NATIONAL

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

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

MoHT Union minister meets hoteliers at Ngapali beach

PAGE-4

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in Myanmar, Chairman of the Nippon Foundation

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in Myanmar and Chairman of the Nippon Foundation at the Tatmadaw Guesthouse in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They exchanged views on the enhancement of friendly relations between the two countries, the current political situation in Myanmar, implementation of peace processes by the government and Tatmadaw to ensure the local peace, assistance of Japan and the promotion of relations between the two countries.

Also present at the meeting were Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo of the SAC, Executive Director Mr Yuji Mori and officials from the Nippon Foundation.—MNA

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in Myanmar and Chairman of the Nippon Foundation in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

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

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, by arranging continuous importation through trading posts, international airports and seaports with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products, including oxygen plants and concentrators, were imported by four companies and transported by eight vehicles as of yesterday.

A total of 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen carried by one bowser, six oxygen plants, and 27 tonnes of masks were imported via Myawady, Chinshwehaw and Kampaiti trading posts.

One bowser transported liquid oxygen to Yangon, while two oxygen plants were transported to Yesagyo, another two to Myothit and one each to Myitkyina and Yenangyaung respectively.

From 1 to 13 November, 155 tonnes of liquid oxygen were carried by 70 bowsers, six tonnes of oxygen bowsers, 6,360 empty oxygen tanks, 13 oxygen plants, 15 oxygen generators, 123 oxygen concentrators, 83,400 PPE suits, 37 tonnes of gloves and 398 tonnes of masks were imported by 37 companies.

In the same period, five bowsers transported liquid oxygen to Yangon, two to Mawlamyine and one to Nay Pyi Taw respectively. Out of 13 oxygen plants, six to Yangon, two each to Yesagyo and Myothit and one each to Danuphyu, Myitkyina and Yenangyaung respectively.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), including online registration for the import process.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, treatment of COVID-19, as well as contact persons for inquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website —www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA

Public request by Ministry of Health

ONLY when the people cooperate will the work process achieve success in a short time for effective prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 among the people. As such, all the people are requested to abide by the following points: -

1. Stay at home as much as possible.
2. Don't accept the guests at the house. You don't visit other houses.
3. The older persons above 65 or those suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart must be worn masks in the house. They must be placed at well-ventilated sites.
4. Wear masks if you go outside without fail. Systematically wash hands. Take a six-foot distance from others. Avoid visits to the rooms where ventilation is not good.
5. Avoid the crowds.
6. If possible, go shopping once a week. Don't buy anything from the vendors who don't systematically wear masks.
7. Take care of carrying the virus to the houses whenever return home from outside. Systematically discard the used masks and single disposable equipment outside the houses. Avoid close contact with family members before changing clothes or washing the body.
8. As the vaccines for your quota is the best, accept vaccinations for full time. Despite receiving the vaccination, you should abide by the protective ways.
9. Systematically cooperate in prevention, control and treatment of the disease with manpower, money, materials and expertise.

Ministry of Health (2-8-2021)

China transfers Myanmar migrant workers

THE Chinese Immigration Officers handed over a total of 99 Myanmar citizens—55 males and 44 females who were detained in the prisons of Guangdong province to Myanmar officials at Myanmar-China border inspection camp in Chinshwehaw Township of Kokang Self-Administered Zone of Shan State on 12 November.

These migrant workers entered China with the temporary border passport at Muse border camps of Chinshwehaw in 2019 to work there. Therefore, the Chinese police arrested them for trespassing and took action against them.

According to the inspection of No (2) Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force, these returnees were not the victims of human trafficking.

They were now undergoing quarantine at the high school in No (3) ward and temporary building in No (1) Ward.

They will be sent to their respective regions if their COVID-19 test results show negative. — Sithu Maung Maung (IPRD)/ GNLM

831 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 13 November, total figure rises to 512,548

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 512,548 after 831 new cases were reported on 13 November 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 483,530 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 18,913 after 14 died.—MNA

Political maturity

POLITICAL maturity and unity of stakeholders and the entire people play a crucial role in building the Union based on democracy and federalism. It is necessary to take lessons that Myanmar could not achieve the deserved development due to requirements in political maturity in successive eras. We must try hard to overcome such challenges. We need to build political maturity and unity with wise mental faculty for ensuring the peace of the nation.

(Excerpt from the Message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Chairman of the National Unity and Peacemaking Central Committee Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to mark the Sixth Anniversary of signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA on 15 October 2021)

Families of Office of Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) hold 11th communal Kathina ceremony

Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and congregation take Nine Precepts at the Kathina Robe offering ceremony yesterday.

FAMILIES of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) held their 11th communal Kathina donation ceremony yesterday morning in Anawrahta Hall of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army). Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla attended the ceremony and presented Kathina robes and offertories.

Present were 27 members of the Sangha led by Ovadasariya Sayadaw of the Board of Trustees of Uppatasanti Pagoda, Presiding Nayaka of Pauk Myaing Monastery in Lewe Township Nay Pyi Taw, Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Jininda.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla present Kathina robes to Kan Oo Sayadaw.

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife offers Kathina robes and offertories to Presiding Nayaka of Mingala Zayyon Monastery Bhaddanta Vimalabuddhi Parli Sayadaw.

Also, present together with Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla were Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Members of the State Administration Council General Mya Tun Oo and wife, Admiral Tin Aung San and wife, General Maung Maung Kyaw and wife Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Lt-Gen Soe Htut and wife, Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe and wife, Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo and wife, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, and Tatmadaw officials from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief.

The Senior General and wife and the congregation observed the display of Kathina robes, offertories and Padethabins (tree-shaped stands where various kinds of offerings are hung) and offered oil lights, water and fruits and meals in the emerald alms-bowl to the Buddha Image in the hall.

The ceremony was then opened by reciting Namo Tasa three times, and the congregation received the Nine Precepts from the Pauk Myaing Sayadaw. Afterwards, the Chairman of the State Administration Council the Senior General and wife offered Kathina robes and alms to the Kan Oo Sayadaw and the Pauk Myaing Sayadaw.

The Deputy Chairman of the State Administration Council Vice-Senior General and his wife offered Kathina robes and alms to Presiding Nayaka of Mingala Zayyon Monastery Bhaddanta Vimalabuddhi Parli Sayadaw. The members and Tatmadaw officers who attended the ceremony then offered Kathina robes and alms to the Sayadaws and Sanghas respectively.

Ganvasaka Preaching Sayadaws from Yezin KanU Monastery Ashin Vayama and Ashin Javana carried out a question-and-answer session on Kathina. The Pali Tekkatho Monastery Sayadaw delivered a sermon and the congregation shared the merits gained, and the day's meal was offered to the Sayadaws and members of the Sangha.

At the 11th communal Kathina offering ceremony of families of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) yesterday, the donations included 84 Padethabins worth over K-144 million from offices/departments. The donations were transported to respective monasteries with the use of cars from those offices and departments.—MNA

MoHT Union minister meets hoteliers at Ngapali beach

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung toured Jasmine Ngapali Resort in Gaut Ward of Ngapali of Thandwe District to inspect the preparations of the hotel yesterday.

Then, the Union Minister went to Ngapali Dam in Lintha Chaung Village of Thandwe District and discussed with Ngapali municipal officials regarding the water storage of dam and water supply towards and hotels/guesthouses.

The dam was constructed in 1970 and it provided water to 2 wards, 1,110 homes and 46 hotels/guesthouses.

He also inspected the Aureum Palace Hotel & Resort which was reopened in line with the COVID-19 health rules in Mya Pyin Village.

At noon, he checked the operation of Amata Hotel at Ngapali beach and met the hoteliers and managers to discuss the hotel and tourism sector development programmes.

During the meeting, the Union Minister talked about the efforts to resume the tourism sectors in the world countries including Myanmar, aims of ministry to revive the international tours via the domestic tourism and traveller arrivals to beaches and other places as the local disease infection rate ranks at 4 per cent.

He also highlighted the holding of the Saung Oo festival at Ngapali Beach in line with the health rules and other needs to provide proper hotel services.

He instructed the officials to cooperate with the departmental personnel, entrepreneurs and residents for clean and sustainable beaches as the growth in tourist arrivals can provide the socio-economic status of locals.

