

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 91, 11th Waxing of Waso 1383 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Monday, 19 July 2021



19th 2021 JULY

OUR TRIBUTE TO MARTYRS ON 74TH MARTYRS' DAY

Broader outlook and farsightedness

Everyone who knows the world's history can consider that the nation-building task is too difficult to avoid encountering various kinds of ups and downs in this mundane world. Therefore, with a broader outlook and farsightedness, we shall seize whatever opportunity we have. That's the way we love Myanmar. We can build our Myanmar.

(Excerpt from the broadcasting speech made by Bogyoke Aung San to the national peoples in November 1944)



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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

COVID-19: start ourselves to take preventive measures

ALL people are urged to abide by the following ways of prevention against COVID-19 without fail in line with the motto: "COVID-19: start ourselves to take preventive measures" not to violently infect COVID-19 as next wave and not to be infected of variant COVID-19 virus.

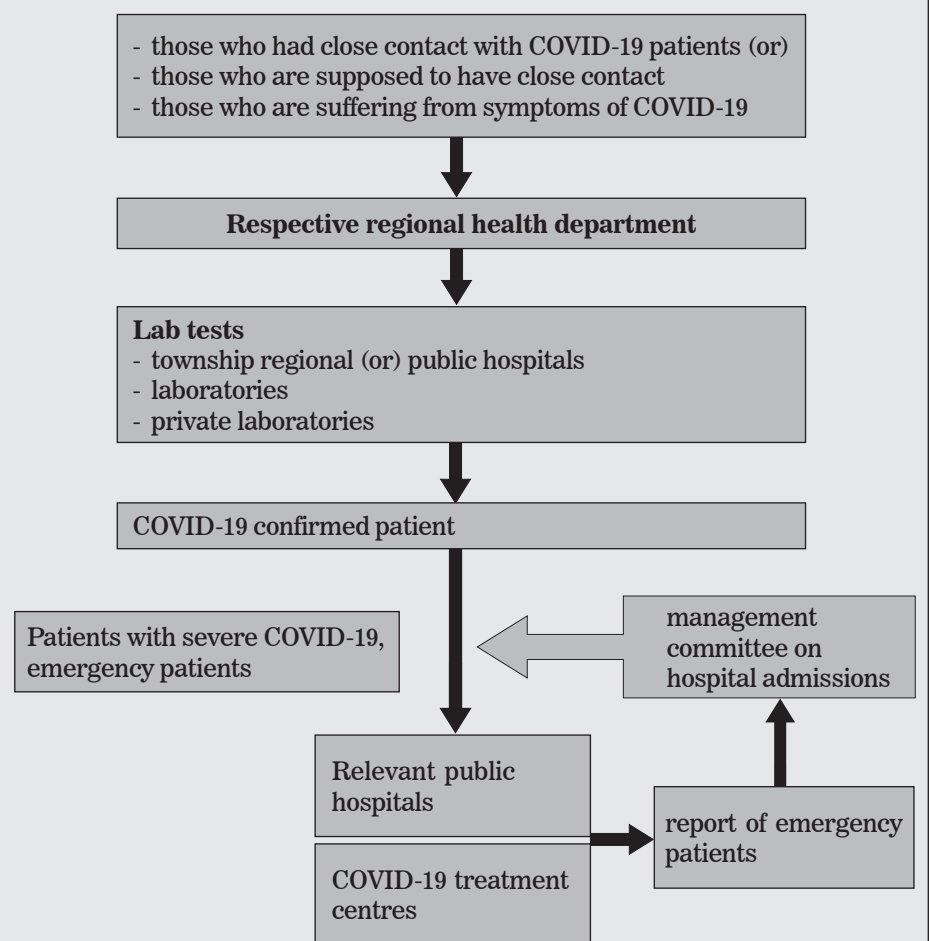
- (1) Systematically wear masks whenever go outside and also wear face shields whenever associate with many people.
- (2) Take adequate distance from each other as much as they can.
- (3) Avoid the crowds.
- (4) Take 20 seconds in systematically washing hands many times.
- (5) Avoid the visits to the closed chambers, air-conditioned rooms and the lesser ventilated rooms as much as possible.
- (6) Those who need to go outside houses should avoid acts close to and eat meals together with older persons above 60 years and those with diabetes, hypertension, and heart diseases.
- (7) Fully cooperate in quarantine processes.
- (8) Don't buy something from the vendors who do not wear masks.
- (9) Exchange information to each other.
- (10) Cooperate in vaccination of COVID-19 pandemic. Continuously follow the preventive measures although they have received the vaccinations.
- (11) Strictly follow the work guidelines for preventing the COVID-19 pandemic issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.
- (12) If somebody suffers from symptoms of higher body temperature, coughing, suffocation, tiredness and sudden loss of smell and flavour, they need to immediately contact nearby health units to receive medical treatment.
- (13) If those who do not wear the masks when they go outside, and if those who conduct mass gatherings will face legal actions under the existing laws.

Health Knowledge Awareness Promoting Department
Ministry of Health and Sports

5,285 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 18 July, total figure rises to 229,521

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **229,521** after **5,285 new cases** were reported on 18 July 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **161,859** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **5,000** after **231** died. —MNA

Healthcare system for secondary COVID-19 contacts, suspected COVID-19 patients



Upon the symptoms of COVID-19 patients, decision will be made for treatment at respective centres.

Healthcare system for secondary COVID-19 contacts, suspected COVID-19 patients

1. Those who have had close contact or have been in contact with COVID-19 confirmed patients and those with COVID-19 symptoms must first inform the respective township health departments or hospitals.
2. Then, the swab tests will be conducted at township regional (or) public laboratories and private laboratories.
3. The confirmed COVID-19 patients must report to their respective township/region/state health committees and they will be sent to the relevant public hospitals and COVID-19 treatment centres under the arrangement of the management committee on hospital admissions.
4. However, patients with severe COVID-19 and emergency patients can directly go to the relevant public hospitals and COVID-19 treatment centres for medical treatment.
5. The public hospitals and COVID-19 treatment centres must report the emergency cases to the management committee on hospital admissions.

Ministry of Health and Sports

It is concerned with the whole country

It is necessary to understand the Burma Defence Army is concerned not only with Tatmadaw members but also the entire Bamar nationals and the whole country. Actually, there is no comprehensive independence camp because no encouragement is given to soldiers of the Burma Defence Army. It is important for defending the country in the establishment of a new era. All should not work for just Myanmar but take lessons from other countries and nearby countries.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by War Minister Colonel Aung San at the special meeting of Burma Defence Army held in Yangon on 2 December 1942)



Public participation needed in response to COVID-19: Senior General



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is addressing the third coordination meeting of prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 in Nay Pyi Taw on 18 July 2021.

ALL the people should participate in COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities as the treatment sector is a public affair, and so not only the health workers but also the outside experts should cooperate in undertaking preventive measures. The health workers are the closest and take the most practical duties and so it needs to provide necessary encouragement and care for them, said State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing during the 3rd coordination meeting on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment yesterday.

In his opening speech, the Senior General talked about the

rapid infection cases, a total of 224,236 confirmed cases of the country until 17 July, differences in relation with the first, second and third COVID-19 waves.

He then said more than 1.6 million people received their first vaccination and arrangements are being made for second jabs. 750,000 vaccines from China will

be arrived in the country on 22, 23 and 24 July and in the first week of August. Therefore, it is estimated that 50 per cent of the population will be vaccinated this year. Currently, private companies are also allowed to import medicines and medical supplies without any restrictions.

The Senior General highlighted the anxieties of the people upon rumours related to oxygen like some save the oxygen while some resell, the use of oxygen with the suggestion of hospitals and health officials, oxygen production rate from the oxygen plants established at public hospitals, military hospitals and factories, importation of liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders from Thailand and China via border trade camps and

challenges of the country amid the third wave of COVID-19 in addition to the neighbouring countries.

He also added that according to the researches and mobility pattern, the numbers of mass gatherings decline and the public participation becomes high, and appreciated the manners of the people for following the stipulated rules and regulations.

