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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Solar power mini-grid project launched in Myanaung Tsp

Solar panels are absorbing sunray to generate electricity at Solar Mini Grid Project in Myanaung Township.

A team led by Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Tin Maung Win, accompanied by Colonel Kyaw Swa Hlaing, Region Minister for Security and Border Affairs, Police Col Tin Zaw Tun, Region Minister for Transport and other officials concerned joined the ceremony of launching the solar power mini-grid project in Bantbwegon of Myanaung Township and formally cut the ribbon at the event on yesterday afternoon.

The Chief Minister and party visited the solar power mini-grid project, implemented by Mega Global Green Automation Company, where U Nay Htet Shein, head of region Rural Development Department and officials and those of the company conducted the Chief Minister and party around the project site. The project electrifies 294 households, two monasteries, two schools and one clinic in Bantbwegon and Yayta villages in Myanaung Township as from 12 August 2021.

The board shows facts about solar Mini Grid Project in Bantbwegon of Myanaung Township. **PHOTO: WIN BO (MYANAUNG-IPRD)**

Moreover, another solar power mini-grid project by Smart Measurement and Control Co., Ltd has also been providing electric supply to 134 households, one monastery and one basic education school in Tatgon, Ywathit and Jeiktaw villages in Bantbwegon village-tract starting from 7 March 2021, Myanaung Township Rural Development Department stated.—Win Bo (Myanaung-IPRD)/GNLM

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.

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State Administration Council
Press Release
Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who reside in various regions for many reasons

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, with worries, have evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries due to the incitements and intimidation of NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful associations and terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, stimulation of CDM, and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities on 1 February 2021.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of unlawful association and terrorist group CRPH and NUG, and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in those areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. **The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.**
4. As those who evade their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from the evaded areas to various parts of Myanmar.
5. As such, the information was released that if those who evaded to various areas, except for persons who committed any kinds of crime, wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord due to multiple worries, the citizens abroad can contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates in accord with the easing restrictions under the law.

Information Team
State Administration Council

THE State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.

Kawthoung's maritime tourism revived with both local and foreign tourists

KAWTHOUNG seaside tourism industry has been revived, with the state now allowing the reopening of the tourism industry under the COVID-19 rules and regulations. With the local tourists from all over the country gradually returning to the islands of Kawthoung, the Bayintnaung Jetty was seen alive with flocks of tourists on speed boats arranged by travel companies to visit the exotic islands near Kawthoung yesterday.

Tourism activities in Kawthoung were shut down during the COVID-19 period, however, once a thriving seaside resort is reviving, attracting both local and foreign tourists, especially on public holidays and weekends, according to tour companies.

Kawthoung is a popular holiday destination for tourists due to its exotic beauty of beaches in the Andaman Sea such as NyaungUphee Island, Saturn Island, Myinkhwa Island, Kyatmauk Island (heart-shape island), Zadetgyi Island, Fork Island and Paradises where tourists can be a day trip.

As measures to prevent and control the transmission of the disease, every traveller is required to present the proof of being vaccinated for twice against the COVID-19 disease and to wear face masks and gloves along the trip. As it is a sea voyage, it is necessary for all tourists to comply with the regulations of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism and tourism companies so as not to endanger the lives of tourists, as well as the natural resources and ecosystems of the sea.—Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)/GNLM

Flocks of travellers are seen on jetly in Kawthoung.

A speed boat carrying travellers is ready to start trip to islands.

Crew members are preparing to launch trips to exotic islands in Kawthoung Township.

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Gather the raw materials at home and produce export-quality products

BASED on a cooperative system, efforts must be made for the development of the rural area. Moreover, it is necessary to gather the raw materials at home and produce export-quality products. The Senior General also stressed the need to improve motor roads and railways for the development of public transport.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at meeting 2/2021 of the Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 26 October 2021)

MoTC Union Minister inspects RTAD, Road Transport

UNION Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San inspected functions of Road Transport Administration Department (Myintha) and No 3 Workshop of Road Transport (Mayangon) in Yangon on 11 December.

During the meeting with the officials of Road Transport Administration Department (Myintha), the Union Minister discussed appointment of employees and expansion of departmental set up if necessary amid the increasing vehicle registration and work license processes, accurate ability and reviewing of estimated budget, COVID-19 vaccination programmes for the staff, reviewing and amendment of sustainable development of department concerned based on the current organizational setup, duties and abilities and arrangements to streamline the department processes for the public.

He also stressed the needs to work hard to increase the State income and taxes, follow the regulations, law and bylaws and six oaths of civil servants and COVID-19 health rules.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister visited No 3 Workshop of Road Transport (Mayangon) and he highlighted uplift of the morale and capacity of department, safety of staff and vehicles and clearance of irregularities by strictly following the procedures.

Union Minister Admiral Tin Aung San views round departmental vehicles at No 3 Workshop of Road Transport (Mayangon) on 11 December.

Then, he inspected the departmental vehicles and vehicles for driving courses and instructed officials to check the strength of vehicles as usual and follow the health rules in conducting the driver training classes.—MNA

Plans are underway to build more staff housings in Hpa-an

Photo shows already-commissioned staff housing building in Hpa-an.

THE Department of Urban and Housing Development plans to continue the implementation of housing projects in various parts of Kayin State depending on the allotment of lands and funds, according to the report on the opening ceremony of a staff housing in Hlakamyin Kwatthit in Hpa-an yesterday morning.

The Department has so far built 78 staff housing buildings formed with 510 apartments with the state funding in order to improve the living conditions of the staff working in the state.

At the opening ceremony, Chief Minister of Kayin State U Saw Myint Oo addressed the ceremony, and officials cut the ribbon to open the housing, which was built with over K 331.3 million from the state fund. This RC type 4-storey building was constructed by Aung Myin Khaing Khant Co., Ltd.

Afterward, the Chief Minister and party inspected the construction site of the Kayin State Department of Urban and Housing Development which is being built with K 267.3 million from the state fund for 2021-2022 financial year. Officials from Aung Myin Khaing Khant Co., Ltd explained the construction works and the Chief Minister instructed officials to work for timely completion in accordance with the set standards.

The Chief Minister also viewed round the placement of staff and situation of adequate lighting and water in 50 low-cost housing buildings, the development of real estate development on 928.93 acres of land in Taungkalay village, the construction of Sasana Weisi Dhamma Beikman at the food of Kya-Inn mountain in Hpa-an, and gave necessary instructions.

During the tour, the Chief Minister and party also visited Zwegapin Hill Sayadaw presiding at the place where the Mahawthada School and offered cash to the fund.—Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)/GNLM

280 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 12 December, total figure rises to 526,661

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 526,661 after 280 new cases were reported on 12 December 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 503,107 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,183 after 6 died.

COVID-19 vaccine is being injected to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 11-12-2021, a total of 18,829,259 people have been vaccinated. Of them, 13,029,777 people have been vaccinated two times and 5,799,482 people once.—MNA

MoC oversees daily import of anti-COVID-19 equipment

THE Ministry of Commerce is overseeing import of essential medical supplies plus anti-COVID devices that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, through trading posts, international airports and seaports.

Anti-COVID-19 equipment was imported by four companies using ten vehicles. A total of 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen carried by one bowser, and 60 tonnes of masks were imported via Myawady and Chinshwehaw trade camps, yesterday.

One oxygen bowser was transported to Yangon via Myawady trade zone, officials said.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures, including online registration for the import process.

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

A bowser carrying liquid oxygen leaves the border trade camp for Yangon.

Four terrorists commit grenade attack on education office in Kyaukme

ADDITION to the brutal killings of peaceful people, Buddhist monks, teachers and civil servants, so called CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorist groups are committing arson attacks and bombings on schools, hospitals, government offices, public and commercial buildings, housings and roads, which are the key infrastructures for the development of the country.

In doing such acts, four terrorists on two motorcycles arrived at the Kyaukme Township Education Office in northern Shan State, and threw a hand grenade into the building and fled away. While the security personnel conducted a search operation, two suspicious men on a speeding motorcycle were found and stopped to inspect near ward 7 at about 11:20 am. They were arrested for attempting to throw a hand grenade to the security personnel. Waing Wine, 28, and Nyan Win, 34, were arrested with one hand grenade and related materials.

it is reported that necessary interrogations are being carried out to ensure that the detainees are prosecuted in accordance with the law, and security forces are continuing to provide security for the towns/villages.—MNA

Some items of equipment were seized from terrorists who committed grenade attack on Kyaukme Township education office on 11 December.

Over 12-year-old students receive COVID vaccines in Mawlaik

HEALTHCARE officials gave COVID-19 vaccine (second dose) to over 12-year-old students in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health in the assembly hall of the basic education high school in Mawlaik, Sagaing Region on 11 December.

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

Chairman of the District COVID-19 Disease Control and Emergency Response Committee District Commissioner U Aye Lwin, COVID-19 Disease Control and Emergency Response Committee Chairman Township Administrator U Wunna Tun and members inspected the vaccination process.

Officials met with the teacher in charge and stressed that efforts should be made to ensure that no students are left behind and the vaccine must be fully given.

On 11 December, a total of 186 school children aged 12-year-old and above got the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines, according to the healthcare officials.—Mawlaik Tharlay/GNLM

Local authorities view process of vaccination for students above 12 years in Mawlaik. **PHOTO: MAWLAIK THARLAY**

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish **"Letter to the Editor"** that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Petrified wood valued added products promoted as souvenirs in Sagaing Region

THE valued-added products (bracelets and beads) made of petrified wood and fossilized toddy palm wood is sold as souvenirs in Sagaing Region.

"The petrified wood and fossilized toddy palm wood are found in Ayadaw, Mingin and Yinmabin townships and Kalay city. They are added value and promoted as souvenirs from Monywa city. The prices of those products move in the range of K500-K350,000. Tortoise figures are highly demanded as they are considered to bring luck and prosperity," said Ko San Moe Aung, an owner of KSM petrified wood products shop.