Then, the Director of the Rakhine State Directorate of Hotel and To urism presented the certificate under Enchanting Myanmar Health & Safety Protocol to the Chairman of Myanmar Hotelier Association (Rakhine zone). — MNA

Travellers allowed visiting Kanbawzathadi palace starting from 10 November

THE travellers are allowed to visit Kanbawzathadi palace, which has a lot of historical heritage to explore in the Bago region, starting from 10 November following the COVID-19 rules and regulations.

Kanbawzathadi Golden Palace used to have 9 Royal Thrones which was decorated with a different motif and used for different occasions. Kanbawzathadi palace is 67.295 acres wide and it is open daily from 9 am to 4:30 pm. The museums and pavilions inside the palace are open except Monday and public holidays.

Starting from 1 January 2022, admission to the palace is K 500 for children and K1,000 for adults. Earlier, the entrance fees were K300 for children and K500 for adults.

The Kanbawazthadi palace was closed on 23 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak. All travellers must wear masks, use hand gels and undergo body temperature checks. They must also keep social distance from each other, it is learnt.

The Kanbawazthadi golden palace was built by King Bayinnaung in 1553 and it was looted and burnt down in 1599 during armed conflict. During excavations, several 176 teak pillars were found, 136 of which are inscribed in the Mon language with the names of towns, regions and people who donated them.— Min Ye Mann/GNLM

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Rural lighting projects implemented in villages in Myeik district

THE Department of Rural Development of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development is carrying out rural lighting projects in areas without access to the main power line in the next 10 to 15 years by using Mini-Grid and the Solar Home System (SHS).

Villages in four townships in Myeik District, Taninthayi Region, are being provided electricity with the use of Mini-Grid and the Solar Home System (SHS) in each financial year, according to U Aung Kyaw Oo, Deputy Director of the Myeik District Rural Development Department.

Of 25 villages in Myeik District, the rural lighting projects have been completed in 20 villages between the 2016-2017FY and the 2020-2021FY, and project officials are paying close supervision to complete the project for the rest of the villages by the end of November 2021, according to U Aung Kyaw Oo.

He said the completion of the lighting projects in these 25 villages will provide 8,737 households, 28 schools, 19 health facilities, 40 religious buildings with 24-hour access to electricity, as well as a total of 1,533 street lights will be provided free of charge. As it will also help more than 300 small and medium-sized enterprises to be developed, the socio-economic life of the rural people would be improved, the Deputy Director said.

The Mini-Grid is powered by solar energy, a renewable energy source, and a diesel generator is used as a backup generator only when solar power is scared. He added that the Khandee Island Small Power Company in Palaw Township had received the Green Energy Award presented by ASEAN in 2019.

"There are four villages in the Khandee Island. All villages have access to electricity with solar power. In the past, we had electricity only part-time with battery and engine lights, now we have 24-hour electricity with solar power," said U Win Thu, member of the Khandee Island Lighting Committee.

"As we have 24-hour electricity, standards of living have risen, in addition to the education, health and social conditions. Also, workshops, warehouses, furniture shops, TV repair shops, beauty salons, and bakeries can run business, providing employment and increasing family income," he added.

Similarly, lighting projects with solar power in a total of 251 villages in the four townships of Myeik District were completed from the 2016-2017FY to the 2019-2020FY, providing electricity to 15,570 households, 288 religious buildings, 195 education buildings, 47 health facilities, and 1,393 street lights. It is reported that the Rural Lighting Project installed lights in education, religious, health facilities and lamp posts free of charge.

The Department of Rural Development of Myeik District is examining the feasibility of implementing a mini-grid in 302 villages in the district as per the project specifications in the next financial year, the implementation will continue depending on the budget for the financial year and the participation of investors, according to Deputy Director U Aung Kyaw Oo. — Myint Oo (Myeik)/ GNLM

Gold bar price drops by over K10,000 per tical in one week

The gold bar price in Myanmar has declined by over K10,000 per tical within one week, according to Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YRGEA).

THE gold bar price in Myanmar has declined by over K10,000 per tical within one week, according to Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YRGEA).

Although pure gold price reached the highest of over K1,800,000 per tical on 8 November, the price dropped to K1,798,000 per tical on 13 November.

The domestic gold price has fallen as a result of the weakened exchanger rate between the US dollar and Myanmar kyat in the domestic market.

Currently, the dollar exchange rate against the Kyat is valued at K1,786 per dollar.

Last 28 September the domestic gold price stood at only K2,220,000 per tical while a US dollar exchange rate mounted up to the highest of over K3,000 per dollar in the exchange market.

In January 2021, the gold price was ranged between the minimum of K1,316,000 per tical (28 January) and the maximum of K1,336,000 per tical (6 January). It reached an all-time high of K1,410,000 per tical on 3 February and hit the minimum of K1,340,000 per tical on 2 February. In March, the rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,391,000 (25 March) and the lowest of K1,302,000 (4 March). The price was registered the highest of K1,455,000 (30 April) and the lowest of K1,389,000 (1 April). The price reached an all-time highest of K1,709,000 (12 May) and the lowest of K1,447,000 in May. The price moved in the maximum of K1,575,500 (11 June) and the minimum of K1,543,000 (19 June). It fluctuated between K1,562,300 (26 July) and K1,587,000 (9 July). The price of gold reached the lowest of K1,572,800 (3 August) and the highest of K1,698,000 (31 August). The price of pure gold metal hit a fresh peak of K2,220,000 per tical (28 September) and it was priced the lowest of K1,703,500 per tical (1 September). Last month, the rate fluctuated between the highest of K2,030,000 (1 October) and the lowest of K1,750,000 (27 October). gold traders said.

The local gold price reached the lowest K1,310,500 (2 September) and the highest level of K1,314,000 (1 September). In October, the rate ranged between K1,307,800 (30 October) and K1,316,500 (21 October). The rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,312,000 (16 November) and the lowest of K1,278,000 (28 November). In December, the pure yellow metal price moved in the range of Ks 1,275,000 (1 December) and K1,333,000 (28 December).

With the global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs in 2019, reaching K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 5 August), climbing to K1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a fresh peak of K1,300,000 on 5 September, according to the gold traders. — NN/GNLM

Myanmar, Thai border trade reaches over $438 mln in mini-budget year

BILATERAL border trade between Myanmar and Thailand reached over US$ 438 million as of 5 November in the mini-budget year of 2021-22 or transition period from October to March this year, according to figures released by the Commerce Ministry.

The country's export to Thailand totalled $276.75 million while its import shared $ 161.47 million during the period.

This fiscal year's figures have increased by $62.84 million, compared to the same period in the last year. During the corresponding period of the past year, Myanmar-Thailand border trade touched a high of $375.38 million.

Some border checkpoints are temporarily restricted during the pandemic period. There are seven border posts between Myanmar and Thailand, Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Hteekhee, Myeik, Mawtaung and Meisei. Except for Tachilek and Myawady, the remaining border checkpoints showed a decrease in trading this FY.

Myanmar primarily exports agriculture and livestock products, natural gas, beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports non-alcoholic beverages, fabric and yarn, motorcycles and related parts, construction materials and food products.

Thailand is Myanmar's second-largest trade partner and third-largest foreign investor. — ACM/GNLM

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IDPs in Namtu receive Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines

COVID-19 Prevention and Control Committee in Namtu Township, Kyaukme District, Shan State (North) is giving COVID-19 vaccines to local people according to priority.

At 8:30 am yesterday, people under the age of 18 were given the first dose of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines IDP camps.

U Win Min Tun, chairman of the COVID-19 disease prevention and control committee in the township, township police chief Kyaw Zaw Aung, Township Information and Public Relations Department Officer Daw Khaing Zar Tun, Township Immigration and Population Department Officer U Sai Tun Hla, Township Fire Department Officer U Wunna Tun Aye, in-charge of Township Disaster Management Department Daw Myat Thu Hnin, Superintendent of Township People's Hospital Dr Aung Lwin, and health workers assisted in the vaccination programme.

A total of 117 people aged 18 and over in Kachin (IDP), Kyusaw (IDP) and Lisu (IDP) camps in Namtu Township have been vaccinated against Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines.

The remaining people aged 18 and over will be vaccinated in the coming days, said an official from the township People's Hospital.

To date, 117 people aged 18 and above have been vaccinated for the first time in Namtu Township.

A total of 3,961 local people in the township were vaccinated twice and 637 people who have been vaccinated for the first time.