He continued that if the individuals follow the basic rules and participate in disease control operations, it can control the infection rate. The officials should strictly monitor the operations. Although the infection rate is on the rise, the air, rail and road transports are opened as usual to facilitate the trade flow.

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Public participation needed in response ...

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Therefore, it should draft a plan to prioritize the staff of the transport sector in vaccination programmes.

The Senior General also said the coming three significant days such as Martyrs' Day, the full moon of Waso and Eid al-Adha Day will be held as per the health rules.

Then, regarding the public participation in COVID-19 prevention and control activities, the Senior General said, "We should carry out the COVID-19 preventive measures without any impacts. Public participation plays a key role. Nothing can stop the disease as we cannot see or hear or smell it. During this situation, all should cooperate with us. In the medical treatment sector, there are government employees in addition to outside experts. All should cooperate with us as it is a public issue. Therefore, we need to

They should be the first priority. The relevant administrative officials should carry out this case. On the other hand, the civil servants and outside experts also cooperate with us anyway as it is the issue of the country. Moreover, the volunteers are also welcomed and some volunteers report. However, some do not dare to volunteer due to the threats. Some cannot do as they are away from here. I have already been told that I welcome such volunteering and that shows we need cooperation. Then, the people donate the needed equipment. According to the report I received on Saturday, the numbers of donated supplies are rising in respective states and regions. I also said earlier we, Myanmar people have a proper **social spirit**. It is such a wonderful case that the well-wishers donated across the nation despite their hardships. I also thank the donors

"We have prepared the quarantine centres. We arrange centres at 1,934 places for about 69,800 patients. Currently, there is only 25 per cent of patients at the quarantine centres. Similarly, there are 1,114 places where can accommodate nearly 46,000 positive patients. There is only 62 per cent of patients at that place now. A total of 560 centres can accommodate about 25,500 people, 92.2 per cent.

I also said earlier we, Myanmar people have a proper social spirit. It is such a wonderful case that the well-wishers donated across the nation despite their hardships. I also thank the donors for their donations. I want the organizations and associations to cooperate with us as much as they can."

guarantee their health issues. They should not be sick. They need more care. Their healthcare intends to the majority of the people such as one offers treatment to many patients. It does not mean many people carry out for only one. Just one person does for many. Therefore, they are more important.

for their donations. I want the organizations and associations to cooperate with us as much as they can."

Then, the Vice-Chairman of State Administration Council Vice-Senior General (Army), SAC members, Union Ministers and military officials discussed the COVID-19 preventive meas-

ures, establishment of oxygen plants and arrival of oxygen cylinders in regions, states and commands, medical sales, health rules in the transport sector, health education programmes and awareness campaigns, 315 confirmed cases at the prison to date with 5 deaths (with underlying diseases), 120 recoveries and 190 still under treatment, systematic healthcare system at the prisons and cells, arrangements to hold significant ceremonies in line with the health rules and other matters related to the oxygen production, importation of oxygen and healthcare system for health workers.

Regarding this discussion, the Senior General said the transportation sector is the key for health and economic sectors. It cannot be suspended and so it should follow the rules strictly. The officials should operate RBE train services.

He also stressed the need to serve duties not to occur power outages as the electricity is important in COVID-19 control activities, conduct education programmes with ethnic languages for the public via TV channels, radio and publishing industry and express clear health-related articles.

He then said to use loud-

speakers in mobile awareness campaigns. Arrangements should be made for all people to get their vaccines. The Tatmadaw's flights and jets can be used to provide oxygen to remote areas.

In his closing remarks, the Senior General talked about the measures to ease the worry of people, systematic arrangements to control the travels during long public holidays, plans to provide healthcare services and Soon (meals) for monks and nuns during Waso.

He also added that the officials should resolve the difficulties in transporting the agricultural and farming products due to some travel restrictions in the COVID-19 period. They also need to make plans for the farmers to get fair production costs and profits. Currently, the prices of chicken eggs are high due to the rumours. Tatmadaw has been making efforts in poultry farms since six or seven years ago. Therefore, there is no need for people to worry about it.

The Senior General also said, "We have prepared the quarantine centres. We arrange centres at 1,934 places for about 69,800 patients. Currently, there is only 25 per cent of patients at the quarantine centres. Similarly, there are 1,114 places

where can accommodate nearly 46,000 positive patients. There is only 62 per cent of patients at that place now. A total of 560 centres can accommodate about 25,500 people, 92.2 per cent. Some of the patients at the treatment centres must be transferred to the places for positive cases, if necessary. Such doing is not carried out during this situation. However, we should make preparations like management for a shift. It is important to provide food and accommodation for the patients. Tatmadaw provides such assistance to the patients at three military hospitals. Similarly, we provide at the public hospitals. We communicate with the donors. The patients need nutrition as they should have good resistance to COVID-19. Some patients can eat the food but some cannot. We need to keep our eyes on that case regardless of who that the person may be. We must not neglect the poor patients. We should make sure that we can give all that we deserve as human beings.»

He urged all to cooperate with the ministry concerned and regional commands if necessary and appreciate the public participation in COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities. — MNA

Public Announcement

1. The Ministry of Commerce cooperates with the ministry concerned to facilitate the implementation of COVID-19 preventive measures, and allows the imports of medicines and other related equipment via sea route/border checkpoints in a timely manner.
2. The imports of Oxygen Concentrators, the current essentials for the treatment of COVID-19, were exempted from paying 3 per cent tax and applying for FDA approval and import licences.
3. It has now reported that some unscrupulous persons post the false information on social media to raise the prices in the market and public awareness by making a fake office letter that bans on importation of medicines and medical supplies.
4. It is here announced that the spreading office letter is just a fake one and actions will be taken against those who spread fake information under existing law, and the certain restrictions on the import of medicines and medical equipment are eased and allowed in a timely manner.

Ministry of Commerce

Development of the State

IT is necessary to have sufficiency of electricity, good transport, good communication system and human resources for proper health and education systems in order to ensure development of a country. Health and education sectors must be encouraged for having good human resources. Hence, the education sector must be encouraged to be able to turn out the educated new generations for emergence of human resources.

(Excerpt from the speech of Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with Mandalay Region Administration Council members and departmental personnel on 17-5-2021)

Oxygen tanks distributed to hospitals, Covid-19 centres

THE Tatmadaw and its donors have donated oxygen cylinders to public hospitals and clinics in various regions/states to help meet the oxygen needs of the Covid-19 patients, said Tatmadaw officials.

Donations are being sent to healthcare centres, Covid-19 centres and Military hospitals, officials added.

Nay Pyi Taw Command delivered 50 oxygen tanks to the General Hospital (1000 beds) in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday while 20 oxygen tanks by Northern Command to Momeik General Hospital in Kachin State.

Next, Commander Maj-Gen Saw Than Hlaing from Coastal Region Command and party donated two oxygen concentrators and 10 oxygen cylinders to Myeik General Hospital, Taninthayi Region.

Southwestern Command also donated 130 oxygen tanks to Whakema General Hospital, Ayeyawady Region and West-



Oxygen cylinders and nutritious food donated to Myeik General Hospital.

ern Command donated 13 oxygen tanks to Taungup General Hospital and 47 oxygen tanks to Ann General Hospital in Rakhine State separately.

Then, Southern Command donated 70 oxygen tanks to Letpadan General Hospital, Bago Region.

Commander Gen Saw Than Hlaing from Coastal Region Command and party yesterday

inspected oxygen production at a public company (Gandamar) Oxygen Plant in Myeik, Tanintharyi Region.

On the same day, Chairman of the Yangon Region Administrative Council U Hla Soe and Commander Maj-Gen. Nyunt Swe Win from Yangon Region Command inspected the free distribution of Liquid Oxygen by Shwe Byain Phyu Co. Ltd at the



The Sagaing Region Administration Council Chair and North-West Command Commander are inspecting the Mi Bha Ghone Oxygen Plant in Monywa.