There are six suppliers for petrified wood products in Monywa city. Indonesia is one of the major markets of the petrified wood in Asia. Bogyoke market in Yangon is the main market of petrified wood in the country.

"The souvenir market is usually relying on tourists. However, the market is sluggish as it is mainly driven by the tourists and travel restriction on the tourists coming to Myanmar has not lifted yet. The market will raise its head again after the travel restriction on tourists is eased," said Ko San Moe Aung.

Pieces of petrified word are displayed at the market. **PHOTO : LU LAY**

Those products from Monywa are sent to the popular travelling destinations such as Yangon, Mandalay, Bagan and NyaungU areas. At present, they are seen as material for interior design as well. Asians prefer them. The rare petrified wood can be discovered in Sagaing Region.

Earlier, there were more than 30 companies exporting petrified wood. But, a mismatch between supply and demand led to a drastic decline in prices. Now, only six companies are engaged in their export, according to Mandalay Region Petrified Wood Entrepreneurs Association.

"The market solely depends on demand from China. The market has cooled since late 2014. Price manipulation and illegal trade have brought down the number of exporter companies," said an official of the association.

Myanmar allowed the export of petrified wood in 2012, and China is the only market for it. Large supply, lack of price regulations, and the conditions in the Chinese market have led to market deterioration after 2014, the association stated.

Petrified wood is found in the central regions of Myanmar — Mandalay, Sagaing, and Magway. Petrified wood mined from Mahlaing and Natogyi townships in Mandalay is of high quality, while Magway and other regions only produce raw materials which can be used for interior decoration. —Lu Lay, KK/GNLM

Onion prices stable despite low production in Minbu Township

Bags of onion are being unloaded from truck at wholesale centre. **PHOTO : ZAYAR HTET**

THE prices of onion are stable at K250 and K300 per viss despite the lower entry to wholesale centre in Minbu Township of Magway Region, according to Daw Lei, owner of No (4) wholesale centre in Minbu.

The villagers from Yenangyoung, Sinbyukyun and Minbu townships sold the million viss of onion per day last year to the onion wholesale centre in Minbu township and there are only thousands of tonnes in late monsoon period of this year.

"According to the onion market of our township, we transport the stocks to Rakhine State most at K400 or K500 per viss and the retail prices are at only K800 and K900 per viss in the markets of Minbu Township. Therefore, the prices are not much high and they are stable despite the low demand and production rate," U Thar Paw, onion merchant.

There are about 10 onion wholesale centres in Minbu Township. The buying price is K250/300 while the selling price at K400/500 and the wholesale price is K800/900 per viss, according to wholesale centres of Minbu Township.— Zayar Htet (Minbu)/GNLM

MIC gives go ahead to 14 foreign projects as of 25 November

THE Myanmar Investment Commission gave green light to 14 foreign projects from China, China (Taipei), Hong Kong SAR, Singapore and the Republic of Korea during the period from 1 October and 25 November of the current mini-budget period and the capital of US$65.786 million were brought into the country, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Those enterprises are to execute in agriculture, livestock and fishery, manufacturing, electricity and other service sectors respectively.

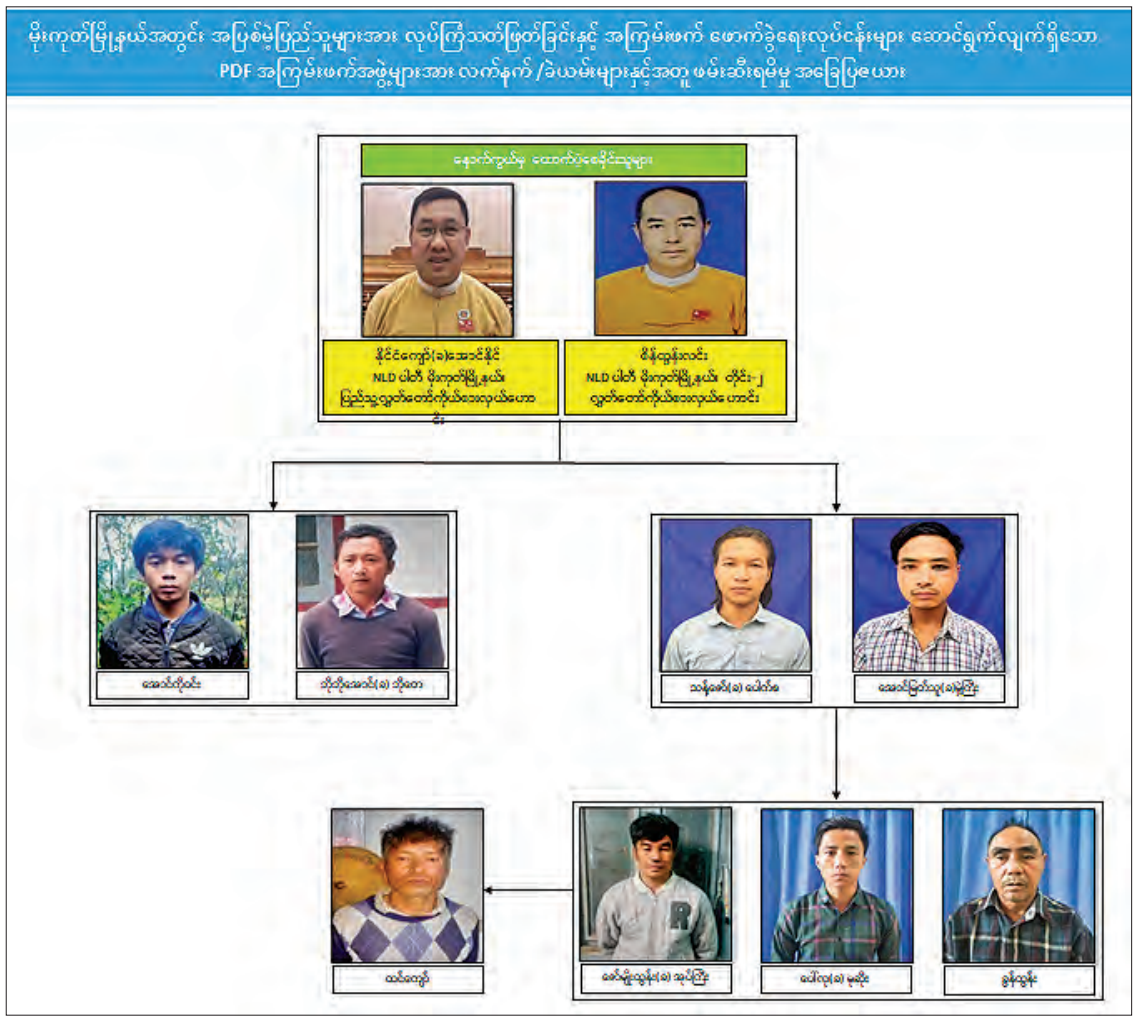
The Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations has been inviting responsible businesses to benefit the country.

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) ensures to approve the responsible businesses by assessing environmental and social impacts. The commission is working together with the relevant departments to screen the projects.

Next, the COVID-19 surge and the political changes led to the drastic fell in this year's FDI sector compared with that of previous years. Myanmar attracted foreign direct investment of more than $3.79 billion in the last financial year 2020-2021 from 48 enterprises.—KK/GNLM

Directorate of Investment and Company Administration handles movements of companies with local and foreign investments.

PDF members arrested together with firearms for committing murders, bomb attacks in Mogok



ACTING on tip-off, the combined security forces raided the house of Mi Nyaung (aka) Nyi Nyi Aung in LeU Ward of Mogok on 15 November.

During the raid, they arrested Aung Ko Win together with 6 KA-25s, 7 magazines, 250 bullets, 2 grenades and 6 sets of equipment. According to the confession of Aung Ko Win, the police also seized 2 KA-25s in a hut of Thanlwintaung of LeU Village of Mogok Township.

Based on the words of Aung Ko Win, the security forces detained Bo Bo Aung (aka) Bo Tay together with 3 KA-25s, 4 plastic mines, 1 homemade mine and other materials at Aungmye Thukha Ward of Mogok on 21 November.

They also seized 1 KA-25, 1 magazine, 5 bullets, 2 M-79 rocket launchers and 3 40mm rockets in Shawliwaing Ward of Mogok Township, according to the confession of Bo Bo Aung (aka) Bo Tay.

On 3 December, the police arrested Thant Zaw (aka) Pauk Sa and Aung Myat Thu (aka) Hmei Gyi with 2 KA-25s, 2 magazines and 60 bullets near Yadanashin Company of Pyaungpyin Village.

According to the confession of Thant Zaw (aka) Pauk Sa, the security forces conducted land security operation in old mine block in Yaypu village-tract. Meanwhile, the terrorists attacked the security members. After the clash, the police arrested Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi, Paw Lu (aka) Moke Soe and Khun Tun together with 3 KA-25s, 3 magazines and 100 bullets while Bo Si and Chan Myae Tun were arrested dead.

According to the words of Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi, the police seized 3 KA-25s, 3 magazines, 140 bullets, 1 M-79 rocket launcher, 8 40mm rockets and 2 grenades near the old mine block. Moreover, they also arrested Htin Kyaw with 1 KA-25 in a hut beside Bawmar-Kyauksin road in Mintada of Mogok and also seized 20 KA-25s, 8 magazines, 735 bullets and 3 sets of equipment near Lwesit hill in Mindata Ward, according to his confession.

During the case, 8 male suspects were arrested together with 42 types of small arms, 20 types of bombs and mines, 1,290 bullets, 24 magazines and other materials.