A total of 836 students have been received the first dose of vaccines, with 1,473 vaccinated in total, according to an official from the township virus control committee. — Lu Maw (IPRD)/GNLM

Over 12-year-old students in Hsipaw receive COVID-19 vaccines

HEALTH officials gave the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines to over 12-year-old students who have been received the first dose vaccines at No.1 and No.2 Basic Education High Schools in Hsipaw Township, Kyaukme District, Northern Shan State yesterday.

The first vaccination was given to 394 students on 17 October, and the second vaccination was given yesterday.

Vaccination activities are documented by officials followed by measuring body temperatures, blood pressure, and monitoring oxygen level.

Vaccines were given systematically to the students, and only those with normal conditions are vaccinated.

Emergency medical services are planned to provide emergency medical care, officials said.

Chairman of the township administration U Aung Soe Win and members visited the vaccination sites.

Departmental staff, Mother and Child Welfare Association, Women's Affairs Committee and the Red Cross carried out joint-supervision. —Khin Lay (Hsipaw IPRD)/GNLM

People, students in Kanbalu get COVID-19 jabs

TO prevent the spread of COVID-19 disease in Kanbalu Township, health workers from the township Public Health Department vaccinated over 12-year-old students at No. (1) Basic Education High School and 100-bedded People's Hospital in the township at 8 am on 13 November.

Members of the township COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee led by the township administration, township health workers, Education Department staff, officials of relevant departments, volunteers, staff from Township General Administration Department, township police, and township firefighters assisted in the vaccination works.

The vaccine (second batch for the first time) was given to students over the age of 12 from monastic schools and private high schools in the township and people aged 40 to 44 in the wards and villages.

Next, the COVID-19 vaccine will be given to 553 students from private high schools and monastic schools in Kanbalu Township and 7,000 people aged 40 to 44 in the wards and villages, officials said. — Aung Win Nyein (Kanbalu)/GNLM

Officials give COVID vaccines to students in Kengtung Township

OFFICIALS gave the first dose of Sinovac COVID-19 vaccines to school children aged between 12 and 18 at Basic Education High School in Kengtung, Shan State (East) on 12 November.

Vaccination is provided by the staff of the Township General Administration Department, health workers, teachers and officials.

The first COVID-19 vaccine was given to 172 students including basic education students, high school and middle school students between the ages of 12 and 18.

A total of 2,732 students in Kengtung Township have been received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccines until 12 November.

Chairman of Eastern Shan State Government Sub-Branch U Ye Naing, Deputy Police Chief of Shan State (East) Police Col Aye Thein, District Administrator U Win Min Thein, Township Administrator U Hlaing Maung Maung and officials assisted in the vaccination works.

Students from the remaining primary schools will be vaccinated next at various collection points on the scheduled dates, officials said. —Aung Zin Myint (IPRD)/GNLM

Putin says Russia has 'nothing to do' with Belarus-Poland border crisis

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin on Saturday denied claims Moscow is helping to orchestrate a crisis that has left hundreds of migrants from the Middle East trapped on the Belarus-Poland border.

Blaming Western policies in the Middle East for the crisis, Putin hit back at claims from Poland and others that Russia is working with Belarus to send migrants to the border of the European Union.

"I want everyone to know. We have nothing to do with it," he said in an interview with state television broadcast Saturday.

Putin said European leaders needed to talk to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko to resolve the crisis and that "as I understand it" German Chancellor Angela Merkel was ready to do so.

"We should not forget where these crises associated with migrants came from... Western countries themselves, including European countries," he said.

The migrants, mainly Kurds, have been stuck for days in a no-man's land on the border in near-freezing temperatures, setting up a tent camp and burning wood to keep warm.

Belarus says there are about 2,000 people in the camp, including pregnant women and children. Poland says there are between 3,000 to 4,000 migrants on the border, with more arriving every day.

Tents, heaters brought to camp

There is growing concern for their plight as temperatures continue to fall, with Poland refusing to allow them to cross and accusing Belarus of preventing them from leaving the area.

Belarusian authorities said Saturday they were delivering aid including tents and heaters to the migrant camp — a move that could make it a semi-permanent presence on the borders of the EU.

Migrants, mainly Kurds from the Middle East, have been stuck for days on the Belarus-Poland border in near-freezing temperatures. **PHOTO: BELTA/AFP**

State news agency Belta reported that government bodies were erecting tents at the camp and that a generator had been delivered.

"The Belarusian side is doing everything to provide them with what they need. Water, firewood and humanitarian aid have been delivered," Igor Butkevich, the deputy head of the state border committee, told Belta. —AFP ■

COP26 talks stumble on climate cash 'cliffhanger'

Climate activists demonstrate outside of the COP26 climate change conference in Glasgow. **PHOTO: AFP**

NATIONS were trying to rebuild bridges at the COP26 summit on Saturday after talks faltered overnight, when rich emitters refused a request to help developing economies meet mounting financial losses from climate change.

Delegates from some 200 countries are in Glasgow to try to hammer out how to implement the 2015 Paris Agreement goals to limit temperature rises to 1.5-2.0 degrees Celsius.

But the issue of finance - how vulnerable nations are supported to green their grids and brace against climate impacts - has stalked the two-week negotiations, after wealthy nations failed to stump up the $100 billion annually they promised over a decade ago. The deadlock pushed COP26 past its scheduled end on Friday evening, with the summit's UK presidency confirming that a new draft text would only be published for scrutiny on Saturday. —AFP ■

Tunisian town revolts over trash crisis

AS tear gas and protest cries filled the air in the Tunisian town of Agareb, Mabrouka Ben Ibrahim vowed to demonstrate for her daughter, whose death she blames on a nearby rubbish dump.

Yousra, 21, died in 2019 after being bitten by a mosquito that came from the toxic trash site, Ben Ibrahim said.

"I lost my daughter and I don't want other families to lose their children because of the filth in this landfill," the 59-year-old said.

Residents say rubbish dumped at the site, including dangerous industrial and medical refuse, has caused a string of diseases from cancer to vision problems and infertility.

Authorities decided to close the site in September after declaring it full but reversed course on Monday, prompting angry street demonstrations that degenerated into clashes with security forces.

In the early hours of Tuesday, a protester died of what relatives said was tear gas inhalation, although authorities have blamed his death on an unrelated health condition. —AFP ■

Eritrea condemns 'illicit and immoral' US sanctions

ERITREA slammed the United States on Saturday for slapping new sanctions on the country over the deadly conflict in neighbouring Ethiopia, calling the move "illicit and immoral".

The US measures announced on Friday came in response to Eritrea's decision to send troops into Ethiopia's Tigray region to back Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in the war against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) rebel group.

Eritrean and Ethiopian forces have been accused of carrying out mass rapes and massacres in Tigray and Washington has repeatedly urged Asmara to pull out of Ethiopia.

On Saturday Eritrea said the sanctions reflected a "misguided and hostile policy" by the US, and were based on false allegations.

"This unilateral sanction, that shifts blame to and scapegoats Eritrea on the basis of spurious allegations, is in contravention of international law, and constitutes a flagrant breach of... sovereignty," the ministry of information said in a statement.

"That the primary aim of the illicit and immoral sanctions is to inculcate suffering and starvation on the population so as to induce political unrest and instability is patently clear."

The sanctions target the Eritrean Defence Force and President Isaias Afwerki's political party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, as well as other players in the closed authoritarian state.

The US has warned that Ethiopia risks "implosion" without a negotiated settlement, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken threatening to impose sanctions against Abiy's government and the rebels unless they move forward on talks.

"We are not imposing sanctions at this time on elements aligned with the government of Ethiopia and TPLF to allow time and space to see if these talks can make progress," Blinken said, ahead of a three-nation trip to Africa next week. But Cameron Hudson, a former US official now at the Atlantic Council, said the sanctions had missed the mark. —AFP ■

14 NOVEMBER 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Restore peace for shaping the nation with prosperity

VARIOUS ethnic nationals have been residing in Myanmar through thick and thin since time in thousands of years. Their cultural heritage and fine arts have been sustainable till today. But, when the country fell under the rule of colonialists, the divide-and-rule policy of the colonialists wedged the unity among national brethren.

Even though the country regained its independence in 1948, armed conflicts among the ethnic nationals due to the instigation of the colonialists cannot be solved till today. These armed conflicts keep the country away from peace. As a result, national reconciliation and peace could not be firmly built, delaying the development of the nation.