Unity Oxygen Plant in Industrial Zone (1) in Shwepyithar Township, Yangon Region.

Next, Chairman of Sagaing Region Administrative Council U Maung Maung Lin, Commander of Northwestern Command Brigadier General Phyo Thant and officials also visited Mi Bha Ghone Oxygen Plant in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region and coordinated the necessary work.

On the same day, officials received 782 oxygen tanks imported by a private company limited through Myawady border gate, 50 oxygen tanks for Dawei Township donated by well-wishers, and 326 oxygen tanks for Myawady Township donated by the public.

The oxygen tanks donated by well-wishers will be distributed to the respective regions and states, officials said. —MNA

Oxygen Plant (Oxymet) installed aboard Tatmadaw vessel gives oxygen to public

AS the Ministry of Health and Sports is stepping up the installation of oxygen plants in each region and state to fulfil the need for oxygen, the Tatmadaw is also installing and producing oxygen plants in various areas of the military headquarters and distributing them to public hospitals and Covid-19 medical centres, said

Tatmadaw officials.

The Oxygen Plant (Oxymet) that is mounted onboard the Marine Hospital vessel (Thanlwin), supplies and distributes oxygen to public hospitals and social organizations in Yangon Region, Tatmadaw officials said.

From 16 July, 126 40-litre oxygen tanks and four 15-litre oxy-

gen tanks have been distributed, officials added.

Tatmadaw has already distributed five oxygen tanks to the People's Hospital in Khayan Township, five oxygen tanks to Thanlyin Township People's Hospital, eight oxygen tanks to Kunchankone People's Hospital, ten oxygen tanks to Seikgyi Khanaungto Public Hospital, five oxygen tanks to Kawhmu Township People's Hospital, 40 oxygen tanks to Twantay Township People's Hospital and Sitta Thukha Social Welfare Association respectively.

Next, a total of 22 oxygen cylinders were donated to the Myanmar Apex Welfare Association (MAB). And 35 oxygen cylinders were donated to other social organizations, officials said. —MNA



Tatmadaw provides COVID-19 protective equipment, oxygen tanks

TATMADAW medical team, healthcare workers and civil society organizations are working together for the COVID-19-positive patients in the military hospitals, public hospitals, healthcare departments and COVID centres since the third wave of COVID-19 was increasing.

In doing so, Tatmadaw members have been donating the disease prevention, control and treatment equipment and oxygen tanks and foods to the hospitals.

From 1 July to yesterday, Commanders from the respective military commands

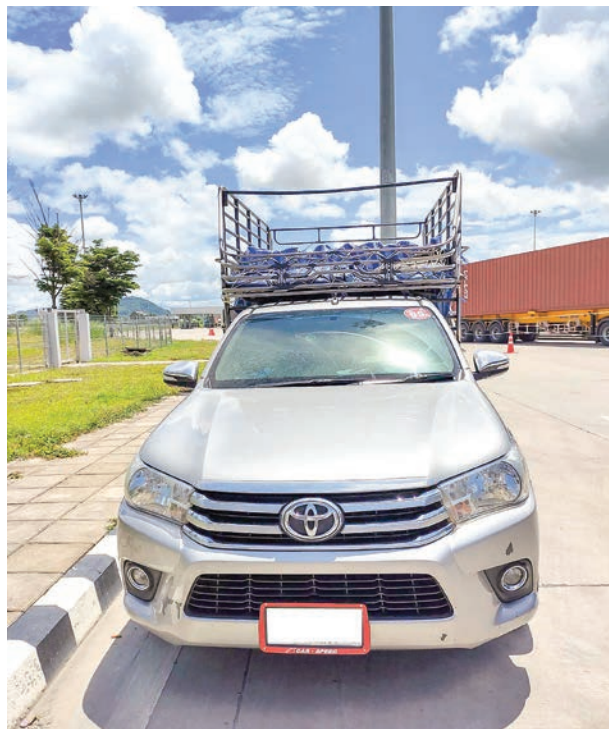
have donated 991 oxygen tanks, 308,362 surgical masks, 960 sets of PPE, 509 hand gel bottles, 150 face shields, four buckets of hand wash, 800 surgical gloves, 500 hair covers, with petrol, foods and cash assistance.

In addition, donors are also providing medical equipment related to the disease, X-Ray machines, nutritious foods and cash assistance to the Tatmadaw's COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities. It is reported that donors are also given certificates of honours for their contribution. —MNA



Images indicating importation processes of liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders via land border trade zones

Images of liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders via land border trade zones and posts. – MNA





March along straight path to the goal without derailment

WE ALL have set a great aim that the motherland Myanmar must be shaped to be a democratic Union in federalism. Such a goal is so distinct. The way to the future of the nation is totally clear. We don't have any reason to choose the wrong way.

We have to march into the goal with full of strength. We all should not be relentless in our endeavours in all things such as nation-building tasks. It is because the federalist Union of Myanmar must be modernized. The living standard of the people must be uplifted. The government and the people must be in harmony.

All the people should be disciplined and united, and the motherland Myanmar must be prosperous. So, let's march along a straight path to the goal without derailment.

Minds of all the people must have chances to enjoy peace and prosperity.

Not only the government but the entire ethnic people must be dutiful. Such a dream must come true one day. We all should discard narrow minds from our souls. We have held up sympathy over one another. Anybody should not be extremist. They all avoid extreme concepts such as inflation of patriotism and deflation of patriotism. During the period when we march on the way to the goal without discarding the inflation of patriotism and deflation of patriotism, the motherland would not be peaceful.

In nurturing patriotism, we all should notice the danger of personal-cult. The history of Myanmar proves the country had faced disadvantages of personal-cult many times. Hence, we have to take lessons from bitter past events and try hard to overcome such challenges. Today is no time to dispute whose patriotism is the best.

Actually, all the people including the government have cultured patriotism in their minds. But, the ways of expression over patriotism are very different. That is why we all should not underestimate each other. We must give encouragement to each other. We must join hands together in marching to the goal.

Today is the martyr day of Myanmar. Fallen national leader General Aung San gave speeches along with his term till his final days. All his speeches are in modernity till today. The summary of his speeches means: All the people should be disciplined and united, and the motherland Myanmar must be prosperous. So, let's march along a straight path to the goal without derailment.



Europeans face travel woes as Covid reaches Olympic Village

Europeans faced last-minute travel frustration on Saturday as the UK and France overhauled Covid-19 border restrictions to combat surging infections that threaten plans to get life back to normal.

THE challenge of charting a return to pre-pandemic lifestyles was highlighted by the first case of Covid-19 at the Tokyo Olympics Games Village, less than a week before the event is due to begin.

The organizers have described the Games as the "most restrictive sports event... in the entire world", but many are concerned about the health risks involved in hosting thousands of athletes and officials.

Britain is also facing a backlash over its decision to exempt France from its new looser entry policies - vaccinated returning UK residents will still have to quarantine for 10 days, unlike in other "amber" countries.

"I'm a doctor so I understand the health issues very well, but this doesn't make any sense," said Maud Lemoine, a doctor based in London who is visiting France.

And France had an upwelling of anger to deal with after the government announced that unvaccinated visitors from Britain and several other European countries must show a negative Covid test taken within the 24 hours of departure rather than 48 or 72 hours, as



Britain's decision to exempt France from its new looser entry policies sparked anger among those hoping to return. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

was the case previously.

The interior ministry said almost 114,000 demonstrators gathered across France on Saturday to protest against the government's handling of the pandemic and continued restrictions on everyday life.

"It's not that we think the Earth is flat, but we don't know the long-term effects of these vaccines cobbled together in a hurry," care

assistant Rita, 39, said at a march in the city of Montpellier.

Elsewhere in Europe, Greek officials imposed curfews on the party island of Mykonos and Spanish authorities did likewise in Barcelona and other cities in the northeastern Catalonia region.

EU jobs overtake US

European governments are facing an uphill battle, with the

EU's disease prevention agency warning that infections could rise fivefold across the bloc by August 1. But the continent also had something to celebrate, with the proportion of people vaccinated topping the US figure for the first time.