According to the words of suspects, Bo Bo Aung (aka) Bo Tay attended the terrorist course 1/b of TNLA together with others who are still at large Saw Htay, Bala Gyi (aka) Sai San and Sai Sai near Shwenyaung village of Momeik Township from the end of April to the first week of June under the communication of NLD young members Htet Zaw and Nyein Chan, who are still at large.

Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi joined the terrorist training in the area of battalion-36 of KIA with the contact of Soe Myint (still at large), former of Shawliwaing ward in the second week of April.

The Padamyar Myay PDF terrorist group was organized under the lead of Soe Myint (still at large) with Bo Bo Aung (aka) Bo Tay, Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi including another seven suspects who are still at large Saw Htay, Nyein Chan (aka) Ba Gyan, Htet Shine, Maung Shine, Bala Gyi, Myauk Nyo and Kywal Gyi with the supports of Naing Ngan Kyaw (aka) Aung Naing (former NLD Pyithu Hluttaw MP of Mogok).

The Mogok (west) PDF was organized by Phoe Ni (still at large) with another three suspects who are still at large Pu Cho, Aye Min and L Phyu with the support of Sein Tun Lin (former No (2) Region Hluttaw MP of Mogok NLD) while the Mone Daing PDF was by Mone Daing (aka) Than Myat Soe.

The suspects admitted that the seized arms were transported from Tonegyi Village of KIA's 34th battalion area to Mogok Township by Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi of Padamyar Myay PDF with the communication of Soe Myint (still at large) in the second week of October and the materials arrived there the first week of November.

Assorted small arms were seized from PDF terrorists in Mogok Township from on 3 December.

PDF terrorist groups committed explosive attacks in Mogok Township as follows:-

- On 16 May, Bo Bo Aung (aka) Bo Tay and Meter (still at large) committed homemade mine attacks on administration office of Myoma Ward of Mogok Township.
- On 22 August, Tat Too (aka) Thet Zaw Hein (still at large) committed a homemade time mine attack on a patrol vehicle in Htinshuchan Ward of Myoma group of Mogok Township.
- On 3 September, Bo Bo Aung (aka) Bo Tay, Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi and Bu Chit (aka) Htet Nay Win (still at large) committed a homemade mine attack on township municipal office of Myoma Ward of Mogok Township.
- On 13 September, Bo Bo Aung (aka) Bo Tay and other four suspects who are still at large Cho Nge, Meter, Sai Sai and Bala Gyi conducted a homemade mine explosion at Mytel tower near a monastery of Shawliwaing Ward of Mogok township.

The PDF terrorist groups killed the innocent civilians in Mogok Township as follows:-

- Mogok (west) PDF terrorists killed one resident of Nyaungthonbin in Myoma Ward of Mogok on 13 July, one local of Kyaukphar of Kyatpyin Village of Mogok on 12 November and two innocent villagers of Panma (lower) of Kyatpyin Village of Mogok on 30 November.
- On 26 July, the Padamyar Myay PDF terrorists Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi and other six suspects who are still at large Bala Gyi, Maung Shine, Htet Shine, Cho Nge, Tat Too (aka) Thet Zaw Hein and Myo Lin Ko killed one villager of Alal village in Chaunggyi Village-tract of Mogok Township and took the valuable things.
- On 6 September, Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi shot two civilians to death in Zaythit Ward of Myoma Ward in Mogok Township.
- On 16 September, Meter, Cho Nge and Maung Shine, who are still at large, shot one fire brigade member from Shwegu (19) of Shawliwaing Ward of Mogok Township due to instruction of Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi.
- On 22 September, Bo Bo Aung (aka) Bo Tay, Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi and other suspects who are still at large Meter, Bala Gyi, Maung Shine and Myo Lin Ko killed one civil servant of township EPC office in Mindata Ward of Mogok Township.
- On 14 November, Aung Ko Win (aka) Moe Thee and other four still at large suspects Htet Shine, Maung Shine, Ko Koe and Bala Gyi killed four innocent civilians of Peikswe area (3) of Shawliwaing Ward of Mogok Township.
- On 3 December, Kywal Gyi and Bo Si killed one civilian of Peikswe area (3) of Shawliwaing Ward of Mogok Township under the instruction of Zaw Myo Tun (aka) Oak Gyi.

The PDF terrorists committed four explosive attacks and nine murder cases in Mogok Township, and they killed 14 government employees and innocent civilians.

The two suspects Naing Ngan Kyaw (aka) Aung Naing (former NLD Pyithu Hluttaw MP of Mogok) and Sein Tun Lin (former No 2 Region Hluttaw MP of Mogok NLD), who are still at large, supported and instructed to conduct such explosions and murders.

The suspects will face legal actions in accordance with the law and the people are urged to report to the nearest security forces regarding the hiding places and activities of terrorists, and the informers will be covertly rewarded.—MNA

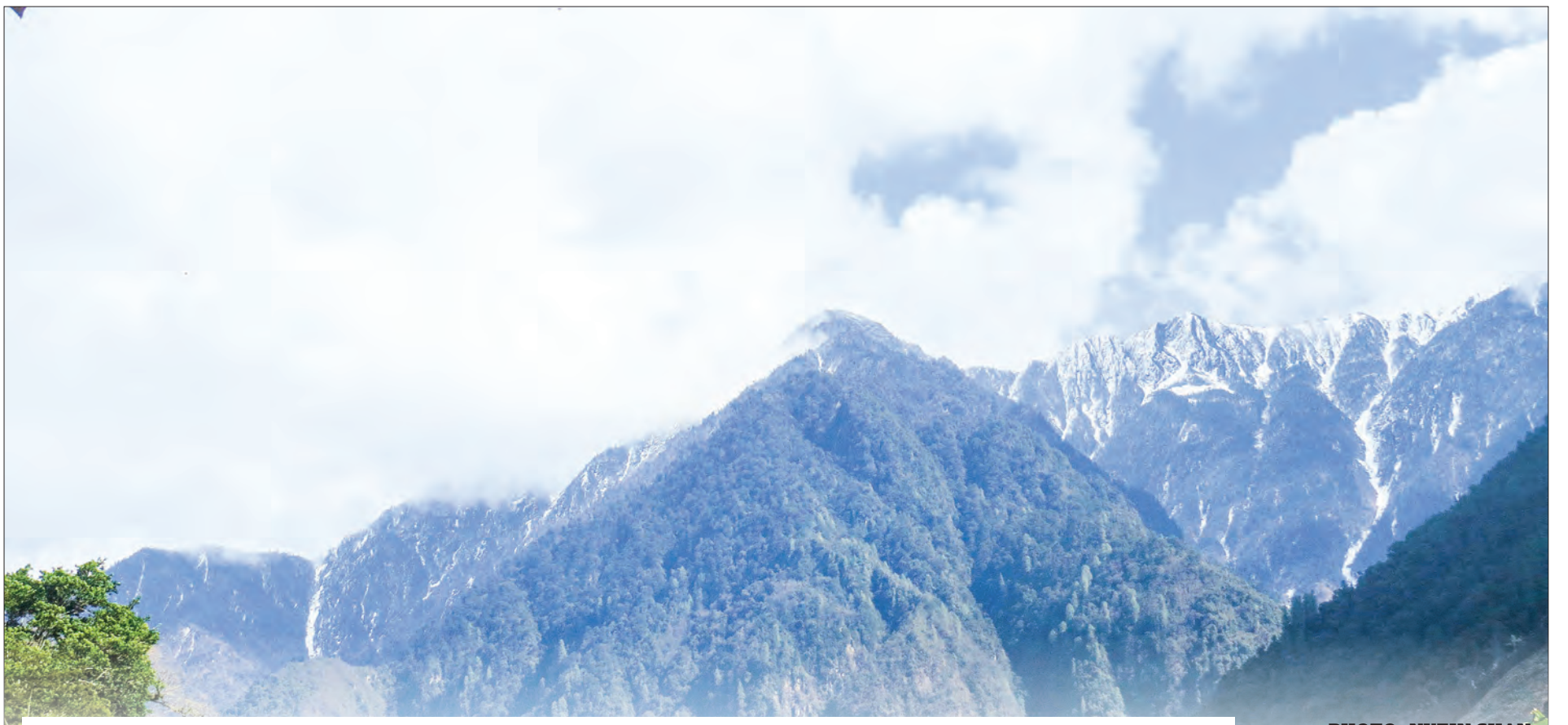


PHOTO : NYEIN CHAN

Rich biodiversity, snow-capped mountain scenery captivates eco-tourists in Khakaborazi National Park, Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary

KHAKABORAZI National Park and Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary in Kachin State is enchanting the eco-tourists in high season, with its scenic view and biodiversity.

Myanmar is strategically located and of geopolitical importance for regional connectivity between Southeast Asia and South Asia. The country is standing proudly with its strategic coastlines in the west and south, natural resources, icy mountains in the north and mountain ranges and rich biodiversity. The country's wildlife sanctuaries and national parks are drawing the attentions of the researchers and has become the destinations for eco-tourism. The country is home to several cultural heritage sites, with UNESCO World Heritage sites and ASEAN Heritage Park.

Green and Alluring Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary

The fasinating natural secnic views of the snow-capped mountains and coniferous forests are the main attractions of the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary. The visitors can enjoy hiking, boat ride, biodiversity, the ecosystem and the natural view of Khakaborazi icy mountain through Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary.

Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Putao District, Kachin State, on over 1,044 square miles of land. It is regarded as the protected area on 1 December 2013 by the Forest Department and the Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division has been implementing the wildlife conservation and sustainable habitat.

Visitors can travel by air to Putao from Yangon, Mandalay and Myitkyina or they can plan road trip as well. The trekking activity in the wildlife sanctuary will make the stessed-out visitors appreciate the peace and quiet moments. Otherwise, they can take mortorbike to tour around.