Although the governments in successive eras emphasized the flourishing of Union spirit and restoration of the perpetual peace, the country has been staying away from from the victory of mission to build the Union based on democracy and federalism due to malpractices in democracy more than 70 years, hugging the ism, dogmatism, regionalism and personal cult.

> That is why the united strength of all the national people will be taking measures of peace and stability of the nation. Today's country is facing abundant internal and external disturbances. Hence, the ethnic national people would have to overcome difficulties, crises and challenges which would fall on the country and the people, with a patriotic spirit based on the genuine Union spirit.

Today's government is working hard in line with the five-point roadmap and nine objectives as its policies for ensuring peace and stability of the State, development and improvement of socio-economy of ethnic national people as much as it can. Strenuous efforts are being made for the national reconciliation and restoration of peace in the Union with a vow to ensure the sustainable and harmonized development all national brethren can enjoy in an equal term.

Emphasizing the restoration of peace, the government wipes off incitements of terrorists and violent attacks. Only when the country enjoys fruits of peace and stability, will it go on along the route to the restoration of peace.

That is why the united strength of all the national people will be taking measures of peace and stability of the nation. Today's country is facing abundant internal and external disturbances. Hence, the ethnic national people would have to overcome difficulties, crises and challenges which would fall on the country and the people, with a patriotic spirit based on the genuine Union spirit. Naturally, every country is safeguarding their independence and sovereignty. The unity as a tool to shape a prosperous country is a backbone for the existence of independence and sovereignty. Only when a peaceful and prosperous society emerges, will it hand the good legacy to new generations.

■■■

APEC ministers say free trade key to pandemic recovery

Some 81 million jobs have been lost across the region due to Covid-19 and the impact on supply chains has been significant, but APEC members have rejected protectionism during this crisis.

PACIFIC Rim trade and foreign ministers agreed at a virtual summit 10 November that free trade and open economies will drive the region's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Ministers from the 21-nation Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group met online to discuss their Covid-19 response ahead of a meeting of national leaders on Saturday, including US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

New Zealand Trade Minister Damien O'Connor, hosting the meeting, said highlights included a plan to voluntarily freeze fossil fuel subsidies and commitments to liberalise tariffs on vaccines and other pandemic medical supplies.

O'Connor said there was overarching agreement on the need to avoid erecting trade barriers in response to the challenges thrown up by the pandemic.

"It is free, fair and open trade that will help economies move forward out of this pandemic… we need openness to drive global growth, indeed it is trade that presents the solution to our challenges," he said.

Millions of jobs lost

"Some 81 million jobs have been lost across the region due to Covid-19 and the impact on supply chains has been significant, but APEC members have rejected protectionism during this crisis."

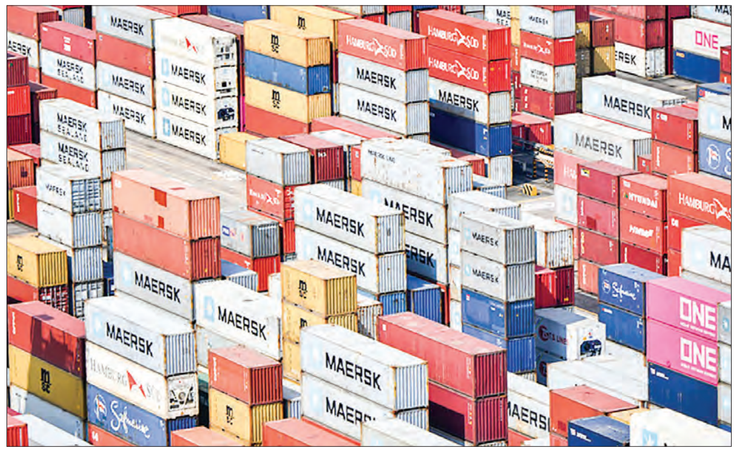
APEC's 21 member economies collectively account for almost 40 per cent of the world's population and around 60 per cent of the global economy.

The summit was originally slated to be held in Auckland but is being held online for a second time due to Covid-19 after Malaysia hosted virtually in 2020.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern this week conceded "it means our ability to put New Zealand on the world stage isn't quite what it would have been".

But she said the digital platform was easier to access than an in-person event, making participation easier for all concerned.

That allowed Ardern to call an unprecedented early leaders' meeting in July, which carried out much of the heavy lifting on agreements surrounding international trade in vaccines and medical equipment.



New Zealand Trade Minister Damien O'Connor said there was overarching agreement on the need to avoid erecting trade barriers in response to the challenges thrown up by the pandemic. Containers are pictured stacked up at the port in Hong Kong before being loaded onto cargo ships. **PHOTO: AFP**

When APEC leaders meet again early Saturday New Zealand time, topics will include how to reopen borders without spreading the virus, ensuring an equitable pandemic recovery and moving toward a carbon-free economy.

New Zealand Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta said APEC members had agreed to send a strong message about halting any increase in fossil fuel subsidies.

"These subsidies cost our economies billions of dollars a year, but the real impact is on our environment," she said.

The issue was highlighted at the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow, where the heads of 91 major global companies called for their elimination.

Debate on the virtual sidelines of the summit will be dominated by bids from China and Taiwan to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership — a huge 11-nation free trade pact.

Beijing, which lays claim to Taiwan, would oppose any recognition of the island nation while Australia is unwilling to allow China into the grouping amid a festering trade dispute.

The United States will also be keen to use the event to reaffirm its commitment to trade in the Indo-Pacific after years of protectionist policies under former president Donald Trump.

Washington has offered to host APEC in 2023 after Thailand takes its turn next year, although the US bid is yet to be confirmed.

SOURCE: AFP

■■■

WHO restarts evaluation of Russian Covid vaccine

"There is a lot of interchange of information that needs to happen" but "the process has restarted", WHO Assistant Director General Mariangela Simao told reporters in Geneva.

THE World Health Organization said Friday it had "restarted" a process that could grant emergency authorisation for the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine against Covid-19, after several months in limbo.

"There is a lot of interchange of information that needs to happen" but "the process has restarted", WHO Assistant Director General Mariangela Simao told reporters in Geneva.

WHO emergency use authorisation would be a seal of quality for the Russian shot, as well as making wider recognition more likely and possibly freeing up travel for those vaccinated with it.

It could also open the way to Sputnik V being used by the Covax initiative that aims to get vaccines to the poorest countries.

Neither US nor EU medicines watchdogs have so far granted authorisation for Sputnik V, which has been used in Russia and some other countries since late 2020.

Simao said that the WHO also "still has to receive the full dossier on Sputnik" and was "in conversations with the applicant... different parts of the Russian government".

"There are pending issues regarding inspections at the manufacturers," she added.

President Vladimir Putin hailed Russia at a recent G20 summit in Rome as the "first country in the world to approve a vaccine against Covid-19", vaunting Sputnik V's "safety and effectiveness".

An AFP tally based on official statistics shows that the vaccine is used in 48 countries.

So far, the WHO has granted emergency authorizations to Covid-19 shots from India's Bharat Biotech, Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Johnson&Johnson and Sinopharm.

SOURCE: AFP

■■■

A facility manufacturing the Sputnik V vaccine near St Petersburg. **PHOTO: OLGA MALTSEVA/AFP**

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 13 November 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure over South Andaman Sea and adjoining Thailand Coast still persists. It is likelihood to move West-Northwestwards and it may further intensify into a Depression over North Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal around (15.11.2021). Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 14 November 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi Region and Northern Shan State, scattered in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, and Ayeyawady regions and Kachin, (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Chin and Kayah states and isolated in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35) mph. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7– 9) feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (4-7) feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of scattered to fairly widespread rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Shan, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 November 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 November 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHB0URING AREA FOR 14 November 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

(Issued at 00:40 hour MST)

A slight earthquake of magnitude (4.4) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (5) miles west of Kamine), latitude 25.52 °N, longitude 96.63°E, depth (10) kilometers, about (53) miles west of Myitkyina seismological observatory was recorded at 00 hr 18 min 16 sec MST on 13 November 2021.

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Japan to get world's 1st operational bus-train dual-mode vehicle

THE world's first operational dual-mode vehicle, essentially a bus capable of running on roads and railway tracks, is set to enter service next month in the Shikoku region, the smallest of Japan's four main islands.