Around 55.5 per cent have now had a first dose following a sluggish start, compared with 55.4 across the Atlantic.

EU Commissioner Thierry

Breton said the achievement validated the EU's strategy of "remaining open and exporting half of our production to 100+ countries", vaunting the bloc's "solidarity" compared with other vaccine makers.

Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said his country had reached the "milestone" of 50 million doses and promised that half of the population would be fully vaccinated by next week.

And in Britain, where most of the adult population has now had two jabs, the government is preparing to ease most restrictions on its citizens.

Quarantine for vaccinated Britons returning from "amber" list countries is due to end on Monday but at the last minute the government decided to retain the status quo for France because of the "persistent presence" of the Beta variant, first identified in South Africa. While the rule applies only to England for now, the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales indicated they were likely to follow suit. The new looser regime in England, with requirements to wear masks among the rules to be dropped, comes as the UK re-

corded more than 50,000 cases in a day on Friday and the government said that rate could double in the coming weeks.

However, officials said the high vaccination rate should prevent a spike in deaths and serious illness.

-Hajj joy-

Among those testing positive was Health Secretary Sajid Javid, who announced on Saturday he had contracted the disease and was isolating. "I'm grateful that I've had two jabs of the vaccine. And so far, my symptoms are very mild," Javid said via Twitter.

More than two-thirds of UK adults are fully vaccinated, but with cases surging, critics say the government is making a reckless gamble. "This is a threat not just to England but to the whole world - particularly low- and middle-income countries who have very limited access to vaccines," a group of international scientists said in a joint statement on Friday.

Saudi Arabia is also allowing crowds to gather for the second downsized hajj since the start of the pandemic.

SOURCE: AFP

Four-fold surge in long COVID cases after second wave, reveals study

The manifestation of post-COVID-19 complications in a number of patients is four-fold higher in the second wave as compared to the first wave, a study by Apollo Hospitals has revealed.

THE long COVID cases are referred to as instances where a patient suffers from COVID-related complications for a longer duration and these cases have surged.

The Delta variant that caused havoc this year in April caused extreme causality and the latter was termed as the virus of concern (VoC) by the Union Health Ministry saw "newer symptoms like high-grade fever, diarrhoea, severe lung infection followed by

long COVID syndrome and post COVID complications like falling oxygen levels and lung fibrosis that manifested even after eight weeks or more of testing positive," the study reads.

Four-fold surge

"Number of cases reported for long COVID and post-COVID complications after the second wave of COVID-19 has been four times more than what was reported last year," it says.

Patients were admitted after 20-30 days of testing positive.

Known as long haul COVID cases, these patients continue to experience symptoms of the disease four weeks post the initial recovery.

Dr MS Kanwar, Lead Lung Transplant and COVID Team, Senior Consultant, Department of Pulmonology says, "After the second wave of COVID-19 we have had a large number of patients coming in with moderate to

severe complications even after eight weeks of testing positive. The reason for it can be a low-grade cytokine reaction or any type of immune dysregulation that is going on in the body and which the body hasn't been able to handle.

This number is extremely high to what we had observed last year."

"Post-COVID complications like chronic fatigue syndrome and myalgia are reported four times



The manifestation of post-COVID-19 complications in a number of patients is four-fold higher in the second wave as compared to the first wave, a study by Apollo Hospitals has revealed. Apollo Hospitals is the leading multispecialty health care unit in India. PHOTO: ANI

more in women than men. Whereas, complications like lung fibrosis are found to be more severe in men," Dr stated.

Other than that lung fibro-

sis, breathlessness and depleting oxygen levels remain some of the most reported complications noticed.

SOURCE: ANI



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 4:00 pm Sunday 18 July 2021)

BAYINFERENCE: Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weak elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal. **FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 19 July 2021:** Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Eastern Shan, Kayah States, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Kachin, Southern Shan, Chin and Rakhine States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-9)feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and (5-7)feet in off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Strong monsoon over the Andaman Sea and South Bay.

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

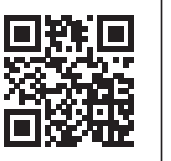
FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 July 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

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Anti-COVID-19 equipment imported daily via land border

THE Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments to facilitate the faster import of COVID-19 protective equipment.

In doing so, 13 companies imported 15.418 million litres of liquid oxygen, 4,000 litres of oxygen cylinders, 2,623 vacant oxygen cylinders, 12,795 PPEs, 19,000 gloves and 180 tonnes of masks yesterday via Muse, Chinshwehaw and Myawaddy border trade camps.

From 12 to 18 July, 49 million litres of liquid oxygen, 6,505 oxygen concentrators and 290 tonnes of masks were imported.

The medicines and medical supplies from Thailand were mainly imported via the Myawaddy trade zone and a total of 117 trucks were allowed to import the medical equipment between 12 and 18 July. The COVID-19 protective gears were imported more and more daily to meet the local demand starting 12 July. — MNA



The medicines and medical supplies from Thailand were mainly imported via the Myawaddy trade zone and a total of 117 trucks were allowed to import the medical equipment between 12 and 18 July.

Covid-19 protective supplies imported through Myawaddy border

IMPORT processes for Covid-19 protective supplies, including oxygen, are being allowed through the Myawaddy border to assist in the prevention and control of the pandemic.

On 17 July, 13 vehicles crossed over the Myawaddy-Myanmar Friendship Bridge No. 2 of the Myawaddy border.

Vehicles will transport essential products, including Liquid Oxygen, Oxygen Cylinders, Oxygen Concentrators, PPE uniforms, and face masks to relevant regions and states, officials said.

Department of Commerce Myawaddy Trade Zone cooperated with the traders to ensure that these Covid-19 protective aids

and equipment are easily and quickly accessible to the public.

According to the Myawaddy Trade Zone, the import of oxygen concentrators does not require an FDA-approved import licence. And the Myawaddy Trade Zone allows for a pre-withdrawal fee of 3% duty-free. —Htein Lin Aung/GNLM



Vehicles will transport essential products, including Liquid Oxygen, Oxygen Cylinders, Oxygen Concentrators, PPE uniforms, and face masks to relevant regions and states.

Longan fruit transactions rise in Mongywang



Longan farmers can get profits and earn better incomes from longan plantations.

THE demand for longan fruits (Hnin Thee or Dragon's eyes) reaches a high in Mongywang Township of eastern Shan State.

The delicious longan fruits are marketable fruits at reasonable prices, so people prefer the fruits from Mongywang Township. It gets K500 for two bunches of longans.

Although the production rate of the fruit is low this year, the transaction is good. It fetch-

es higher prices than in previous years. The Mongywang residents grow the fruits in their yard, garden and on the fences of their houses.

Sellers get prices depending on fruit sizes. The longans are transported to Tachilek and Kengtung townships via Tarlay and Mongphyat townships. Longan farmers can get profits and earn better incomes from longan plantations. —Sai Aung Zaw Lin/GNLM

Green gram market sees flat rate amid border trade slowdown

THE price of green gram remains stable owing to the border trade closure triggered by the COVID-19 crisis, exporters said.

The trade slowdown happened amidst the COVID-19 infections spiking in the country,

causing the price to flat. The price of green gram stood around K121,000 per three-basket bag.

Following up on the COVID-19 detection of the staff from Muse 105th mile trade zone, China closed down all the border

posts. Wan Ding, Kyinsankyawt and Pan Hseng (Kyukoke) border posts came to an abrupt halt on 8 July.

In a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus on the border, China banned border crossing, causing the price hike for the agricultural input, cement and medical devices and posing difficulties for exporters and importers.

Myanmar conveyed more than 539,000 tonnes of green grams to foreign trade partners between 1 October and 18 June in the current financial year 2020-2021, according to the Ministry of Commerce's trade data.

The country generated an income of US\$427.17 million from

the exports of green grams over the past eight and half months.

China accounts for 60 per cent of Myanmar's green gram exports. In addition, countries in the European Union, India, Thailand and Viet Nam also purchase green grams from Myanmar. China prefers green grams (Shwe Wah) variety. At present, the demand slips due to border trade restrictions amid the COVID-19, traders said.