The officials set up the community-based information center in coordination with the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) at Wasandam village in Putao city to share and observe the rich biodiversity, raise awareness of the wildlife conservation and enhance the livelihoods of the residents in the hilly areas.

The Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division under the Department of Forest, in coordination with the inernational organizaitons, has been carrying out the setting up of camera trapping, reserach on gibbons, plants, biodiversity and endangered wildlife animalas, petrolling, and educating the people for wildlife sustainability.

Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary was established with an aim to conserve the biodiversity in the north of Myanmar, maintain the ecosystem, document the wildlife species, enhance the ecotourism and effectuate the socio-economic development of the local ethnic people.

The visitors can enjoy the captivating beauty of the snow-capped mountians, rhododendron hills and pine forests. It is a destination for those who love to go trekking and adventure tours.

Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary is covered with the evergreen forest, subtropical regions, wetland, rhododendron hills and pine forests, documenting 533 plant species of plants including rhododendron, pine, oat, different types of bamboo and cane, herbal plants and 200 types of orchid. It is also home to 36 mammal species, 370 bird species, 360 butterfly species, 82 species of crawling and amphibious animals. Most importantly, it is the important habitat for the endangered species.

Rich biodiversity in Khakaborazi National Park

The new wildlife species, alluring icy mountains and medicinal plants and herbs are catching the attentions of the visitors.

Khakaborazi was established as a natural reserve on 30 January 1996 and as a national park on 10 November 1998. It has been declared as ASEAN heitage park on 18 December 2003. It lies between latitude 27° 30'N and 28° 30'N and longitudes 97° 15'E and 98° 15'E, occupying an area of 1,472 square miles (942,080 miles).

People can directly go to Putao city from Yangon and Mandalay by air. The flight time takes only 35 minutes. It takes 8 days for road trips. The visitors can go there only in high season. The trekking is the popular activity in the park.

The National Park is located at the 3,000 feet above sea level. It is the highest mountain in the country, with its height of 19,296 feet. As it has extended form the Himalaya, it is nourished by rich soil and year-round rainfall. The highest temperature is 25°C and the lowest is 0°C and the highest annual rainfall is 156 inches. It is snow-capped mountain rising 10,000 feet above sea level with breath-taking unique geophysics features, waterfalls, mountain ranges and valleys. Khakaborazi is the largest national park and rich in biodiversity, which is standing proudly as biosphere reserve.

The park is home to more than 297 plant species, 13 bamboo species, herbal plants, 220 orchid species, 42 types of mammals including langur, Himalayan bear, mountain goat, deer, red panda, 370 bird species including phoenix, the 365 butterflies species (such as Golden Birdwing ,Kaiser and Apollo), 43 fog types, 32 snake species, 3 species of turtles, 6 types of lizard and other endangered species.

In addition to the natural scenic beatuy of Khakaborazi icy mountian and other mountians, the visitors can study the tradition and customs of the ethnic people, living styles and the wildlife habitats.

Dr Kate Armstrong from New York Botanical Garden, Dr Ruichang Quan from Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden and officials of Wildlife Conservation Society are working together on biodiversity research. They are jointly exploring the new species that have not officially listed and also documenting the endangered species to conserve the natural environment in the north and Ayeyawady Confluence, promote the ecotourism and raise the revenue for the country.

Myanmar is relying on the ecotourism as it belongs to the wildlife sanctuaries, UNESCO listed sites and ASEAN heritage sites. The mountain destinations are different from the ecotourism in Myanmar coastal areas.

The biospehere reserves Khakaborazi National Park and Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary in Kachin State are attracting the visitors locally in high season, featuring the beauty of icy mountians and biodiversity.—Thitsa (MNA)/GNLM

13 DECEMBER 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Recruit more medical professionals on public healthcare services

ACTS of providing medical treatment to patients can be dubbed as performing meritorious deeds not only in the religious arena bu t in the secular world.

Most of the medical professionals such as medical doctors, nurses, medical technicians, physiotherapists and those related to the medical field give healthcare services to the people with genuine goodwill at hospitals and clinics.

In fact, they tried hard to pursue medical education at the respective institutions, including the traditional medicine university, for many years in their student life. During the period, they invested their sweat and time of young age in learning the invaluable education.

In Myanmar, medical universities: the university of medicines, medical technology, dental medicine, community health and nursing are turning out qualified medical professionals to serve the people with treatments based on their experiences.

So far, these medical universities have turned out over 57,000 medical professionals, a certain number of medical professionals who discharge duty at State-owned hospitals and health units. As a result, the ratio of medical professionals to patients is never in balance. Regrettably, some station hospitals are being run to give healthcare services to the rural people without medical directors.

In fact, health staff members only provide healthcare services to the citizens as their profession is different from any other arenas. Hence, they cannot be substituted with those from any profession. As such, the authorities need to recruit more medical professionals to fully discharge the duty of public healthcare services.

The standard of providing health care services in Myanmar is the lowest among neighbouring countries and those of ASEAN. Hence, efforts must be made for raising the qualification of medical education while the able persons of medical human resources should be deployed in the right positions.

> Medical professionals are the lifeblood of public healthcare services. Not only successive governments but those professionals should strive for having higher qualifications of medical education in order to uplift the health standard of local people to have longer longevity.

Only when the medical professionals are qualified in their respective fields will they give better and more effective treatments to the people. If so, citizens of Myanmar will have a higher life expectancy than now. Consequently, a number of senior citizens will emerge across the nation, and their invaluable experiences can be applied in the nation-building tasks.

Medical professionals are the lifeblood of public healthcare services. Not only successive governments but those professionals should strive for having higher qualifications of medical education in order to uplift the health standard of local people to have longer longevity.

Study analyses impact of lockdown over non-COVID deaths

In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, people wait in line for coronavirus tests in Shenyang in northeastern China's Liaoning Province, Monday, 11 January 2021. **PHOTO: YAO JIANFENG/XINHUA**

AN international team of researchers led by Dr Guojun He, Associate Professor in Economics and Management & Strategy at HKU Business School, investigated how China's strict lockdown affected non-COVID mortality. The study has been published in the 'Nature Human Behaviour Journal'. Facing the unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, different countries adopted different measures to mitigate its impacts, ranging from one extreme, where governments imposed stringent measures to restrict human mobility immediately after the outbreak, to the other extreme, where governments were reluctant to adopt any serious disease preventive measures and explicitly resorted to herd immunity.

Dr He's research evaluated the benefits and costs of different COVID policies by analysing the death registry data in China, serving as a reference to the policy-makers to consider the disease prevention measures in the future. "There are competing arguments about whether lockdowns should be implemented," Dr Guojun He explained.

"On the one hand, some argue that lockdowns could bring about very significant health damages to normal people. For example, human mobility restrictions reduced access to healthcare services and business restrictions could lead to sharp economic disruption and massive layoffs, both of which may lead to higher overall mortality.

On the other hand, virus containment policies could also cause unintended health benefits because they encourage health-protecting behaviours (like wearing face masks and washing hands frequently), diminish risks associated with business activities (like improving air quality and reducing work and traffic accidents), and reduce transmission of other infectious diseases (like seasonal influenza).

Thus, whether lockdowns bring about additional health gains or losses is ultimately an empirical question," He said. Using death registry data that covered one-quarter of the Chinese population, the research team compared non-COVID mortality before, during, and after the "lockdowns" between two groups of cities: those with strict anti-contagion policies and those without.

They found that lockdown measures reduced the number of deaths from other causes by 4.6 per cent, preventing 54,000 deaths from other causes during the initial 50 days of strict "lockdown." Surprisingly, the health benefits became even greater after the lockdown policies loosened. Mortality from other causes decreased 12.5 per cent in the 115 days after the lockdown, leading to 293,000 lives saved across the country from non-COVID deaths. To understand why, Dr Guojun He and his co-authors found that less traffic and industrial activities led to less air pollution, in turn leading to a large drop in cardiovascular disease deaths. Areas that were initially very polluted saw the greatest improvement, suggesting better air quality can be vital in preventing premature deaths. Social distancing and an increase in sanitizing surfaces, hand washing and mask-wearing also contributed to fewer deaths from infectious diseases. "Our research also points to the direction to improve population health after the lockdown measures are lifted, if the government can continue its effort to control pollution and the public are willing to keep good personal hygiene, these short-term benefits will become long-lasting," said Dr He. The study was a joint effort of scholars from multiple institutions.

The co-corresponding authors of the study included Guojun He from HKU, George F. Gao and Maigeng Zhou from the Chinese CDC. Jinlei Qi from the Chinese CDC and Dandan Zhang from Peking University are the co-first authors of the study.

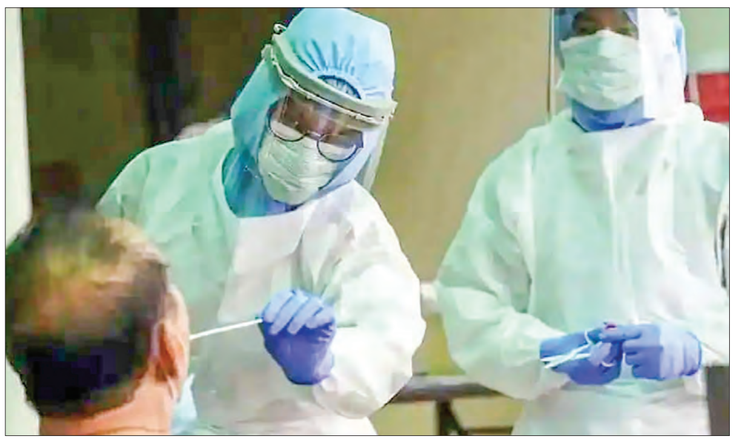
SOURCE: ANI

ICMR designs kit to detect new COVID-19 variant Omicron in 2 hours

AMID rising cases of the new COVID-19 variant Omicron, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in Dibrugarh, Assam has designed a testing kit that will be able to detect the virus in two hours time. The development has come at a time when the Omicron variant is making its presence felt in various states, with at least 33 cases being detected in the country so far. Till now it was a real concern for the authorities to quickly detect the variant. It used to take three to four days time to detect the Omicron variant with the help of the kits currently available in the market. A team of scientists of Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) for the Northeast region, ICMR has developed a testing kit that enables to detect the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in real time. The team led by scientist Dr Biswajyoti Borkakoty has prepared a kit that has the ability to detect the Omicron variant in 2 hours time from a given sample.