Asa Seaside Railway Corp. in Tokushima Prefecture said it will roll out the DMV on 25 December, having cleared safety checks by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

The vehicles will run on a 50-kilometer course connecting the town of Kaiyo in Tokushima and the city of Muroto, Kochi Prefecture, of which 10 km will be on a railway track. Three will be in operation, each with a capacity of 23 passengers and crew.

The DMV is a diesel-powered bus that has been fitted with an extra set of wheels on the undercarriage, which can be deployed in about 15 seconds, capable of traveling on railway tracks.

The Tokushima prefectural government, which has a 35 percent stake in Asa Seaside Railway, said it hopes the DMV will become a tourist draw and help boost the local economy, which, like much of Japan, has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. The company is also 10 percent owned by the Kochi prefectural government.

The vehicles may also be useful in natural disasters such as earthquakes, which may leave sections of roads or railway tracks unusable. The DMV is lighter than a traditional train, which, according to the company, means it requires less fuel and is easier to maintain. Hokkaido Railway Co. developed its own version in 2004 but did not bring it into operation, in part due to financial difficulties.—Kyodo ■

The dual-mode vehicle has a bus mode and a train mode and can easily switch between regular roads and railroads. **PHOTO: ASA SEASIDE RAILWAY/ KYODO**

Lionfish — an invasive menace terrorizing Venezuela's coast

THE dazzling, colorful lionfish is a must for any exotic aquarium, but it has also become a major threat to the western Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean.

"It's beautiful, but you have to kill it," says Mavi Escalona, a Venezuelan nurse and amateur spearfisher.

"It causes a lot of damage, and it's delicious!"

The spectacular, stripey lionfish with its venemous spines is a carnivore originally from the Indian and Pacific oceans that has now become an invasive species in the Atlantic and Caribbean, posing a threat to their ecosystems.

Known by many other names such as zebrafish, tastyfish and butterfly-cod, the lionfish can now be found from Florida to northern Brazil.

And it has a voracious appetite: eggs, small fish, crustaceans, molluscs. It is at least partly responsible — alongside over-fishing, pollution and climate change — for a drop in the numbers of other fish in the area.

"It's an invasive fish. It doesn't have competitors or predators," said Laura Gutierrez, a Venezuelan biologist now based in the Canary Islands of Spain but who studied lionfish for many years in her homeland.

The lionfish was first spotted in Florida in 1985.

"People that had them in their aquarium released them because they ate their other fish or it was difficult to feed them," said Gutierrez.

"It is eating all the commercial fish, crustaceans, fish and molluscs that keep reefs and corals clean, fish that eat algae."

What happens in an aquarium takes place on a much larger scale in the Caribbean, and could do so, too, in the Mediterranean, which lionfish have started to colonize. "We're not talking about eradicating them, you can't. It's very difficult but we're talking about minimizing their impact," said Gutierrez.—AFP ■

Lionfish are the first exotic species to invade coral reefs. **PHOTO: AFP/ FILE**

Energy experts predict that more ambitious climate action from world leaders will significantly increase companies' use of a tribunal mechanism. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Governments risk 'trillions' in fossil fuel climate litigation

GOVERNMENTS which enact climate legislation risk being sued for trillions of dollars by fossil fuel companies seeking compensation for lost revenue and stranded assets, according to data that campaigners warn threaten pledges made at COP26.

Energy experts predict that more ambitious climate action from world leaders will significantly increase companies' use of a tribunal mechanism that has already awarded billions to heavy industry.

Trade agreements such as the Energy Charter Treaty and NAFTA contain investor arbitration clauses, known as investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS), that allow foreign companies to sue governments over actions they say hit profits or investments.

Campaigners say that energy companies are increasingly turning to this type of arbitration to recoup investments as governments accelerate the shift away from fossil fuels.

Jean Blaylock, trade campaigner at Global Justice Now, tells AFP these corporate courts -- "the global trade system's dirty little secret" -- could "make a mockery" of commitments generated at the COP26 summit.

"We're seeing the fossil fuel sector use investor-state dispute settlement to hold climate action to ransom," she says.

"These companies have made unfathomable profits from fuelling the climate crisis, we cannot let them demand even bigger pay-outs."

AFP has obtained excerpts from a presentation given at a September trade event by consultancy firm Berkeley Research Group (BRG), which predicted that climate legislation would lead to a rise in private lawsuits.—AFP ■

In divided Cyprus, UN sees environment as unifier

A broken plastic chair, a printer box, old tyres and other discarded waste are loaded into the back of United Nations pickup trucks in the buffer zone that divides Cyprus. The initiative on Friday, which included young Greek Cypriots who have demonstrated a commitment to working with counterparts in the Turkish Cypriot community, helped to make the common heritage of a divided Mediterranean island just a little bit cleaner.

But it came as the politics of the island's division become messier, 47 years after Turkish troops invaded and occupied the northern third of the island in response to a Greek military junta-sponsored coup.

Since then the UN has maintained a buffer zone between the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot forces in the north —which is recognized only by Ankara — and the Greek and Greek Cypriot forces in the Republic of Cyprus, a European Union member.

Although they are divided, the environment has been one way the two communities have been able to cooperate.—AFP ■

Singapore migrant workers suffer under Covid curbs

Migrant workers in Singapore are typically packed into shared rooms and sleep on bunk beds.
PHOTO: SINGAPORE MINISTRY OF MANPOWER/AFP/FILE

BANGLADESHI migrant worker MD Sharif Uddin used to spend his days off with friends outside his cramped Singapore dormitory, but coronavirus curbs have for 18 months left him stuck inside during his spare time.

More than 300,000 migrant workers, many of them from South Asia, live in dorms in the prosperous city-state, where they are typically packed into shared rooms and sleep on bunk beds. The vast complexes were hit by Covid-19 and locked down at the start of the pandemic, while restrictions were introduced across the whole country for a period to prevent a broader outbreak.

Curbs have been eased for most in Singapore, where -- despite currently facing a renewed virus wave — vaccinated people can go out shopping and to restaurants, and borders are gradually re-opening.

But it is a different story for the low-paid migrants, who remain subject to far more onerous restrictions that mostly allow them to travel only between their work and accommodation.

"It's a very painful life... like prison," said construction site worker Uddin, adding that before the pandemic he used to meet friends at the weekend to drink coffee, recite poetry and gossip.

"We're only allowed to go to work and home, back and forth, and nowhere else. It's like living under house arrest," added the 43-year-old, who has worked in Singapore for 13 years and written two books about his experiences. Beyond heading to work, the migrants are allowed occasional trips to specially-built "recreation centres" that typically comprise shops set around a square, and sports facilities.

'Economic commodity'

When the dormitories — self-contained and usually in out-of-the-way parts of Singapore — became the epicentre of the city's first Covid-19 wave last year, it sparked national soul-searching.—AFP ■

Norway to reinstate national measures to combat Covid-19

Residents who are over 85 years old and do not live in a nursing home wait for their vaccination against the novel coronavirus in Drammen, Norway, on 21 January 2021. **PHOTO: OLE BERG-RUSTEN/NTB/AFP**

NORWAY will reintroduce nationwide measures to stem surging coronavirus cases, including authorising towns to use health passes, the government announced on Friday.

The Nordic country, which had lifted all Covid-19 restrictions in late September, will also propose a third vaccine dose for people over 18 but will not impose a new lockdown, Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store told a press conference.

"The government wants to introduce new national measures to contain contagions," he said.

"However, we are not talking about confinements or measures as strict as we saw earlier in the pandemic."

The new measures include a requirement for adults who have been in contact with a positive case to be tested, and unvaccinated health workers will have to be tested twice a week and wear masks.

Local restrictions had reappeared in recent days in Norway, with daily cases at around 1,500 in a country of 5.4 million people.

Europe is facing a sharp deterioration in the epidemic situation, especially in Germany and central and eastern Europe. Non-vaccinated people are the most affected.

The World Health Organization has warned that Europe is once again the "epicentre" of the pandemic.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Johnson & Johnson to split into two companies, separating consumer health business

SHARES of Johnson & Johnson jumped in premarket trading Friday, after the health care giant announced it its splitting itself into two publicly traded companies.

The new companies will be one focused on consumer products, such as Band-Aid bandages and baby powder, and another focused on prescription drugs and medical devices.

Shares of Johnson & Johnson were up 4 per cent in premarket trading after the announcement. J&J did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The news was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.—AFP ■

Japan: More hospital beds planned for next virus surge

THE Japanese government is adding thousands more hospital beds as it prepares for a surge in Covid-19 cases.