China makes value-added products from green grams and sends them to foreign markets. Moreover, it produces bean by-products as feedstuffs.

Myanmar's green gram exports were registered at over

330,000 tons in the 2015-2016 financial year; over 400,000 tonnes in the 2016-2017FY, and over 350,000 tons in the 2017-2018FY and over 300,000 in the 2018-2019FY. Green grams are mostly exported to China through the border trade channels.

Of the total pulses' exports, green grams accounted for more than 26 per cent of the exports in the previous years.

As per green gram plantation data, there are over 300,000 acres of plantations in the country. Green grams are primarily grown in Sagaing, Magway, Mandalay, Yangon, Bago, and Ayeyawady regions and Mon and Kayin states. — KK/GNLM



As per green gram plantation data, there are over 300,000 acres of plantations in the country.

Fishery exports plummet to \$606 mln as of 9 July

EXPORT earnings from the fisheries sector over the nine months (1 October-9 July) of the current financial year 2020-2021 plunged to US\$606 million, which is a significant decrease of \$113 million from the year-ago period, according to statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

The figures stood at \$719 million during a year-ago period. Myanmar's fishery exports have slightly declined this year, owing to the COVID-19 impacts and the transport difficulty.

The fishery exports through the Sino-Myanmar border have ground to a halt following the consequences and safety measures on the imported seafood amid the COVID-19 pandemic, traders stressed.

Myanmar's fishery export was experiencing a downturn due to the import restrictions triggered by the detection of the COVID-19 on fish imports in China.

China was the second-largest buyer of Myanmar's fishery products, accounting for US\$254 million out of overall fishery export value of \$850 million in the past financial year 2019-2020.

At present, China shut down the border areas in wake of the COVID surge in Myanmar. The fishery sector is dependent on maritime trade only.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) is-



Workers are working in cold storage for emphasizing fish processing work.

sued guidelines to ensure food safety during the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020.

The permitted companies are advised to carry out food safety plans, follow the guidelines of WHO and FAO, formulate the safety management system and suspend the exports if any suspicious foodborne virus or virus infection risk are found in the products. The export is likely to resume once the products meet food safety criteria set by the General Administration of Customs of the People Republic of China (GACC).

Myanmar Fisheries Federation stated that only the G2G

pact can tackle problems faced in the export of farm-raised fish and prawns and ensure smooth freight movement between countries to bolster exports.

During the last FY2019-2020, MFF expected to earn more than \$800 million from fishery exports and it reached a target.

Myanmar exports fisheries products, such as fish, prawns, and crabs, to markets in 40 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, the US, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and countries in the European Union.

The MFF is making concerted efforts to increase fish-

ery export earnings by developing fish farming lakes that meet international standards and adopting advanced fishing techniques.

To ensure food safety, the foreign market requires suppliers to obtain Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Good Aquaculture Practices (GAQP) certificates.

To meet international market standards, fishery products must be sourced only from hatcheries that are compliant with GAQP. The MFF is working with fish farmers, processors, and the Fisheries Department under the Ministry of Agricul-

ture, Livestock, and Irrigation to develop the GAQP system.

Processors can screen fishery products for food safety at ISO-accredited laboratories under the Fisheries Department.

Myanmar's economy is more dependent on the agricultural sector to a large extent. Also, the fisheries sector contributes a lot to the national gross domestic product (GDP). Its fishery production including shrimps and saltwater and freshwater fish are far better than the regional countries. If the country can boost processing technology, it will contribute to the country's economy and earn more income for those stakeholders in the supply chain, Yangon Region Fisheries Department stated.

There are 480,000 acres of fish and prawn breeding farms across the country and more than 120 cold-storage facilities in Myanmar.

Myanmar exported 340,000 tonnes of fishery products worth \$530 million in the 2013-2014FY, 330,000 tonnes worth \$480 million in the 2014-2015FY, 360,000 tonnes worth \$500 million in the 2015-2016FY, 430,000 tonnes worth \$600 million in the 2016-2017FY, 560,000 tonnes worth \$700 million in the 2017-2018FY and 580,000 tonnes worth over \$730 million in the 2018-2019FY, respectively, according to the Commerce Ministry. – KK/GNLM

Corn harvest season starts in Mongyu Town

THE growers from Mongyu town in Tachilek District of eastern Shan State start harvesting the corn crops, in the hope of generating more profits.

The local growers began planting the corn crops (mainly Cp.888, F.888, and Cp.222 varieties) in early April. There are over 2,290 acres of corn crops this year in the town.

This year, the growers substitute tissue-culture bananas for corns. A kilo of maize fetches K312 and the growers can earn K624,000 as an acre can produce about 80 baskets. The input cost is estimated at K358,000, leaving the profit of K266,000 per acre, the grower from Mongyu Town said.

Corn is a potential crop that is highly demanded by foreign

markets and the domestic market. The growing acres in Mongyu Town has increased this year.

Myanmar's corn exports to foreign countries generated revenue of more than US\$392 million in the seven months (October-April) of the current financial year 2020-2021, Myanmar Customs Department's statistics showed.

The prices of Myanmar's corn are climbing up in the Mandalay market on the back of strong demand by Thailand, coupled with the growing demand in the domestic market, traders from Mandalay depot said.

Myanmar has been delivering corns to the neighbouring countries Thailand and China via the land border. The shipment

to Singapore, Malaysia and Viet Nam abruptly stopped due to lack of demand, he added.

Thailand gives the green light to corn imports through Maesot under zero tariff (with Form-D) between 1 February and 31 August. At present, Myanmar is conveying corn to Thailand through the land border, with a tonne of corn fetching up to about 8,000 baht.

Myanmar is the second-largest exporter of corn among regional countries. Corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons – winter, summer and monsoon. The country yearly produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn.



The corn crop is mostly demanded by the feedstuff processing business. Therefore, it is a potential business for both domestic and external markets.

The corn crop is mostly demanded by the feedstuff processing business. Therefore, it is a potential business for both domestic and external markets, said an official of the Ministry of Commerce.

During last FY 2019-2020 ended 30 September, the country exported 2.2 million tonnes of corns to the external market, with an estimated value of \$360 million, the Ministry of Commerce's data

showed.

As per data from the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar exported 1.5 million tonnes valued at \$270 million in the 2018-2019FY, 1.4 million tonnes of corn worth over \$290 million in the 2017-2018FY, 1.2 million tonnes of corn worth \$250 million in the 2016-2017FY, and, 1.1 million tonnes of corn worth \$300 million in the 2015-2016FY. – Ko Ko Naing, Ko Htet/GNLM

Major oil producers seek output boost



Increased oil output could help fuel major economies' emergence from coronavirus slumps. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

MAJOR oil producers seeking to boost output will meet on Sunday, OPEC said, after negotiations earlier this month became deadlocked over plans to gradually ease production cuts.

The OPEC+ grouping, which includes Saudi Arabia and Russia, will meet via videoconference at 1000 GMT on Sunday, the Vienna-based OPEC Secretariat said in a statement.

The group's 23 members cancelled a meeting on 5 July that was supposed to overcome an impasse over crude output levels. Since May, the group has

raised oil output bit by bit, after slashing it more than a year ago when the coronavirus pandemic crushed demand.

At stake is a proposal that would see the world's leading oil producers raise output by 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) each month from August to December.

That would add two million bpd to markets by the end of the year, helping to fuel a global economic recovery as the coronavirus pandemic eases. A further proposal seeks to extend a deadline on capping output from April 2022 to the end of 2022.

But holding out against the new deal was the United Arab Emirates, which criticized the terms of the extension as unjust.

Oil prices, which had already been sliding owing to concerns about the global economy, plummeted in April 2020 as coronavirus spread around the world and battered global consumption, transport and supply chains.

