

Street artists paint a mural depicting a Covid-19 frontline worker along a street in Hanoi on June 15, 2021.
PHOTO: AFP



Shaky recovery in South-east Asia

THE economic recovery of South-east Asia is being hobbled by new lockdowns, as the highly-infectious Delta variant of the Covid-19 virus now ravages the region.

In Indonesia, the daily average number of new infections is now highest in the world, with more than 44,000 new infections reported daily.

Fresh virus hotspots in Thailand threaten the kingdom’s sandbox reopening of tourist destinations, and has prompted a tightening of restrictions. Thai authorities said 80 per cent of current cases are infections from the Delta variant.

Meanwhile in Malaysia, the country battles a mounting political crisis calling for the removal of prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin, whose administration has been unable to contain the pandemic even under emergency conditions. Ramped up inoculation efforts may have also come too late, as infections topped 13,000 a day last week.

Even Singapore, which leads ahead in the region with

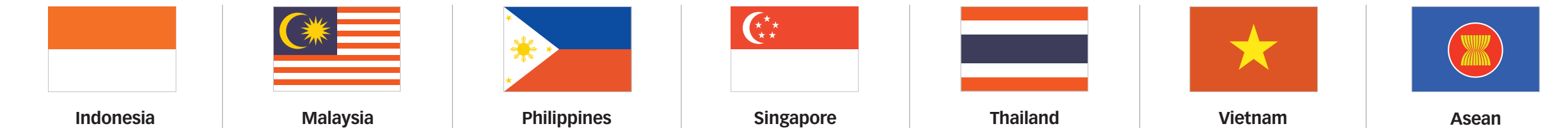
nearly half of its population fully vaccinated, has had its reopening plans upended by clusters linked to KTV lounges and wholesale fish markets. Locally-transmitted cases have climbed from low single-digits to Daily new local transmissions have climbed from the low single-digits to 182, as of Tuesday.

It does not help that vaccination rates in South-east Asia are still low. Other than Singapore, most in the region have vaccination rates of under 5 per cent.

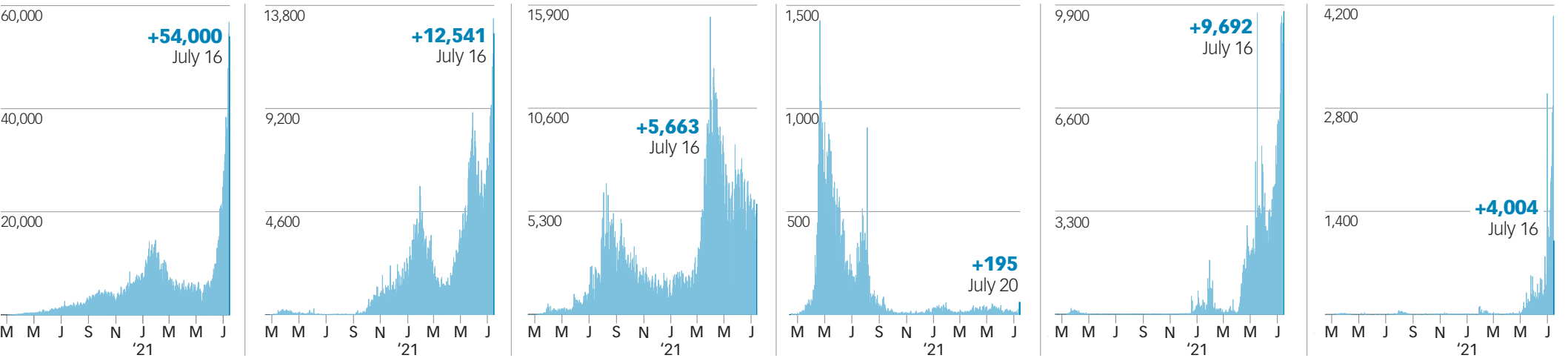
Analysts also said that as more developed countries in the West reopen, demand for South-east Asian manufacturing exports may drop.

“The bottom line is that until infections are under control, movement control orders of varying severity will be imposed and will hurt domestic demand,” said Marisa Di Natale, head of global forecasting at Moody’s Analytics.

BY SAMANTHA HEO



Daily new cases in...



The total Covid-19 cases in Asean
5,949,265
as of July 16

Vaccination rates (%) (Types of vaccines)