Last summer, many patients were forced to stay at home and receive oxygen deliveries, due to a lack of appropriate bed space in hospitals.

While Japan has the world's largest number of hospital beds per capita, Covid-19 patients were only admitted to a fraction of these beds. This was partly down to small private hospitals being reluctant to accept Covid-19 patients. The government responded with incentives such as subsidies to encourage private hospitals to treat such patients, but tougher measures may now be needed to enable the government to respond quickly to a health emergency. The government plans space for 37,000 Covid patients in hospitals by the end of November, compared to 28,000 beds currently available.—AFP ■

Mongolia plans horse festival to revive pandemic-hit tourism sector

AN annual horse festival is set to return this year in Mongolia in an attempt to revive the country's pandemic-battered tourism sector, organizers said Friday.

The annual "Horses of Mongolian Steppe" festival in 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the seventh edition of the festival will be held from 19 to 21 November in Batnorov soum of the eastern Khentii province under the auspices of the country's Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the provincial governor's office said in a statement.

More than 2,000 horses are expected to take part in the festival this year. The festival will include several activities, including horse-related jewelry auctions, horse racing, lasso competitions and concerts.—Xinhua ■

Herdsmen dressed in Mongolian ethnic costumes attend a horse-riding competition during the Ice and Snow Naadam festival in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, 4 January 2014. A series of traditional activities were held during the festival to show horse culture. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

NEWS IN BRIEF

US to start talks with Japan on imported steel, aluminum tariffs

THE US administration of President Joe Biden said Friday it will start talks with Japan over tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, a move that may lead to easing the duties that were imposed on imported items under his predecessor Donald Trump.

"The United States and Japan will seek to resolve bilateral concerns in this area (of steel and aluminum)," the Office of the US Trade Representative said, just ahead of next week's visit by USTR Katherine Tai and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo to Japan.

The move comes as the Biden administration is working to rebuild alliances that it believes have been undermined by Trump's four years of unilateralist "America First" foreign and trade policy.— Kyodo ■

US job openings remain exceptionally high in September

US job openings remained exceptionally high at more than 10 million in September while the number of Americans quitting their jobs rose to a record high, indicating a tighter labor market.

There were 10.4 million job openings in September, a little lower than an upwardly revised 10.6 million in the previous month, but well above the 7.4 million unemployed workers in the US labor force, the U.S. Labor Department reported Friday. Meanwhile, the quits level, which reflects the number of jobs that workers left voluntarily, rose to a record high of 4.4 million in September, according to the department. Sarah House, senior economist at Wells Fargo Securities, said the latest job opening numbers indicate that demand for labour remains "quite strong".

"Openings continue to outstrip the number of workers officially counted as unemployed, in a sign that the labor market is tighter than even the 4.6% unemployment rate suggests," House said Friday in a note, adding the number of unemployed workers per opening is now at its lowest rate ever at 0.73. "The abundance of job openings is allowing workers to change jobs for greener pastures like never before. The quit rate rose to a fresh record-high of 3.0%," she said.— Xinhua ■

Pace of Europe's economic recovery hit by high energy costs

THE European Commission on Thursday revised downwards its outlook for next year, warning that staggering energy prices would impact utility bills and affect people's spending power and investment.

European Commissioner for Economy Paolo Gentiloni told a news conference that the Commission had "a very positive outlook but a quite high level of uncertainty."

The commission's autumn forecast raised the growth outlook for this year to 5 per cent from the 4.8 per cent predicted in summer while the 2022 growth forecast dropped to 4.3 per cent from 4.5 per cent. For 2023, it is estimated to hover around 2.4 per cent.

Gentiloni said that at almost 14 per cent in annual terms, the rate of GDP growth in the EU in the second quarter of 2021 was the highest reading on record and as high as the unprecedented fall in GDP in the same period last year, during the first wave of the pandemic.

Energy commodity prices have reached unprecedented high levels across Europe. Gas prices in October 2021 are 400% more expensive than in April 2021. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Domestic demand is set to continue to drive this expansion but the growth momentum is facing "new headwinds" — bottlenecks and disruptions in global supply, especially on raw materials, which are weighing on manufacturing in the EU and rising inflation, driven largely by a spike in energy prices, particularly for natural gas, which "increased at a tumultuous pace" over the last month. These, added to rising numbers of COVID-19 infections, are "set to weigh on consumption and investment." Despite the negative-than-predicted outlook for the EU, the Commission raised its growth forecast for the year for the 19-country euro area, saying that the economy was bouncing back from the worst of the coronavirus pandemic as people went back to work.— Xinhua ■

'It feels good': New York welcomes back tourists

NEW York is welcoming back visitors with open arms after the US ended its 20-month Covid travel restrictions, but it will likely take several years before the number of tourists to the Big Apple reaches pre-pandemic levels. The economic and cultural powerhouse of Manhattan is already feeling busier since the United States lifted its ban on "non-essential" travel on 8 November, with Europeans among the early returnees.

Eglantine Lasserre, a 40-year-old from Bordeaux, was on the first flight to NYC out of France on Monday.

"New York has always been a dream of mine, so when I heard about the reopening of the borders I jumped at the opportunity," she told AFP beneath the giant electronic billboards of Times Square.

French couple Alexis Maynier, 33 and his wife Camille also decided to make their first trip to New York this week. On a piercing blue-sky fall day, they enjoyed the freedom of meandering around Broadway, 5th Avenue and Central Park.

"We were under a lot of constraints and now we want to go back to more normal activities," said Maynier, referring to the nearly two years of various pandemic restrictions in France.— AFP ■

Visitors take pictures at the Empire State Building on 9 November 2021 in New York, New York. **PHOTO: AFP/ANGELA WEISS**

Iconic corporate names breaking up in trend to boost value

GE and Toshiba are splitting into three parts while Johnson & Johnson will break into two businesses, big names in a growing trend. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THREE multinational giants —General Electric, Johnson & Johnson and Toshiba—this week announced plans to split into multiple companies, joining a trend the firms hope will provide more growth opportunities.

It is a move in large part forced on them by financial markets, analysts say.

The break ups "represent a trend line that has been out there for 20 years ," said Michael Useem, professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

The big names joining the trend indicate the model of a huge, diversified conglomerate "is unequivocally on its way out," he told AFP.

Useem, who specializes in corporate restructuring, said the move allows the companies "to become more focused on single markets."

GE, like Japan's Toshiba, announced it was splitting into three companies, involved in aviation, health and energy.

Toshiba, which had previously spun off several divisions, will break off infrastructure and electronic devices like semiconductors, leaving the flash memory business. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

AstraZeneca to take profit from Covid vaccine sales

BRITISH pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca said Friday it has begun to sell its Covid vaccine at a profit as the company posted a third quarter loss on higher costs.

AstraZeneca, which has sold its vaccine at cost during the pandemic in contrast to rivals, including US giant Pfizer, said it expects "to progressively transition... to modest profitability as new orders are received" in the current fourth quarter and beyond.

AstraZeneca posted a net loss of $1.65 billion (1.44 billion euros) for the third quarter compared with a profit after tax of around $650 million in the July-September period last year, a statement said.

AstraZeneca said it experienced higher costs in the current third quarter following its $39-billion takeover of US biotech company Alexion, as well as increased research and development expenses across multiple programmes, including its Covid treatments.—AFP ■

US court maintains block on Biden vaccine mandate for businesses

A US federal court on Friday maintained a suspension of the Biden administration's mandate requiring large businesses to vaccinate employees for Covid-19.

The three-judge panel for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans affirmed its initial order from last week, which blocked the mandate from going into effect.

The court said on Friday that the mandate "grossly exceeds" the administration's authority.

A person walks past a business in downtown Newark, New Jersey on 12 November 2020. **PHOTO: TIMOYHY A. CLARY/AFP/FILE**

If upheld, the suspension would represent a major setback to one of Biden's most far-reaching and high-impact efforts to secure the widespread immunization of American workers ahead of a winter when a resurgence of Covid-19 is expected.

Biden had set a January 4 deadline for such companies to ensure full vaccination of their employees—a rule the administration said would affect more than two-thirds of the country's workforce and which the court ruling criticized as "staggeringly overbroad."