OPEC+ decided to withdraw 9.7 million bpd from the market and to gradually restore supplies by the end of April 2022. Benchmark oil prices rebounded as a result.—AFP ■

Environmental concerns grow as space tourism lifts off

AFTER years of waiting, Richard Branson's journey to space this month on a Virgin Galactic vessel was supposed to be a triumphant homecoming. Instead, the jaunt attracted significant criticism — about its carbon footprint.

With Jeff Bezos set to launch on a Blue Origin rocket on July 20, and Elon Musk's SpaceX planning an all-civilian orbital mission in September, the nascent space tourism industry finds itself facing tough questions about its environmental impact.

Right now, rocket launches as a whole don't happen often enough to pollute significantly.

"The carbon dioxide emissions are totally negligible compared to other human activities or even commercial aviation," NASA's chief climate advisor Gavin Schmidt told AFP.

But some scientists are worried about the potential for longer term harm as the industry is poised for major growth, particularly impacts to the ozone layer in the still poorly understood upper atmosphere.

Virgin Galactic, which came under fire in op-eds on CNN and Forbes, as well as on social media, for sending its billionaire founder to space for a few minutes in a fossil fuel-guzzling spaceship, says its carbon emissions are about equivalent to a business-class ticket from London to New York.

The company "has already taken steps to offset the carbon emissions from its test flights and is examining opportunities to offset the carbon emissions for future customer flights, and reduce our supply chain's carbon footprint," it said in a statement to AFP.—AFP ■

Spain inches ahead with pension reform



The average level of monthly Spanish pensions is around 80 per cent of a worker's final salary. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

SPAIN will pay workers to postpone retirement as part of a pensions reform strategy that analysts warn does not go far enough to cut a huge deficit in the system.

With nearly 30 billion euros (\$36 billion) of annual losses in 2020 and rising, Spain's social security budget is one of the biggest contributors to the coun-

try's ballooning public deficit.

The European Commission has long demanded that Spain reform its pension system and has made it a condition for accessing European Union economic recovery funds.

Under a planned reform unveiled earlier this month that aims to get more people to work longer, Spain will give

cheques worth up to 12,000 euros (\$14,000) per year to retirement-age workers who postpone their retirement.

Retiring early on the other hand would lead to a reduction in monthly payments.

But the reform, which must still be approved by Spain's fragmented parliament, will also restore the indexation of pensions to inflation.

"Pensioners will no longer have to worry about the evolution of their pension," socialist Budget Minister Maria Jesus Montero told a news conference last week after the cabinet approved the reform.

A conservative government eliminated indexation in 2013, although in 2018 it hiked pensions in line with inflation following protests by pensioners against their loss of purchasing power.

The 2013 reform also gradually increased the legal retirement age to reach 67 in 2027 from around 65 years currently.—AFP ■

China's Guizhou targets 45 pct green economy share of GDP in 2021

SOUTHWEST China's Guizhou Province aims to raise the green economy share of its gross domestic product (GDP) to 45 per cent this year, according to the provincial development and reform commission on Saturday.

Guizhou became one of China's first national ecological civilization pilot zones in 2016. As the province with the highest number of natural world

heritage sites in China, Guizhou, which acts as the ecological barrier of the upper reaches of the Yangtze River and the Pearl River, has been sticking to a high-end, green and low-carbon development model in recent years.

In 2020, the green economy accounted for approximately 42 per cent of the province's GDP.

The province has clarified

that a "green economy" is an economy that promotes sustainable growth and improves people's well-being. It is based on energy saving and ecological conservation, and demonstrates harmony and common prosperity between people and nature.

The province aims to raise the green economy proportion of its GDP to over half by 2025.—Xinhua ■



Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket burns liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen, which combusts as water vapour. **PHOTO: MRTEGDIF/TWITTER/AFP**

Electric car lithium demand powers mining revival in UK

As the global auto sector accelerates production of electric cars, one British company is hoping to cash in from mining lithium needed to make rechargeable batteries that power the vehicles. It is five years since former investment banker Jeremy Wrathall launched Cornish Lithium, a company operating in Cornwall, southwest England, which recently hosted the G7 summit.

And while it may be

another four years until it begins commercial production of the metal, Wrathall is optimistic that his punt will pay dividends.

"In 2016, I started to think about the electric vehicle revolution and what that would mean for metal demand and I started to think about lithium," he told AFP in an interview.

"A friend of mine mentioned lithium being identified in Cornwall and I just wondered if that was

a sort of an unrecognised thing in the UK." In fact lithium was discovered in Cornwall in 1864, while the area is known for its historic copper and tin mining, which dates back 4,000 years and ended at the turn of the century. "Of course I would like to revive mining in Cornwall but this a commercial project," insisted Wrathall. "It's not a mission that drives me to the point to be emotional or romantic."

'Encouraging results'

Cornish Lithium is at a testing stage to see if the metal can be produced commercially. "Initial results are encouraging. I'm excited about it," Wrathall said, whose company has revived a former mine situated away from the area's picturesque villages and beaches. The mining firm is looking to extract enough lithium from hot water underground to meet at least a "significant



Cornish Lithium is at a testing stage to see if the metal can be produced commercially to meet growing demand from the electric car sector. PHOTO: AFP

proportion" of UK demand, respecting the environment while at the same time. —AFP ■

China's nationwide carbon market begins trading: media

CHINA'S nationwide carbon market on Friday began trading online, state-run media reported, as President Xi Jinping has pledged that the Asian country would aim to become carbon neutral by 2060.

Carbon emissions by more than 2,000 power companies involved in the first trading group are estimated to exceed 4 billion tons per year, making the market the world's biggest in terms of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions covered, Xinhua News Agency said.

Trading started on Friday morning at the Shanghai Environment and Energy Exchange, with the first transaction priced at 52.78 yuan



China's nationwide carbon market begins trading online on July 16, 2021. PHOTO: CPA/KYODO

(\$8.16) per ton, according to the news agency.

Carbon trading is the process of buying and selling permits to emit carbon dioxide or

other greenhouse gases, Xinhua said. China is the world's largest CO2 emitter. Many nations have recently promised to achieve net

zero carbon emissions by 2050, including the United States, the second-biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, and Japan. — Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Flush with unicorns, India's tech moment to overtake China arrives

Last week marked a watershed for technology startups in India, as a record bout of fundraising shifted attention to the world's second-most populous market, just as investors were becoming spooked by a crackdown on internet companies in China.

Food-delivery app Zomato Ltd. became the nation's first unicorn to make its stock-market debut, raising \$1.3 billion with backing from Morgan Stanley, Tiger Global and Fidelity Investments. The parent of digital payments startup Paytm filed a draft prospectus for what could be India's biggest IPO at \$2.2 billion, while retailer Flipkart Online Services Pvt raised \$3.6 billion at a \$38 billion valuation, a record funding round for an Indian startup. "Indian entrepreneurs have been quietly building startups for a decade now, the country's internet infrastructure has vastly improved in that time and there's a very good appetite for tech stocks globally," said Hans Tung, the Silicon Valley-based managing partner of GGV Capital, which manages \$9.2 billion in assets. "Investors are beginning to see the huge upside and they expect India to be a China." —ANI ■

Mumbai to hold virtual Chinese conversation course to facilitate business communication

MUMBAI will hold a three-month basic Chinese conversational course once-a-week virtually from July 24 under the auspices of World Trade Centre Mumbai, a statement said Saturday.

The course was designed to facilitate accurate and appropriate business communication to professional transact cross-border trade.

The course will cover areas such as greetings, introductions, identification of people and objects, expression of gratitude, acknowledgement of remarks, making of appointments, creating invitations, purchase of goods, seeking opinions, making suggestions, etc.

Moreover, this preliminary course will equip participants to pursue studies in Chinese language at an advanced level, which will subsequently follow this course, if the participants desire to take it up, the statement said.