"ICMR-RMRC, Dibrugarh, has designed and developed a hydrolysis probe-based real-time RT-PCR assay for detection of the new Omicron variant (B.1.1.529) SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) that can detect the new variant within 2 hours. This is important because as of now a minimum of 36 hours is required for targeted sequencing and 4 to 5 days for whole-genome sequencing to detect the variant," said Dr. Borkakoty on Saturday.

The kit developed by ICMR-RMRC Dibrugarh is now being produced on a bulk basis by a 100 per cent made in India, a Kolkata-based company, GCC biotech on a public-private partnership (PPP) model. "The kit has been tested against specific synthetic gene fragments of Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 within two different highly specific unique regions of the spike protein and also reference wild type control synthetic gene fragments. Internal validation has shown that the tests are 100 per cent accurate," Dr. Borkakoty said. It may be mentioned that in July 2020, a team of scientists led by Dr. Borkakoty had successfully managed to isolate the COVID-19 virus (SARS-CoV-2) and by doing so ICMR-RMRC Dibrugarh became the third government laboratory in the country to achieve the feat. States including Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Gujarat have reported cases of the new COVID-19 variant with the total number of Omicron cases in the country going up to 33.



The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in Dibrugarh, Assam has designed a testing kit that will be able to detect the virus in two hours time. **PHOTO: ANI**

On November 26, the WHO named the new COVID-19 variant B.1.1.529, which has been detected in South Africa, as 'Omicron'.

SOURCE: ANI

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 12 December 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the South Bay of Bengal and a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 13 December 2021: Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Northern Shan and Rakhine states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Sagaing, Mandalay, and Magway regions and Kachin and (Southern and Eastern) Shan states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5 -7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperatures in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan, Chin and Kayah states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 December 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 December 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHB0URING AREA FOR 13 December 2021: Generally fair weather.

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

(Issued at 18:55 hour MST)

A slight earthquake of magnitude (4.2) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (33) miles east of Mawlaik), latitude 23.55°N, longitude 94.93°E, depth (34) kilometers, about (45) miles northwest of Kanbalu seismological observatory was recorded at (18) hr (38) min (27) sec MST on 12 December 2021.

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Wildlife concerns blunt Germany's green power efforts

GERMANY is expanding its power grid to aid the transition to renewable energies, but local residents in some areas are holding up the process over concerns about wildlife.

"I am not saying that the energy transition is not necessary. But we don't want these pylons," Hartmut Lindner, 75, told AFP.

Lindner has been campaigning for 15 years against a planned high-voltage power line in the Schorfheide-Chorin nature reserve, a few kilometres from Berlin.

Energy company 50Hertz is planning to install around 115 kilometres (71 miles) of new lines between the towns of Bertikow and Neuenhagen, replacing an existing network of smaller pylons.

The new network is intended to supply the region with wind energy produced in northern Germany.

A growing number of Germans are fighting against the construction of electricity pylons near their homes, a trend that risks slowing down the transition to renewable. **PHOTO: AFP**

But it could pose a threat to "thousands of species of birds, some of them endangered" in the nature reserve, according to Lindner, a retired teacher.

Together with several hundred local residents, Lindner started a campaign in 2008 to oppose the project.

After years of public consultations and discussions, he is unhappy about the "lack of response" from 50Hertz, which has refused to change the route of the line and began construction work earlier this year. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia to ban capturing whales for aquariums

RUSSIAN activists on Friday welcomed a move by President Vladimir Putin to close a legal loophole that allowed sea creatures, particularly whales, to be captured to perform in aquariums and other venues.

Images of 100 whales cramped into a notorious facility dubbed the "whale jail" in Russia's far east sparked an international outcry in 2019.

The whales, which were destined for aquariums, were freed after an intense campaign by rights groups and earlier this month Russia said it had fully dismantled the secretive facility.

Greenpeace Russia director Sergei Tsyplyonkov had asked Putin to get rid of a legal loophole that allowed the capture of sea animals, most of them destined for aquariums in China. — AFP ■

Colorado's capital city sees record late snowfall after 87 years

DENVERITES woke up Friday morning to see the season's first snowfall that broke an 87-year-old record for the latest first snow in Denver, the capital city of Colorado state.

Before Friday, the latest first snow in Denver, also dubbed Mile High City as it is located one mile high above the sea level, was on 21 November 1934. Although residents of the city saw only two inches (5.08 centimeters) of snow, just to the west in the Rocky Mountains, ski resorts logged up to two feet (60.96 centimeters) of snow as temperatures plunged below minus 17 degrees Celsius Fright night across the region, according to the US National Weather Service (NWS). — Xinhua ■

Over 100 feared dead as dozens of tornadoes hit US states

OVER 100 people are feared dead as dozens of tornadoes ripped through six states in the US Midwest and Southern regions from Friday night into Saturday, local media said. Damage from tornadoes was reported in Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee, with Kentucky appearing to be hit hardest.

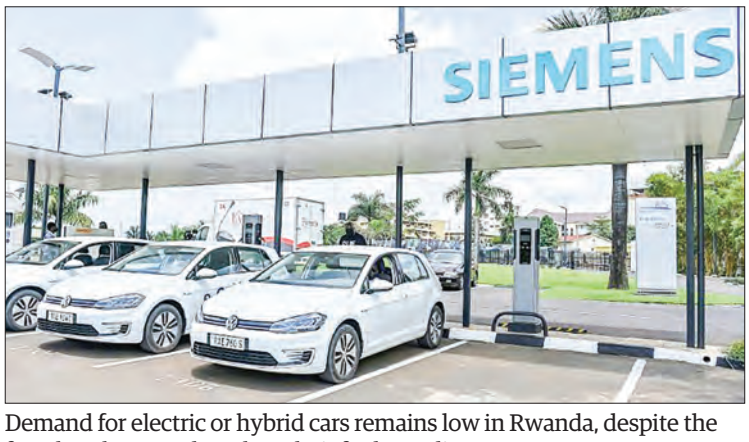
Speaking at a press conference Saturday morning, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said at least 70 people had been killed by tornadoes in his state and the death toll could rise to more than 100 as search and rescue operations continue. According to Beshear, about 110 people were inside a candle factory in Mayfield that collapsed after a tornado touched down in the area. "We believe we'll lose at least dozens of those individuals," the governor was quoted as saying by CNN.

Later around 40 people were rescued from the collapsed building. Having declared a state of emergency, the governor has sought support from the federal government while mobilizing National Guard troops for search and rescue operations and the clearing of debris.

US media video footage shows many collapsed buildings and houses left in the aftermath of the tornadoes in Kentucky and other affected states. President Joe Biden, who was briefed on the disaster, tweeted, "We're working with Governors to ensure they have what they need as the search for survivors and damage assessments continue." — Kyodo ■

A person stands among the damage and debris in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on Saturday, 11 December. **PHOTO: GUNNAR WORD/AFP**

Rwanda turns to electric motorbikes to drive down emissions



Demand for electric or hybrid cars remains low in Rwanda, despite the fact that they cost less than their fuel-guzzling counterparts. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

WHEN Rwandan motorcycle taxi driver Evode Niyorurema converted his fuel guzzler to an electric motorbike, he had no idea he was on the frontlines of the East African nation's fight against climate change.

"The reason I switched to an electric motorbike is because I wanted to avoid fuel costs, which are always rising, and also the cost of going to the garage all the time (for servicing)," the 37-year-old told AFP.

The firm responsible for revamping his ride, Rwanda Electric Motors Ltd, has converted around 80 motorcycle taxis so far — the most common form of public transport in the capital Kigali — and developed another 200 brand-new electric motorbikes for use.

The project, which is funded by Rwanda's government and the United Nations Development Programme, is part of an ambitious national push to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 16 per cent by 2030 and a further 38 per cent over the following decade.

In July the government waived import taxes on electric and hybrid vehicles as well as equipment used by charging stations, saying it hoped the move would accelerate Rwanda's transition from fuel-based transport and "reduce greenhouse gas emissions". — AFP ■

Vietnam's COVID-19 hotspot administers vaccine booster shots

VIETNAM'S largest COVID-19 hotspot Ho Chi Minh City on Friday started administering extra vaccine shots for prioritized groups, being the first locality in the Southeast Asian country to do so upon the health ministry's approval.

The booster COVID-19 shots were given to frontline forces including health workers, police, and military personnel. The priority was also given to those aged 50 and above, and immunocompromised people who have been fully inoculated with the last shot of the normal course at least 28 days, Vietnam News Agency reported on Friday. From now on until 2022, the southern city will continue to administer the booster shots for immunocompromised people and adults who have received the full primary doses for at least six months in order of priority.

According to a plan announced Tuesday, it targets completing the booster vaccination for all residents aged 18 and over by the end of 2022.