The court did not decide whether such a mandate, which would apply to companies with more than 100 workers, is ultimately valid.—AFP ■

Canada sees increased int'l arrivals in October

Canada saw the number of international arrivals to the country increase in October from the same month last year, but remain well below the pre-pandemic levels of October 2019, according to Statistics Canada on Friday. **PHOTO: AFP**

CANADA saw the number of international arrivals to the country increase in October from the same month last year, but remain well below the pre-pandemic levels of October 2019, according to Statistics Canada on Friday.

US residents took 292,200 trips to Canada in October in US-licensed automobiles through 111 land ports equipped with the automated Integrated Primary Inspection Line (IPIL) application, according to a report released by Statistics Canada.

The figure was over four and a half times higher than the 64,700 trips taken in October 2020. But it was less than 29.4 per cent of the 994,100 US arrivals by car in the same month in 2019.

Meanwhile, there were 207,600 Canadian residents who returned from the United States in Canadian-licensed automobiles via the 111 IPIL equipped ports. The number is up significantly from the 159,500 recorded in October 2020.

Given that the U.S. land border was closed for non-essential travel until 8 November 2021, this represents about 10.3 per cent of 2 million Canadians who drove back across the border in October 2019.

There were 114,200 arrivals from the United States and 149,200 arrivals of non-residents from other countries at Canadian airports equipped with Primary Inspection Kiosks (PIKs) in October 2021. All airport arrivals combined in the month were 18,300 more than in October 2020.—Xinhua ■

US-listed Chinese firms trade mostly higher

US-LISTED Chinese companies traded mostly higher on Friday with six of the top 10 stocks by weight in the S&P US Listed China 50 index ending the day on an upbeat note.

Shares of Pinduoduo and JD.com rose 2.29 per cent and 2.08 per cent, respectively, leading the gainers in the top 10 stocks in the index.

Shares of Yum China Holdings and Alibaba Group Holding lost 0.73 per cent and 0.62 per cent, respectively, leading the decliners in the top 10 stocks. US stocks finished higher on Friday, buoyed by overall strength in tech names.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 179.08 points, or 0.5 per cent, to 36,100.31. The S&P 500 increased 33.58 points, or 0.72 per cent, to 4,682.85. The Nasdaq Composite Index added 156.68 points, or 1 per cent, to 15,860.96.

Nasdaq MarketSite in Times Square, New York, 11 February 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA/WANG YING**

The Cboe Volatility Index, widely considered as the best fear gauge in the stock market, dropped 7.76 per cent to 16.29.—Xinhua ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (237N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (237N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **14-11-2021** 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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NEGAR VOY.NO. (SCY1112)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NEGAR VOY. NO. (SCY1112)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **14-11-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** 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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Cambodia hits back at US sanctions over naval base

CAMBODIA on Friday angrily condemned a US decision to sanction two senior military officials over a contentious naval base, accusing Washington of showing "utter contempt" for its sovereignty.

The US Treasury Department this week announced it was freezing any US assets and criminalising transactions with senior defence ministry official Chau Phirun and naval commander Tea Vinh over alleged corruption linked to the Ream Naval Base.

Washington accused the pair, along with other Cambodian officials, of conspiring to inflate costs at the base to pocket the proceeds.

"Cambodia strongly deplores the long-arm jurisdiction of the United States over Cambodian officials on the basis of groundless allegations driven by geopolitical motives," the Cambodian foreign ministry said in a statement.

Cambodia angrily condemned a US decision to sanction two senior military officials over the contentious Ream Naval Base. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

"The smear campaign and unilateral sanction of the United States against public figures of a sovereign state... (displays) an utter contempt for the independence of another country as well as acts as a serious interference in its domestic affairs," the statement said.

The Cambodian foreign ministry also warned that the move was "another step in the wrong direction" for ties between the two countries.

The base on the Gulf of Thailand has been a running sore in US-Cambodia relations in recent years, with Washington suspecting it is being converted for use by China.

Cambodia has been dismantling facilities at the base that were built partly with American money and played host to US exercises.—AFP ■

Trump advisor Bannon indicted for refusing to testify in Capitol riot probe

US President Donald Trump's former Chief Strategist Stephen Bannon exits Manhattan Federal Court following his arraignment on fraud charges in New York on 20 August 2020. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

FORMER US president Donald Trump's longtime advisor Steve Bannon was indicted Friday for refusing to testify to the congressional committee investigating the Capitol riot, the Justice Department announced.

Bannon, who investigators suspect could have information on links between the White House and the Trump supporters who invaded the Capitol, was charged with two counts of contempt—for ignoring subpoenas to appear for a deposition and for failing to supply documents to the committee.

The House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6 Attack subpoenaed Bannon, 67, on 23 September. He was among the first of dozens of people who have been called to testify on the violent attack that shut down Congress as it convened to certify Joe Biden's election win over Trump two months earlier.

The committee said it has reason to believe Bannon has "information relevant to understand important activities that led to and informed the events at the Capitol."

The committee pointed to his presence at activities focused on blocking Congress's certification session the day before, when he said: "All hell is going to break loose tomorrow."

After Trump claimed executive privilege to block aides from testifying and to prevent the committee from accessing documents from his administration, Bannon said he would not testify until questions over privilege had been resolved.

The House then voted to refer contempt of Congress charges to the Justice Department. Each count carries a penalty of one month to one year in jail.

Given the highly political background of the case, it was not clear the Justice Department would take action—until now.

"Since my first day in office, I have promised Justice Department employees that together we would show the American people by word and deed that the department adheres to the rule of law, follows the facts and the law and pursues equal justice under the law," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement.—AFP ■

Flight ban imposed as pressure builds on Belarus over migrants

TURKEY on Friday barred people from several Middle Eastern countries from flying to Belarus, as pressure mounts on Minsk to end a migrant crisis on its border with EU member Poland.

The Turkish Civil Aviation Authority said citizens of Iraq, Syria and Yemen would not be allowed on flights from Turkey to Belarus because of "the problem of illegal border crossings between the European Union and Belarus".

It said citizens of these countries would be prevented from buying tickets or boarding flights to Belarus until further notice. Belarusian state airline Belavia said it was complying with the order.

It was the first move to start preventing migrants from entering Belarus, which is being accused of bringing them into the country to send over the border into Poland in revenge for Western sanctions.

Hundreds of migrants, mainly Kurds, have been stuck for days on the Belarusian-Polish border in near-freezing temperatures, with aid groups warning of a looming humanitarian catastrophe.

Poland is refusing to allow the migrants to cross, has declared a state of emergency in the area and has deployed thousands of troops along the border.— AFP ■

Hundreds of migrants, mainly Kurds, have been stuck for days on the Belarusian-Polish border in near-freezing temperatures. **PHOTO: BELTA/AFP**

Sweden's new Social Democratic leader to try to form govt

SWEDEN'S speaker of parliament on Thursday tasked current finance minister Magdalena Andersson with trying to form a new government, which would make her the country's first woman prime minister if she succeeds.

Speaker Andreas Norlen told reporters he had given Andersson, the new head of the Social Democrats, until Tuesday to secure support for a new left-wing government.

If she is able to do so, parliament could vote on her as new prime minister on 18 November at the earliest. Outgoing Social Democratic Prime Minister Stefan Lofven resigned on Wednesday in a widely expected move aimed at giving his successor enough time to prepare for the country's September 2022 general election.

Andersson was elected to replace Lofven as the head of the Social Democrats at a party congress last week.

She now needs the support of the Social Democrats' coalition partner Green Party, and the Left and Centre parties in order to be elected prime minister.

Both the Green and Centre parties have agreed to back her, but the Left has said it will demand concessions in exchange for its support.

Left Party leader Nooshi Dadgostar told media on Thursday she wanted to negotiate higher pensions and sickness benefits. "I'm ready, my work to seek support for a government begins now and I've just invited Left Party leader Nooshi Dadgostar in for talks," Andersson wrote on Facebook after the speaker entrusted her with the task.—AFP ■

Duterte's daughter Sara to run for Philippines vice-president

Sara Duterte (R), the daughter of outgoing Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, will run for vice-president in the 2022 elections. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

SARA Duterte, the daughter of outgoing Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, will run for vice-president in the 2022 elections, the government's election monitor said Saturday, after months of speculation she would seek the top job.

The Commission on Elections announced on its official Facebook page that Sara would be running for the country's second-highest office, replacing another candidate.

"This is to confirm that Mayor Inday Sara Duterte through her representative, has filed her Certificate of Candidacy for Vice-President under Lakas-CMD (party)," her spokeswoman Christina Garcia Frasco said on Facebook.