Participants will be taught the Chinese phonetic system in order to correctly pronounce the language with the appropriate intonation, help understand basics of Chinese grammar, create awareness on aspects of Chinese culture embedded in the language, familiarize with the structure of Chinese characters to be able to recognize and write approximately 200 Chinese characters. —Xinhua ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NORDDAL VOY.NO. (125S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NORDDAL VOY.NO. (125S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-7-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GREEN ACE VOY.NO. (127S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GREEN ACE VOY.NO. (127S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-7-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

NEWS IN
BRIEFGerman spa town
begins mammoth
flood clean-up effort

In the normally scenic German spa town of Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, stricken residents were scraping muddy water from streets piled high with debris on Saturday as they began to face the aftermath of the worst flooding in decades.

"I haven't slept for two days," said Michael Kossytorz, 40, standing by a pile of rubble outside his apartment.

"For my parents it's even worse because they lived closer to the river. But we have to keep going," he said.

Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler in the volcanic Eifel region is among the areas hardest hit by severe storms that have killed at least 140 people in western Germany since late Wednesday.

Torrents of water were sent rushing down the streets, sweeping away cars, sheds, trees and more.

- 'We need help' -

The pavements were littered with broken furniture, while residents wandered the streets in rubber boots and mud-stained clothes, determined to make a start on the enormous clean-up job.—AFP ■

Iran wary but
pragmatic as Taliban
resurges next door

THE Taliban's advances in Afghanistan have put neighbouring Iran on edge, but the Islamic republic appears to be adopting a pragmatic approach and seeking a rapprochement with the resurgent militia.

With US and allied forces rushing for the exit and the Afghan government wobbling after a string of victories by the hardline Sunni group, Shiite Iran fears an influx of refugees fleeing sectarian violence alongside the danger of an ideological rival taking power next door.

Reformist newspaper Etemad warned Sunday of "unpleasant consequences if extremist and violent movements like the Taliban come to power, from a flood of refugees to the empowerment of dangerous sects, who share the Taliban's thinking, on our eastern borders."

Less than seven weeks before the last US soldier is set to leave Afghanistan after two decades, the Taliban say they control around 85 percent of the country.—AFP ■

Taliban, Kabul officials hold talks in Qatar as
fighting rages in Afghanistan

REPRESENTATIVES of the Afghan government and the Taliban met in Doha for talks on Saturday, AFP correspondents said, as violence rages in the country with foreign forces almost entirely withdrawn.

The two sides have been meeting on and off for months in the Qatari capital, but the talks have lost momentum as the insurgents have made battlefield gains. Several high-ranking officials, including former Afghan former chief executive Abdullah Abdullah, gathered in a luxury hotel on Saturday after morning prayers.

They were joined by negotiators from the Taliban's political office in Doha.



Abdullah Abdullah (R), here seen meeting top US general Austin Miller at a handover ceremony in Kabul on 12 July 2021, is in Doha for talks with the Taliban. PHOTO: AFP

Former president Hamid Karzai had also been due to travel to Doha but remained in

Kabul, according to a source. "The high level delegation is here to talk to both sides, guide

them and support the (government) negotiating team in terms of speeding up the talks and have progress," said Najia Anwari, the spokeswoman for the Afghan government negotiating team in Doha.

"We expect that it (will) speed the talks and... in a short time, both sides will reach a result and we will witness a durable and dignified peace in Afghanistan," she told AFP.

'Ready for dialogue'

The Taliban have capitalised on the last stages of the withdrawal of US and other foreign troops from Afghanistan to launch a series of lightning offensives across the country.—AFP ■

Merkel to visit flood zone as western
Europe death toll tops 170

CHANCELLOR Angela Merkel is to visit flood-ravaged areas in Germany on Sunday to survey the damage and meet survivors, after days of extreme rainfall in western Europe left at least 171 people dead and dozens missing.

Merkel is scheduled to travel to the village of Schuld in Rhineland-Palatinate state, one of the two hardest-hit regions in western Germany, where the swollen Ahr river swept away houses and left debris piled high in the streets.

At least 144 people have died since Wednesday in Germany's worst flooding in living memory, while 27 people have lost their

lives in neighbouring Belgium.

Rescue crews in both countries were sifting through rubble to find victims, often in dangerous conditions.

The historic downpours also battered Switzerland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

As the waters began to recede in Rhineland-Palatinate and neighbouring North-Rhine Westphalia, concern shifted south to Germany's Upper Bavaria region where heavy rains inundated basements and swelled rivers and creeks late Saturday. One person died in Berchtesgadener Land, a spokeswoman for the Bavarian district told AFP. In



Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler in the volcanic Eifel region is among the areas hardest hit by severe storms. PHOTO: AFP

Austria, emergency workers in the Salzburg and Tyrol regions were on high alert for flooding.

The historic town centre of Hallein, near the German frontier, was under water.—AFP ■

After conquering Earth, Jeff Bezos eyes a new frontier in space

JEFF Bezos sets his sights on a new frontier in space in the

coming days after building a gargantuan business empire that

has in many ways conquered the Earth. Bezos and three others - his brother Mark, barrier-breaking female aviator Wally Funk and 18-year-old high school graduate Oliver Daemen - will fly to space on July 20.

His journey into space aboard a reusable rocket built by his firm Blue Origin comes just two weeks after he stepped aside as chief executive of Amazon, which grew from a garage startup into one of the world's most formidable businesses.

It also follows right after a similar trip by fellow billionaire Richard Branson, who entered

space aboard a spacecraft built by his company Virgin Galactic.

Bezos, 57, remains executive chair at the technology and e-commerce colossus he founded 27 years ago, Amazon. But he is clearly looking to even loftier ambitions.

With a fortune worth more than \$200 billion, Bezos has been at or near the top of the world's richest people, even after his divorce settlement.

He owns some 10 percent of Amazon, a behemoth with a presence in dozens of countries and some 1.3 million employees.—AFP ■



Bezos poses in front of a Blue Origin rocket. PHOTO: AFP

Tensions flare as Erdogan heads to breakaway north Cyprus



The fenced-off area of Varosha in Famagusta town in the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) seen here in June this year. **PHOTO: AFP**

TURKISH President Recep Tayyip Erdogan heads to breakaway north Cyprus Tuesday, to mark the anniversary of Turkey's 1974 invasion, a visit infuriating Greek Cypriots with island reunification talks in limbo. Erdogan's visit is seen as

a show of strength to support a two-state solution to the island's decades-long division, but also to bolster his ambitions to dominate the strategic eastern Mediterranean.

In a gesture set to send tensions soaring, Erdogan will review some of the thousands of Turkish troops in the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in the abandoned beach resort of Varosha, which the invasion emptied of its Greek-Cypriot inhabitants.

"It is not only a symbolic visit... but one that will affect the Cyprus problem," said Giannis Ioannou, of the Geopolitical Cyprus think tank. Tensions are already running high, fuelled by an influx of undocumented

migrants into the south that the government there sees as a pressure tactic by Ankara.

On Friday, Cyprus government spokesman Marios Pelekanos condemned Turkey's "aggressive behaviour" after Cypriot police said the Turkish coastguard fired warning shots at one of its vessels off the island's north coast, a report denied by Ankara.

'Red line'

The Turkish invasion -- launched in response to an Athens-engineered coup in Nicosia designed to unite Cyprus with Greece -- was followed in 1983 by the proclamation of the TRNC, still recognized only by Ankara. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cuban president dismisses unrest as a 'lie' as regime mounts response

CUBA'S President Miguel Diaz-Canel on Saturday denounced what he said was a false narrative over unrest on the Caribbean island, as the Communist regime vigorously pushed back against suggestions of historically widespread discontent.

"What the world is seeing of Cuba is a lie," Diaz-Canel said, speaking during a rally alongside ex-president Raul Castro and before thousands of supporters who had gathered on the Malecon, Havana's famed oceanfront boulevard. The rally, and similar ones in other cities, constituted the regime's first public response to the anti-government protests that unexpectedly brought thousands to Cuban streets last weekend. —AFP ■

Three people shot outside baseball stadium in US capital

THREE people were shot outside a baseball stadium crowded with thousands of spectators in the US capital on Saturday, causing the game to be abruptly halted as fans were ushered out.