Ho Chi Minh City is by far the largest COVID-19 hotspot in Vietnam with nearly 484,000 infections recorded as of Thursday. The city had inoculated around 14.8 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to its people, including over 6.8 million second shots, according to the municipal center for disease control. — Xinhua ■

Primary school students have their temperature taken before entering school in northern Vietnam's Yen Bai province, 5 September 2021. Over two-thirds of Vietnam's 63 provincial-level localities started their new school year on Sunday amid the worst ever wave of COVID-19 infections in the country, Vietnam News Agency reported. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

New York to impose mandatory masking or COVID vaccines for businesses

Fully vaccinated people 'can participate in indoor and outdoor activities, large or small, without wearing mask or physical distancing', the director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE state of New York will impose mandatory masking for all businesses or require their employees to be vaccinated against the novel coronavirus, Governor Kathy Hochul announced on Friday, extending a similar mandate for New York City by Mayor Bill de Blasio. "I share New Yorkers' frustration that we are not past this pandemic, but the winter surge is here and we must take action," Hochul said via Twitter. "Starting Monday through January 15, businesses will have the option to implement either a vaccine or mask requirement." Hochul said her top two priorities were to protect the health of New Yorkers and the economy of the state.

"The measures I'm announcing today will help accomplish this through the holiday season," she said. "To the more than 80% of New Yorkers who have done the right thing to get fully vaccinated: Thank you. Let's get more New Yorkers vaccinated so we can put this pandemic in the rearview mirror." On Monday, New York City Mayor de Blasio said he was launching a "preemptive strike" against the new coronavirus Omicron variant by enforcing a vaccine mandate for all businesses in the city two days from 27 December and onward. — ANI ■

UK records highest daily coronavirus cases since early January

BRITAIN reports 58,194 new coronavirus cases, reaching levels not seen since early January, bringing the total number of coronavirus cases in the country to 10,719,165, according to official figures released Friday.

The country also reported a further 120 coronavirus-related deaths. The total number of coronavirus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 146,255, with 7,413 COVID-19 patients still in hospital.

The latest data came as another 448 cases of the Omicron COVID variant have been reported in Britain, taking the total cases found in the country to 1,139.

According to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), 443 cases were discovered in England, one case was found in Scotland and four in Wales. No further Omicron cases were found in Northern Ireland.

The Omicron variant is growing "rapidly" in all regions of England and it is spreading faster than Delta, the latest data from UKHSA has revealed. Omicron is expected to be the dominant variant in Britain by the middle of this month, it said.

Meanwhile, experts also estimate that if it continues to grow at the current rate, Britain could see up to 1 million cases in total by the end of the month. — Xinhua ■

A pedestrian wearing face covering due to Covid-19, walks past a sign asking members of the public to social distance, in central London on 7 June 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Netherlands approves vaccination of children aged 5-11 against COVID-19

THE Netherlands approved the recommendation of the Health Council to vaccinate children aged 5-11 against COVID-19, the cabinet said in a statement. "Children aged 5-11 can now be vaccinated against coronavirus," it said. The vaccination of healthy children aged 5-11 will begin in the second half of January 2022. – ANI ■

True death toll of COVID-19 pandemic in US undercounted: report

THE true death toll of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States could be 20 per cent higher than the official figure, USA Today reported Thursday.

"That's based on research showing that deaths attributed to COVID-19 do not account for all of the increased deaths in 2020 and 2021 when compared to prior years," said the report.

"That means the number of Americans who have died from the virus could be closer to 1 million, not the roughly 793,200 deaths officially recorded as of Thursday," it said. – Xinhua ■

India's cumulative COVID-19 vaccination coverage exceeds 131 crore

INDIA'S cumulative COVID-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 131.18 crore doses. According to a release by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, more than 68 lakh vaccine doses were administered on Friday till 7 pm. "India's COVID-19 vaccination coverage has reached 131,90,73,072 today. More than 68 lakh (68,63,955) vaccine doses have been administered till 7 pm today," the release said. The daily vaccination count is expected to increase after the compilation of the final reports for the day by late tonight. Out of 68,63,955 vaccine doses administered on Friday, 17,83,856 people received their first dose while 50,80,099 people were given the second dose of the vaccine. – ANI ■

Global chip demand seen up 8.8% at new record over $600 bil in 2022

GLOBAL chip demand is expected to grow 8.8 percent to another record level of more than $600 billion in 2022 following a 25.6 percent leap this year, estimates by an industry body show, leaving the market of a key electronic device tight. The semiconductor market is estimated at $601.49 billion worldwide next year, topping an all-time high of $552.96 billion projected for 2021, the World Semiconductor Trade Statistics said in its latest forecast.

Workers are operating manufacturing equipment in a workshop of a semiconductor company in Shanghai, east China, 10 February 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Demand for chips for laptop and tablet computers as well as Wi-Fi equipment picked up on the back of the increased need for telework and online classes following the coronavirus pandemic. Sales of computer game consoles also surged as consumers opted to avoid nonessential outings, adding to requests for extra chip supplies.

On top of the pandemic-driven demand, economic reopening along with progress in COVID-19 vaccinations also sparked an appetite for chips for use in vehicles and industrial products, keeping demand solid next year, WSTS said. The chip-manufacturing industry expects supply and demand conditions to continue to be tight for the time being.

Pat Gelsinger, chief executive of U.S. chip giant Intel Corp., said the global semiconductor shortage could take several years to abate. The outlook has pushed some governments to take measures to ensure stable supplies of chips, a key device used in a wide range of products from smartphones and vehicles to high-speed networking equipment. — Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

112 WTO members sign statement on investment facilitation negotiations

CHINA and 111 other members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Friday signed a joint statement on investment facilitation, the Ministry of Commerce said on Saturday. The 112 WTO members, including the EU, Russia and Japan, aim to complete the negotiations on the text concerning investment facilitation by the end of 2022, and push for a final multilateral agreement, the ministry said in a statement on its website. The G20 Guiding Principles for Global Investment Policymaking were established at the 2016 G20 Hangzhou Summit. To translate the outcomes of the summit, China and various other WTO members launched discussions on investment facilitation in 2017. Formal negotiations began in 2020, with Chile currently serving as coordinator. — Xinhua ■

Worn-out currency notes add to Afghanistan's growing economic woes

AMID the financial crisis in Afghanistan, the use of worn-out Afghan currency is an added problem to the larger issues of the collapsing country's economy.

Tolo News reported that the people of Afghanistan have expressed frustration over the use of the old and damaged banknotes, saying that their usage causes problems in business deals.

"There is a lot of worn-out currency in the market, particularly the 100, 50, 20 and 10 Afs bills are very worn," Tolo News reported citing a shopkeeper, Samir. — ANI ■

China injects momentum into rail transportation industry

People view the exhibits at China International Rail Transit and Equipment Manufacturing Industry Exposition in Zhuzhou, Central China's Hunan province, 8 December 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

CUTTING-EDGE Chinese technologies have attracted enterprises from the United States, Germany, France and other countries at an international expo held in Zhuzhou city, central China's Hunan province.

The core technologies developed by CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive Co Ltd allow trains to automatically identify and diagnose technical faults, according to company representative Hou Zhaowen.

The high-speed trains running on the China-Laos Railway, which began operations earlier this month, have now been equipped with the technologies, guaranteeing improved reliability and performance. Over the past six months, multiple countries in Asia and Europe have witnessed "China speed," receiving more exports of rail transit vehicles.

In May, CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive's first double-decker electric multiple unit (EMU) trains for export to Europe rolled off the production line. With a maximum operating speed of 200 kilometers per hour, the trains will run on railways in Austria, Germany, Hungary and other European countries. — Xinhua ■

Young Arabs swipe to fintech as saving, investing takes off

BEING raised in the Middle East with a lack of savings and investment culture, many young Arabs are turning to online banking services to help track their spending and budget.

When Mayar Akrameh was growing up in Lebanon, financial advice was simple: work long, work hard and aim for a high-paying job.

Now the 29-year-old management consultant is one of a growing number of young Arabs who are turning to financial technology, or "fintech", to help them save and invest, often a neglected practice in the Middle East.

"We're taught that if you're working and making enough money, even if you hate your job, you're good," she told AFP. "Or they think we're good."

Akrameh moved to the United Arab Emirates in 2019 at the start of Lebanon's financial crisis, which would later see the local currency plunge to all-time lows, with many people denied free access to their savings by stringent banking controls.

The region's economic instability, exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, has spurred many to turn to online banking and financial tools.

Akrameh, who did not know how to invest and save money when she started generating income, now uses an app to track her spending. "It's not just about retiring; it's about living better, having dreams, having time to breathe and reflect," she said.

S&P Global said in a 2019 report that indicators showed Gulf Arab countries appeared the most ready for fintech adoption, with the key driver being demand and a preference by clients for digital banking. — AFP ■

Dubai — the region's investment landscape is mostly limited to high-net-worth individuals. Women wearing protective masks pose for a "selfie" in front of Burj Khalifa in Dubai. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

NEWS IN BRIEF

China's SME development picks up in November

CHINA'S Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Development Index, based on a survey of 3,000 SMEs, rose 0.2 points from the previous month to 86.3 in November, the latest industry data showed. The increase ended seven straight months of decline, but the current level is still lower than that in the same period of 2020 and 2019, according to the China Association of Small and Medium Enterprises. The index contains multiple sub-indexes to gauge the performances and expectations of SMEs. A reading below 100 indicates dented vitality. In November, the sub-indexes for financing, labor force and operating costs remained above 100. – Xinhua ■

SpiceJet plans to introduce drone delivery service to expand its logistics platform

SPICEJet on Saturday said that it is planning to introduce a drone delivery service to strategically expand its logistics platform. It plans to introduce customized drones of different payloads including 0-5 kg, 5-10 kg, and 10-25 kg which have the potential to change India's supply chain capabilities thereby making it more resilient and sustainable. The company has decided to first target mid-mile drone deliveries while preparing for last-mile deliveries in the future. Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet, said, "SpiceJet continues to innovate and experiment with new technologies and we hope to introduce our drone delivery services soon. – ANI ■

Vietnam to resume int'l commercial flights from January 2022

THE Vietnamese government has approved the resumption of regular commercial flights between Vietnam and international destinations which are highly safe from COVID-19 since 1 January 2022.