Her decision came just before the November 15 deadline for candidates to make a late entry into the May elections.

She was immediately endorsed by the party of Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the son and namesake of the former dictator, to be his running mate in the poll.

Sara had been widely expected to run for president in a bid to succeed her father, who is constitutionally barred from seeking a second six-year term and is facing an investigation by the International Criminal Court into his deadly drug war.

For months, she had insisted she wanted to serve another term as Davao City mayor, the family's southern bailiwick, despite consistently leading in surveys of voter preferences for the next president.

Speculation about her plans intensified this week after she suddenly withdrew from the mayoral contest, quit her regional party and joined Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, the national political party of her close ally and former president Gloria Arroyo.—AFP ■

Pro-Beijing candidates dominate nominations for Hong Kong election

A total of 154 candidates have been nominated for Hong Kong's legislative election next month as nominations closed on Friday, with pro-Beijing candidates comprising a majority of the forms received.

Amid a handful of non-establishment hopefuls was centrist Third Side party leader Tik Chi-yuen, who was also the only opposition-leaning figure elected to the city's powerful Election Committee in September.

Also in the running is former Democratic Party founder Nelson Wong, who was ousted from the party after expressing his support for government-proposed constitutional reforms.

A woman walks near the Harbour City in Hong Kong, south China, 27 August 2019. **PHOTO: XINHUA/LI GANG**

This year's nominations saw no contenders from the city's major democratic parties, including the Hong Kong Democratic Party, marking that party's absence from a local election for the first time in over two decades.

The Legislative Council election, set to be held on Dec. 19, is the first since the legislature approved sweeping changes to the city's electoral system in May. In 2016, following the 2014 Umbrella Movement that called for democratic change in the former British colony, the pro-democracy camp captured 30 of the 70 seats in the council.

But following the 2019 anti-government protests, which left the city in political and social turmoil, the central government called on Hong Kong to oust lawmakers deemed "unpatriotic" to rein in dissent and exclude anti-Beijing elements from the levers of power. —Kyodo ■

Cuban opposition figure arrested ahead of banned protest

CUBAN dissident, journalist and human rights campaigner Guillermo Farinas was arrested Friday, his mother told AFP, three days before opposition figures plan to hold a protest that has been banned by the government.

Cuban officials, who deny the existence of political prisoners in the country, consider the opposition to be illegitimate and allege it is financed by the United States. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

"They arrested him today. They took him around 2:10 pm," Farina's mother Alicia Hernandez said.

She said her son is on antibiotics because of a urinary tract infection.

"An ambulance and two police patrols came and took him to the Arnaldo Milian Castro Hospital," Hernandez said.

"They told me that tomorrow a prosecutor will visit him to charge him, but we don't know what for."

Farinas, 59, is a psychologist by training and has worked as an independent journalist and human rights activist. He won the European Parliament's 2010 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

Over the last 20-something years, Farinas has undertaken 23 hunger strikes to protest the Cuban government, considerably damaging his health.

He is a member of the Patriotic Union of Cuba, the most active political opposition group in the country.

Farinas' arrest comes before a planned opposition-led demonstration set for Monday to demand the release of political prisoners in Cuba.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Thailand takes over APEC chairmanship from New Zealand

THAILAND on 12 November took over the rotating chairmanship of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) from New Zealand, declaring the theme for 2022 APEC as "Open. Connect. Balance."

During the handover of the APEC chairmanship, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said that the 2021 theme of APEC, "Join, Work, Grow. Together," was inspired by the Maori.

"Traditionally, building a waka (canoe) involved entire Maori communities working in harmony toward a common goal. These waka enabled Maori to traverse vast expanses of ocean. Likewise, building APEC prosperity requires collaborative effort from all the APEC economies to reach a common goal," she said. "New Zealand is confident that Thailand would paddle the APEC canoe forward with enthusiasm, creativity and ingenuity," Ardern said.—Xinhua ■

British troops to assist Poland on border with Belarus

A team of British engineering troops has been sent to Poland to help the country strengthen its border with Belarus, Poland's Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak said here on Friday.

He wrote on Twitter that "reconnaissance has begun ... our soldiers will cooperate in strengthening the fence on the Polish-Belarusian border."

According to information obtained by the Polish news agency PAP from Poland's Defense Ministry, the British soldiers are to determine the specific activities that they will take to support Poland during the migrant crisis.

The ministry told PAP that the intention of the British contingent's actions is to be "a manifestation of allied solidarity."

The ministry tweeted on Friday that Polish army units had built over 180 kilometres of fencing on the country's border with Belarus to keep out migrants from the Middle East, saying the fence was "effectively hindering illegal attempts to force the border."—Xinhua ■

Timor-Leste relegated to Group A due to Brunei withdrawal from Suzuki Cup

AS Brunei withdrew from the 2020 ASEAN Suzuki Cup at the end of this year, Timor-Leste won the tournament and was relegated to Group A, which includes Myanmar.

The Suzuki Cup kicks off on 1 December with a match between Brunei and Timor-Leste, but Brunei has resigned.

Timor-Leste qualified for the finals without having to play a football match.

According to the final group draw, Timor-Leste will be relegated to Group A and the team is falling in the same group with Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore.

Meanwhile, defending champions Vietnam; Malaysia Indonesia Cambodia and Laos are participating in Group B.

Brunei has announced that they have resigned due to the COVID-19 epidemic condition.

The 2020 ASEAN Suzuki Cup, which has been postponed due to an epidemic, will be held in Singapore from 5 December 2021 to 1 January 2022.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

The 2020 ASEAN Suzuki Cup will be held in Singapore from 5 December 2021 to 1 January 2022. **PHOTO: SUZUKI CUP**

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.

Pulisic, McKennie on target as US sink Mexico

CHRISTIAN Pulisic and Weston McKennie scored the goals as the United States downed Mexico 2-0 to move to the top of CONCACAF's 2022 World Cup qualifying race on Friday.

Chelsea star Pulisic nodded home a 74th-minute cross from Timothy Weah just five minutes after coming on as a second-half substitute to put the Americans 1-0 up in Cincinnati.

Juventus's McKennie then made the game safe five minutes from time, sweeping a low finish past Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa after Weah's deflected low cross caused confusion in the Mexican area.

A late red card for Miles Robinson after a second bookable offence left the US down to 10 men for the closing stages, but US coach Gregg Berhalter's young side were not to be denied. The win leaves the United States on top of the eight-team final round of CONCACAF standings with 14 points from seven games.— AFP ■

Sapporo eyes 20% cost cut in bid for 2030 Winter Olympics

THE northern Japan city of Sapporo intends to review its bid for the Winter Olympics and Paralympics in 2030, looking to reduce costs by up to 90 billion yen ($790 million) or 20 per cent of the total, sources familiar with the plan said Saturday.

Sapporo, which hosted the 1972 Winter Olympics, decided to drastically slash the cost of holding the Winter Games in light of criticism of the snowballing expenses incurred by the Tokyo Games this summer.

The estimated cost of Sapporo hosting the Winter Games will likely be 280 billion yen to 300 billion yen after the plan is streamlined, the sources said.

In 2019, Sapporo had said the event would cost 310 billion yen to 370 billion yen.— Kyodo ■

Beijing Olympics venue restricted to 20% capacity over Covid fears: state media

A major Beijing Winter Olympics venue will only let in one-fifth the spectators it normally holds due to Covid-19 fears, Chinese state media reported.

With less than 100 days to go to the Games, China is bracing for a major challenge to its zero-Covid strategy as thousands of international athletes and officials descend on its capital after months of strict border controls.

The National Aquatics Centre, the main curling venue, will allow "no more than 1,000 people" — 20 per cent of its capacity — to attend 2022 Winter Olympics events, manager Yang Qiyong told the state-run Global Times in comments published Thursday.

The venue, built to host water sports during the 2008 Summer Olympics, was dubbed the "Water Cube" for its striking box-like design. It got a new nickname—the "Ice Cube"— after being refitted for the Beijing Winter Games.

All staff at the venue have received booster Covid-19 jabs, and backup personnel will be deployed to "take over if anyone has an epidemic-related problem", Yang added.—AFP ■

The 'Ice Cube' venue will operate at 20 per cent capacity during the Beijing Winter Olympics over Covid fears, its manager told Chinese state media. The exterior view of the National Aquatics Centre **PHOTO: XINHUA /FILE**