are subject to granular lockdown — even the food will be delivered

to you."

There were no further details about how the more targeted measures would be enforced.

The lighter restrictions in the national capital region, which accounts for about a third of the country's economy, will enable many hard-hit businesses to reopen and spur local tourism. Based on previous guidelines, restaurants will be allowed to accept diners and beauty salons permitted to operate — albeit at reduced capacity. — AFP ■

Taliban say resistance holdout Panjshir Valley 'completely captured'

THE Taliban said Monday they had captured the last pocket of resistance in Afghanistan, the

Panjshir Valley, as the top US diplomat flies to Qatar to try and handle the aftermath of the

chaotic American withdrawal.

Following their lightning-fast rout of Afghanistan's army last month — and celebrations when the last US troops flew out after 20 years of war — the Taliban turned to crush the forces defending the mountainous Panjshir Valley.

"With this victory, our country is completely taken out of the quagmire of war," chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said. Late Sunday, the so-called National Resistance Front (NRF) — made up of anti-Taliban militia and former Afghan security forces — acknowledged suffering major battlefield losses in Panjshir and called for a ceasefire. — AFP ■



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 2 September 2021, Afghan resistance movement and anti-Taliban uprising forces take part in a military training at Malimah area of Dara district in Panjshir province. The Taliban said on 6 September 2021 the last pocket of resistance in Afghanistan, the Panjshir Valley, had been "completely captured". **PHOTO: AFP**

FIFA 'regrets' chaos at abandoned Brazil v Argentina match

FIFA said Monday it regretted the chaotic scenes that preceded the suspension of the World Cup qualifier between Brazil and Argentina and a decision on possible disciplinary action would be taken "in due course".

The match at Sao Paulo's Neo Quimica Arena on Sunday was halted when Brazilian health officials ran onto the pitch seven minutes after kick-off, triggering a melee involving team officials and players from both sides.

The officials intervened just hours after health authorities in Brazil said four England-based players in Argentina's squad should be placed in "immediate quarantine" for breaching Covid-19 protocols.

"FIFA regrets the scenes preceding the suspension of the match between Brazil and Argentina for the CONMEBOL qualifiers of the FIFA World Cup 2022 which prevented millions of fans from enjoying a match between two of the most important football nations in the world," football's world governing body said in a statement.

"The first match official reports have been sent to FIFA. This information will be analyzed by the competent disciplinary bodies and a decision will be taken



Brazil's Neymar (L) and Argentina's Lionel Messi talk before their South American qualification football match for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 at the Neo Quimica Arena, also known as Corinthians Arena, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 5 September 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

in due course," FIFA added.

Brazil's National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA) said the Argentinian Premier League players — Giovanni Lo Celso and Cristian Romero of Tottenham, and Aston Villa's Emiliano Martinez and Emiliano Buendia — had given "false information" when they entered Brazil.

Romero, Lo Celso and Martinez were all in Argentina's starting line-up for Sunday's game, prompting the intervention of ANVISA officials.

In scenes of confusion on the pitch, Argentina captain Lionel

Messi and his teammates left the field while Brazil's squad began a practice game.

After the game was abandoned, Messi criticized the intervention of the Brazilian officials.

"We've been here for three days, why are you doing this just now?" he said on Argentina's TyC network.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni told reporters that "at no time were we told that they could not play the game".

The Argentina team arrived back in Buenos Aires early Monday. — AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Davies rescues Canada as US held again

THE United States were held to a second consecutive draw in CONCACAF qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup on Sunday as Bayern Munich star Alphonso Davies helped Canada grab a 1-1 draw against the Americans in Nashville.

Coach Gregg Berhalter's US side, forced to settle for a 0-0 draw against El Salvador on Thursday, looked to be on course to take all three points after Red Bull Salzburg forward Brenden Aaronson fired them ahead on 55 minutes.

But American hopes of a vital three points were left in tatters only seven minutes later when Davies ruthlessly punished a defensive error by US substitute DeAndre Yedlin down the left flank.

The 20-year-old winger raced forward and then squared a perfect pass to Cyle Larin who tucked away the finish to silence a crowd of 43,000 at Nashville's Nissan Stadium.

The hosts, who welcomed Chelsea's Christian Pulisic back into their starting line-up after his recovery from Covid-19, were unable to break the deadlock in the time remaining as Canada held on for a deserved draw.

The result leaves the Americans, desperate to atone for their failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, with just two points from two games in the eight-team final group of qualifying for teams from North America, Central America and the Caribbean. — AFP ■

Medvedev to face Dutch qualifier in US Open quarter-finals



Russia's Daniil Medvedev hits a return to Britain's Daniel Evans during their 2021 US Open Tennis tournament men's singles fourth round match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Centre in New York, on 5 September 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

RUSSIAN second seed Daniil Medvedev marched into the US Open quarter-finals on Sunday, where a shock Dutch qualifier will try to deny him a third straight trip to the New York semi-finals.

Medvedev defeated British 24th seed Daniel Evans

6-3, 6-4, 6-3, making his fourth trip to the last eight in the past five Grand Slams as he chases his first Slam title.

Medvedev, who lost this year's Australian Open final to Novak Djokovic and the 2019 US Open final to Rafael Nadal, has not dropped a set in four matches.

"Now I just want to make it to the finals again to have another thing to remember, and hopefully a better one," Medvedev said.

Medvedev next faces 117th-ranked Botic Van de Zandschulp, who outlasted Argentine 11th seed Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 5-7, 6-1 in four hours and 20 minutes.

"I don't really have words for it," Van de Zandschulp said. "Played so many matches. Some of them I was on the brink of defeat but I pulled through and won them." — AFP ■