According to the latest notice by the Vietnamese government office, the destinations included those in China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Laos, Cambodia and the United States, Vietnam News Agency reported Saturday.

The move is to restore international passenger transport, speed up economic and tourism recovery and enable overseas Vietnamese to return to their homeland for the upcoming Lunar New Year, Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh said in the government directive. While the resumption of international flights is necessary, effective pandemic control must also be ensured, Minh said, urging relevant authorities and aviation businesses to work actively to realize the approved plan and make recommendations for adjustments in accordance with the actual situation. — Xinhua ■

Noi Bai International Airport prepares to welcome a number of foreign visitors. **PHOTO: EXOTRAVEL/XINHUA**

60% of Japan firms abroad expect to log profits in 2021: poll

A total of 18,932 local subsidiaries of Japanese firms, as well as branches and offices of Japanese companies, in 82 countries and territories were polled, with 7,575, or 40 per cent, giving valid responses. **PHOTO: KYODO**

MORE than 60 per cent of overseas affiliates of Japanese companies expect to post operating profits in 2021, rebounding from a record low of 48.0 per cent the previous year but still the second-lowest level in the last decade, according to a survey.

The reading of 62.6 per cent suggests performances by Japanese businesses operating abroad — which slumped significantly in 2020 due to the impact of the novel coronavirus — "have shown an upswing globally, but the momentum of the recovery lacked strength," said an online survey by the Japan External Trade Organization. By region, 57.1 per cent of Japanese businesses operating in the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations forecast they will chalk up profits, while the profits of those operating in Europe and North America have yet to recover to 2019 pre-pandemic levels, it said.

According to the survey released 30 November, 85.3 per cent in South Korea expect to register profits, followed by 72.2 percent in China, 66.3 per cent in Germany, 63.4 per cent in Indonesia, 62.6 per cent in Thailand, 59.2 per cent in the United States and 54.3 percent in Vietnam.

JETRO conducted the survey from 24 August to 30 September, before the first case of the Omicron coronavirus variant was confirmed in South Africa in November. A total of 18,932 local subsidiaries of Japanese firms, as well as branches and offices of Japanese companies, in 82 countries and territories were polled, with 7,575, or 40 per cent, giving valid responses.

By sector, 82.0 per cent of respondents in the banking sector and 79.0 percent of those in precision machinery expect to log profits, while 85.1 per cent of respondents in the hotel and travel businesses forecast otherwise.— Kyodo ■

German carmakers race to retrain workforce for electric age

AFTER her apprenticeship at Volkswagen, Michelle Gabriel was a master at welding, cutting, bending and stretching metal, but just a few years later it's not chassis but software frameworks she's piecing together after a speedy change of career.

The 24-year-old's professional journey reflects the transformation the auto sector is undergoing, moving away from its traditional focus on building combustion engines to developing software. Germany's new government led by Olaf Scholz, which took office on Wednesday, wants to speed up this pivot with the aim of having 15 million electric vehicles on its roads by 2030 from just over 500,000 today.

But the upheaval being caused by the electric revolution is putting in doubt the livelihoods of thousands of employees in jobs where their skills may no longer be needed. Managers are now confronted with the challenge of preparing their workforce to build the car of tomorrow.

Cognitive faculties

Despite thinking the welding work during her apprenticeship was "super", Michelle Gabriel could not imagine entering a profession that "could disappear in five years", she told AFP. — AFP ■

Invitation For Open tender No.(2/2022)

1. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines invites to submit the tender quotation sale open tender of (3000) Metric Tons, average metal content (Ni-35.94%, Fe-62.19%) (17) Lots of Ferro Nickel by United States Dollar as follows;
   a) Ferro Nickel (100) MT (10) Lots, Tagaung Taung, Mine Site
   b) Ferro Nickel (200) MT (5) Lots, Tagaung Taung, Mine Site
   c) Ferro Nickel (500) MT (2) Lots, Tagaung Taung, Mine Site
2. The base price of the Ferro Nickel will be determined based on the Unknown Price of the Nickel at the London Metal Exchange on the opening day of the tender, and the Iron price 300 USD per metric ton. The winner of the tender will be considered as the highest Premium with the lowest cost for shipping costs (Ferro Nickel Price + Highest Premium - Lowest Shipping Cost).
3. The closing date and time of the tender is 11.1.2022 at (14:00) hours and opening time of tender is at (15 :00) hours that day.
4. For any further detailed information, it is requested to contact the telephone number (+95) 067 3409378 and 067 3409372, Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Tender Committee
Department of Mines
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Key meeting stresses proper understanding of major issues in China's new development stage

THE Chinese authorities have emphasized the need to establish a proper understanding of the country's major economic and development issues in a tone-setting economic meeting.

"As China enters a new stage of development, its internal and external environment has undergone profound changes. The country is faced with major theoretical and practical issues that need to be properly comprehended," read a statement released Friday after the annual Central Economic Work Conference.

The meeting stressed proper understanding of the strategic goal and pathways of realizing common prosperity.

The country should create and accumulate social wealth continuously, and at the same time avoid polarization.

People enjoy themselves at a homestay in Xincang Village of Haining City in Jiaxing, east China's Zhejiang Province, 26 August 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

To realize common prosperity, the nation should first "make a bigger and better cake" through joint efforts of the people, and then divide and distribute the cake properly through rational institutional arrangements, the statement said.

"This is a long historical process, and steady steps should be made toward this goal," it said.

China should strengthen the implementation of the job-first policy in its pursuit of high-quality development and better leverage the role of economic growth in boosting employment, according to the statement.

It stressed efforts to exert the role and function of wealth distribution, stick to the system in which distribution according to work is dominant, improve the policy where remuneration is distributed according to various factors of production, and enhance the role of taxation, social security and transfer payments. — Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi newspaper hails crown prince's Qatar visit as "new milestone"

A Saudi newspaper has hailed Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud's visit to Qatar as "a new milestone in the resetting of relations" between the two countries.

"The crown prince's arrival in Doha is seen as a new milestone in the resetting of relations and a recognition that ties of blood, common history, and shared policy concerns are more durable than the disagreements that led to the breakdown in relations in mid-2017," the Arab News, an English language daily in Saudi Arabia, reported on Thursday. The comment come after the crown prince's visit to Doha on Wednesday, his first visit since Riyadh and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic ties with Qatar in June 2017 and placed an embargo on the Gulf state, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism. Qatar has repeatedly denied all the charges.

Relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar improved since the AlUla Declaration was signed at the Saudi-hosted 41st Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit in January. – Xinhua ■

Czech president objects to incoming foreign minister

CZECH President Milos Zeman on Friday objected to the incoming government's nominee for foreign minister, calling into question the timetable for the new cabinet to take office.

Zeman said in a statement that he did not want Jan Lipavsky, a nominee from the Pirate Party, part of the newly formed coalition, to take the post. Zeman cited among his objections the fact that the 36-year-old "only" had a bachelor's degree with a low mark for his final thesis. He said Lipavsky also had a "distant attitude" towards relations with the regional Visegrad regional group of countries and with Israel.

Lipavsky has in the past spoken out against Russia and China, while Zeman is a major supporter of both.

"The Czech constitution does not oblige the president of the republic to accept every candidate that is submitted to him," Zeman said.

Centre-right leader Petr Fiala, designated as next prime minister, said the Constitutional Court should rule on "the issue of competences regarding the appointment of ministers".

An appeal to the court could take months. Fiala, who is due to meet with Zeman on Monday, has previously said he would like the new government to be in place by mid-December. – AFP ■

Theme park giving S Koreans a Japan fix despite pandemic

IN a city about 60 kilometers north of Seoul is a theme park that makes visitors feel like they have time-traveled to Japan when even normal trips remain impossible for many due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Nijimori Studio, located in Dongducheon, South Korea, not far from the border with the North, features a set of buildings that bring visitors back to Japan's Edo Era (1600s-1860s) and has become a popular tourist spot since opening in September.

Photo taken in November 2021 shows a theme park that opened in South Korea's Dongducheon themed on Japan's Edo period (1600s-1860s). **PHOTO: KYODO**

"I've always wanted to travel to Japan, and after realizing that this place is nearby, I decided to make a visit," said 30-year-old Hong Song Hyun, who was at a cafe at the park with his friend.

"The only way I have experienced Japan was through photos, and I like it here because the country has been portrayed in the image I had." — Kyodo ■

Biden slams Kellogg's for replacing striking workers

Kellogg's plant workers remain on strike after rejecting the company's latest contract offer. **PHOTO: AFP**

US President Joe Biden slammed Kellogg's management for replacing striking workers and urged the breakfast cereal giant to negotiate a solution to their labor dispute.

Biden, a longtime champion of unions, said he was "deeply troubled by reports of Kellogg's plans to permanently replace striking workers" and vowed to "aggressively defend" collective bargaining."Collective bargaining is an essential tool to protect the rights of workers that should be free from threats and intimidation from employers," Biden said in a statement. The company on Tuesday announced it would replace workers after members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) rejected the latest contract offer.

"Permanently replacing striking workers is an existential attack on the union and its members' jobs and livelihoods," Biden said. — AFP ■

US urges Russia to withdraw from Ukraine border or face 'massive consequences'

THE United States on Saturday urged Russia to pull back from the brink over Ukraine, warning that the G7 and its allies will impose tough measures if it abandons diplomacy.

A senior State Department official told reporters at a meeting of the grouping's top diplomats in Liverpool, northwest England, that Moscow still had time to change course.

"But if they choose not to pursue that path, there will be massive consequences and severe costs in response, and the G7 is absolutely united in that," the official said. "A large number of democratic countries will join us in imposing costs," they added. The warning came as Russian sabre-rattling against Ukraine and how to counter an increasingly assertive China dominated the first day of a two-day meeting of G7 foreign ministers in the British city.