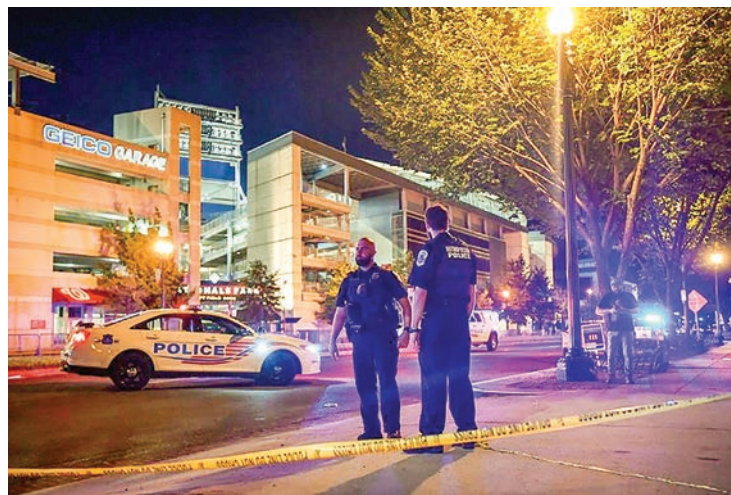
Police initially tweeted four people had been shot, but Washington police second in command Ashan Benedict later said there were three wounded in the incident. He said two of those hit were in one of two vehicles that was involved in a shootout. The third victim was a woman on the sidewalk outside the stadium where she had been attending

the game.

"At no time during this incident were individuals inside the stadium attending the game in any type of danger. This was not an active shooter incident. Everything took place outside the stadium," Benedict told reporters.

He said the woman was "expected to be OK."

AFP journalists who were at the game said some spectators had rushed for the exits after hearing a dozen or more gunshots outside the stadium, while others remained in their seats at



Police blocked off roads near the Nationals Park baseball stadium in southern Washington, DC after the shooting. **PHOTO: AFP**

the announcer's initial urging.

Several bursts of automatic gunfire could be clearly heard in the stadium in footage of the game posted on social media, while another video showed streams of people sprinting away from the stands.

The United States has a long and painful history of deadly gun violence, in the form of a steady daily toll of shootings as well as high-profile mass killings that have targeted schools, workplaces and shopping centers — AFP ■

Invisible wounds: France faces up to war trauma

CHRISTOPHE came close to death in Afghanistan, Raphael saw one body bag after another in the Sahel region of Africa, while Omar does not even want to talk about what he experienced on the battlefield.

Bit by bit, the trauma settled in, over the course of many years.

The French military recognizes the problem of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for its troops, among the busiest and most exposed in the Western world in terms of active deployments in deadly environments.

But it is seeking to ease the trauma endured by thousands of them with new techniques also practised by Western allies including Canada and the United States.

Omar, 35, a former navy commando, has battled PTSD for a decade, causing his relationship to break up and repeated hospitalization after deployment in Guiana in 2012 and then the experience in Afghanistan that he still refuses to discuss.

Youssef, 44, a former military intelligence agent, took part in numerous operations that left him sometimes violent, sometimes filled with fear.

"An unpleasant force surges up in you, your family abandons you, people don't really understand," he told AFP. —AFP ■

Three Chinese, two Mauritians kidnapped in Mali



Malian soldiers on patrol. Mali has been struggling to contain an Islamist insurgency that first broke out in the north of the country in 2012 before spreading to the centre and neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THREE Chinese nationals and two Mauritians were kidnapped in southwest Mali on Saturday, the country's armed forces said, in the latest attack in the war-torn Sahel state.

Armed men attacked a construction site 55 kilometres (34 miles) from the town of Kwala, making off with five pick-up trucks and the hostages, Mali's army said on social media.

The assailants also destroyed equipment including a crane and dump trucks belonging to Chinese construction

firm Covec, and Mauritanian road-building company ATTM, according to the army.

A Malian army official, who requested anonymity, said the kidnap victims were working on road construction in the region.

"The release of all the hostages is our priority," he said.

Mauritania's Al-Akhbar news agency reported that gunmen arrived on motorbikes to attack the construction site, burning equipment as well as fuel tanks before withdrawing with captives. —AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

AFC focus on Futsal development, club Licencing criteria

THE Asian Football Confederation is now focusing on futsal sport development following a virtual Task Force meeting held on 15 July.

During the meeting officials discussed Asian Futsal Club Licencing Criteria.

AFC Club Licencing Task Force Chairperson Hamad Mohamed Aljneibi said, "The COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt and impact lives and livelihoods across the world. But despite the great challenges, we can take pride in the progress of club Licencing in Asia.

"It is a testament to the resilience and dedication towards professionalism from the AFC and its Member Associations across the Continent.

"I applaud the dedication towards professionalism and the business continuity

across Asian football to ensure the smooth implementation of the Club Licencing cycle," the AFC chairman added.

AFC football authorities also stated that the mandatory club Licencing entry requirements for the AFC Futsal Club Championship 2024, the Task Force also agreed on the implementation timeline before members were briefed on the latest developments of club Licencing throughout Asia, including the progress of the AFC Women's Club Licencing.

During the meeting, Asian football authorities approved criteria for AFC Futsal Club Licencing including sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial requirements, as part of the AFC Club Licencing Regulations. — GNLM

Thai sisters fire second 59 to capture LPGA pairs event

THAI sisters Ariya and Moriya Jutanugarn shot their second 11-under par 59 in best-ball play to capture the LPGA Great Lakes Bay Invitational, taking a three-stroke victory on Saturday over defending champions Cy-

dney Clanton and Jasmine Suwannapura.

Ariya, 25, and Moriya, 26, finished at 24-under 256 at windy Midland Country Club golf course in Michigan.

In the first round, they shot a 67 in the alternate

shot format, then fired a 59 on Thursday in best ball and carded a 71 in alternate shot Friday to enter the final round two shots behind American Clanton and Thailand's Suwannapura, who closed Saturday with a 64.— AFP ■

Charlo, Castano battle to draw in super welterweight showdown



Jermell Charlo (right) and Brian Castano exchange punches during their super welterweight fight in San Antonio, Texas. PHOTO: AFP

JERMELL Charlo and Brian Castano fought to a draw Saturday, denying either a historic victory that would have crowned one of them the first four belt undisputed champion in boxing's super welterweight division.

The showdown marked the first time all four 154-pound belts were on the line with Charlo keeping his three (WBC, WBA and IBF) and Castano retaining the WBO strap as a result of the draw.

But the fight proved to be closer than expected with more-aggressive Castano proving he could take Charlo's best punch and deliver heavy blows of his own, especially in the middle rounds at the AT&T Centre in San An-

tonio, Texas.

Judges delivered a split decision draw with one having it 114-113 for Argentina's Castano, another 114-114 and the third raised eyebrows by scoring it a one-sided 117-111 in favour of American Charlo.

Both fighters thought they won the bout, Charlo because he almost knocked down his rival in the second round and Castano because he controlled the tempo in the middle rounds.

"A draw isn't what I wanted to hear," said Charlo. "I won this fight. I hurt him a lot more. My power is serious. I had him in trouble in the second and 10th rounds. — AFP ■

World Cup hopefuls Zambia sack coach Sredojevic

ZAMBIA have fired Serbian coach Milutin Sredojevic as they prepare for a tough World Cup qualifying programme from September, the national football association confirmed on Sunday.

"The Football Asso-



Zambia coach Milutin Sredojevic instructs his players during an African Nations Championship quarter-final against Morocco in Cameroon last January. PHOTO: AFP

ciation of Zambia (FAZ) can confirm that it has reached a mutual separation agreement with its senior men's national team coach Milutin 'Micho' Sredojevic," a statement said.

"After a meeting between FAZ and the coach it was agreed that in the interest of progress for both parties they had to separate."

Zambia have been drawn in the same World Cup group as Tunisia, Mauritania and Equatorial Guinea, who have all qualified for the Cup of Nations next January while Zambia will miss out. Only group winners qualify for the final elimination phase in the World Cup and Tunisia, who visit Zambia in September, are favourites to advance.— AFP ■