The meeting — at which ministers want to present a united front against authoritarianism — is the last in-person gathering of Britain's year-long G7 presidency, before it hands the baton to Germany. Opening the talks, Britain's Foreign Secretary Liz Truss told delegates: "We need to come together strongly to stand up to aggressors who are seeking to limit the bounds of freedom and democracy.

G7 foreign ministers met in Liverpool, northwest England, for talks about Russia's military build-up on the border with Ukraine, an assertive China and other threats. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

"To do this, we need to have a fully united voice. We need to expand our economic and security posture around the world."

Truss, in the job since September, set out her foreign policy vision in a major address on Wednesday, echoing US threats of unprecedented sanctions if Russia invades Ukraine. Western concerns are growing over a Russian troop build-up on the border that the Kremlin says is defensive against any move by the former Soviet state eastwards towards NATO.—AFP ■

Bulgaria's PM-designate announces graft-fighting govt

Kiril Petkov has pledged to fight graft in corruption-plagued Bulgaria. **PHOTO: AFP**

BULGARIA'S PM-designate Kiril Petkov, whose new anti-graft party won general elections last month, said on Saturday he hoped to take office on Monday as the head of a four-party coalition, ending months of political deadlock in the poorest EU country.

Announcing his cabinet, Harvard graduate and former entrepreneur Petkov, 41, said he would "not lose a minute" in getting his cabinet approved by parliament.

"I hope that as soon as Monday, this government will become a reality and will remain so over the next four years," Petkov said as he unveiled ministerial picks that included many younger professionals with overseas experience or from business circles.

Two elections in April and July returned fractured parliaments that failed to form a cabinet.

Disillusioned voters backed Petkov's newly founded anti-graft party We Continue the Change (PP) on a third vote on 14 November, lured by its platform for "zero tolerance for corruption".

The new government will end ten years of dominance by the centre-right GERB party of "tough guy" ex-Prime Minister Boyko Borisov. A burly former fireman and bodyguard with a karate black belt, he had faced massive anti-corruption protests in 2020.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bangladesh protests US sanctions of its security chiefs

BANGLADESH on Saturday called in the US ambassador to protest sanctions by Washington against its top security officers after seven people including the country's national police chief were accused by the Biden administration of human rights abuses. Washington imposed sanctions against the Rapid Action Battalion, which is accused of involvement in hundreds of disappearances and nearly 600 extrajudicial killings since 2018.

Seven current or former officials of the Rapid Action Battalion were also sanctioned. They include Benazir Ahmed, previously the RAB chief and currently the national head of the South Asian country's more than 200,000-strong police force.—AFP ■

Libya delays candidate list raising new doubts over election timetable

LIBYA'S election commission on Saturday delayed publication of a final list of candidates for a presidential election scheduled in less than two weeks. It is just the latest twist in a UN-led effort targeting December 24 presidential polls intended to help the oil-rich North African country move past a decade of violence. The process has been undermined by bitter divisions over the legal basis for the elections, their dates, and who should be allowed to run, with a string of controversial figures stepping forward. Analyst Jalel Harchaoui of the Global Initiative think tank said the "inevitable" consequence of the latest procedural delay was the postponement of polling day.—AFP ■

France-Greece frigate deal going ahead despite US offer: Paris

GREECE will honour a deal to buy three frigates from France, Paris and a source in the Greek defence ministry said Saturday, after a competing offer from the US threatened to overturn the contract. "Since we have been in discussion with the Greeks, the American offer is no longer on the table… We also signed the contract with the Greeks. It was initialled a few days ago," France's armed forces ministry told AFP. A source at Greece's defence ministry said "the agreement is on and moving forward". "It has been done at the highest possible level. The Greek prime minister himself has announced it," the source told AFP on Saturday. On Friday the US State Department said it had approved the sale for $6.9 billion of four Lockheed Martin combat frigates, known as multi-mission surface combatant ships. The announcement suggested France faced a fresh commercial arms deal threat after the US wrested away a massive submarine contract for Australia in a shock announcement on 15 September that ruptured relations between Washington and Paris.—AFP ■

Athens has signed a deal with Paris to buy three French Belhara class frigates for €3billion. **PHOTO: NAVAL GROUP**

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 inves tment 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.

Myanmar women's team to play int'l friendlies in January

THE Myanmar women's team will play international friendly matches in January before the final round of the 2022 Asian Cup Women's Football Championship, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

The Myanmar squad is undergone training with more than 30 players as tentatively selected players.

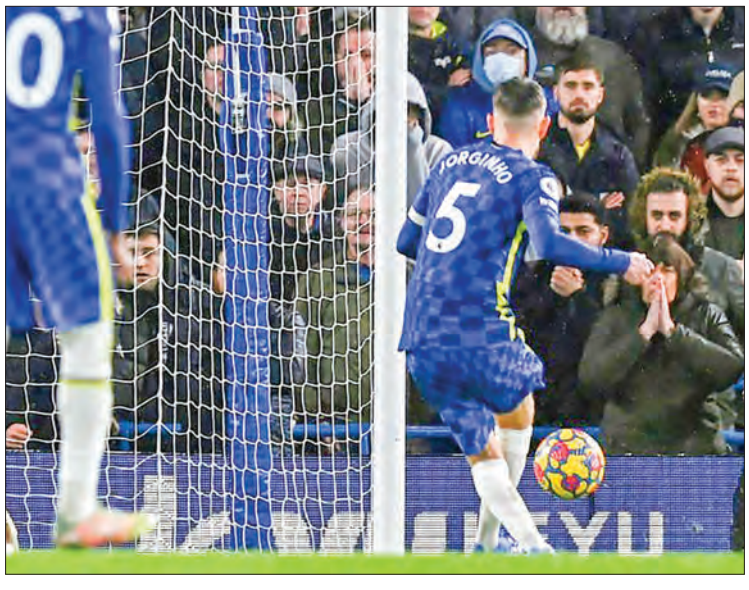
The Myanmar women's team has been under training in Mandalay from early December to mid-month and will return to Yangon in the coming days, officials said.

The team will travel abroad in early January before the Asian Cup to compete in international tournaments, officials added.

The final round of the 2022 Asian Women's Cup will take place in India from 20 January to 6 February, 2022. Team Myanmar will face defending champions Japan and Asian powerhouse South Korea in the Group C. They are also in the same group with ASEAN star Vietnam.

This is the fifth time the team Myanmar has qualified for the finals of the AFC Asian Cup and has won the Qualifiers again this year.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM ■

Salah spoils Gerrard's Liverpool return, Ronaldo rides to Man Utd's rescue



Spot on: Jorginho (centre) scored two penalties as Chelsea beat Leeds 3-2. **PHOTO: AFP**

MOHAMED Salah scored the only goal as Liverpool spoiled Steven Gerrard's return to Anfield as Aston Villa manager as the Reds, Manchester City, Chelsea and Manchester United all needed penalties to win on Saturday.

City edged 10-man Wolves 1-0 thanks to Raheem Sterling's controversial winner, Chelsea required two Jorginho spot-kicks to see off Leeds 3-2 and Cristiano Ronaldo made sure United did not slip up with a 1-0 win at bottom-of-the-table Norwich.

Gerrard was given a subdued reception at Anfield as the former Liverpool captain faced his old side for the first time in his playing or coaching career.

"I had to accept it was going to be emotional for me and my family," said Gerrard. "For me, it was trying to control that, trying to control the outside noise and be respectful to Aston Villa." Villa were largely outplayed, but stayed in the game thanks to a combination of dogged defending, good goalkeeping from Emiliano Martinez and a couple of calls in their favour from referee Stuart Attwell, who dismissed two first-half appeals for a Liverpool penalty.— AFP ■

Aussies Leishman, Day stretch QBE Shootout lead

MARC Leishman holed out for eagle again on Saturday as he and Jason Day combined for an eight-under par 64 to stretch their lead to three shots in the QBE Shootout at Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Florida.

The Aussie duo took a one-shot lead into the second round of the unofficial team event and kept the accelerator down in the modified alternate-shot format in which both players hit a tee shot, select which one to play and alternate shots from there to complete the hole.

They built a 24-under par total that put them three shots clear of three teams: Billy Horschel and Sam Burns, defending champions Matt Kuchar and Harris English, and Kevin Na and Jason Kokrak.

After a birdie at the first, Leishman holed out for eagle from the fairway at the seventh — his third hole-out eagle in two days. — AFP ■

Donaire defends WBC title with body shot KO of Gaballo

NONITO Donaire showed that age is a just a number, knocking Reymart Gaballo out in the fourth round with a thunderous body shot to retain his World Boxing Council bantamweight title on Saturday.

The veteran and ageless wonder Donaire continues to impress at 39 despite being counted out several times by boxing critics before the Philippine boxer moved back to the 118-pound division. Donaire landed a vicious left hook to the body of Gaballo that sent the 25-year-old opponent down late in the fourth round at Dignity Health Sports Park in south central Los Angeles.

Gaballo remained on his right knee for several seconds before trying to get up. He rose partially but slumped back down again, grimacing as the referee officially stopped the fight at 2:59 of the round.

"I have no mercy," Donaire said. "He didn't expect the left hook to the body. I had to set it up. That was a very tremendous punch." Donaire was fighting a Philippine compatriot for the first time since 2002. A likeable fighter outside the ring, Donaire showed his human side by putting his arm around Gaballo and telling him to not be discouraged after suffering just the first loss of his rising boxing career.— AFP ■

Nonito Donaire poses with his family members and boxing team after showing he still has plenty of fight left at age 39 after knocking out Reymart Gaballo with a thundering body shot in the fourth round of their title fight in Los Angeles . **PHOTO: AFP**