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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.

Vinaya Pitaka treatise guides members of the Sangha to have mental and physical politeness: Bharmo Sayadaw

THE Vinaya Pitaka treatise was set as the first-ever subject in the written test of the Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida selection examination with the aim of turning out the well-versed members of the Sangha called qualified Suta Buddhas, said Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bharmo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa at the opening of the written test of the examination at Wizayamin-gala Dhamma Thabin Hall on Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday morning.

Speaking on the occasion, the Sayadaw delivered a Saraniya Ovadakatha, saying that the



State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Secretary Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Sandima Bhivamsa delivers the sermon at the Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida selection examination (written test) on Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday.



The MoRAC deputy minister and congregation take the Five Precepts at the opening of the Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida selection examination on Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday.

Vinaya Pitaka treatise guides members of the Sangha to have mental and physical politeness. The monks who abide by the Vinaya Pitaka treatise are more admirable for the Buddhist people. Noviciate and ordination need to follow the rules of Vinaya Pitaka. Hence, forefather venerable Sayadaws remarked that the Vinaya is the backbone of the Sasana.

As preaching of the members of the Sangha on the Dhamma, Adhamma, Vinaya and Avinaya contribute much towards the uplift of socio-economic improvement of the people. Truly, members of the Sangha need to have the capacity for preaching

the Dhamma, Adhamma, Vinaya and Avinaya by studying the Tri Pitaka treatises. 'Sasanatthitiya Pana Pariyatti Pamanam' mentions that existence of the Buddhism is primarily based on Pariyatti. The Lord Buddha urged members of the Sangha to uplift Buddhism through Dhamma Nuggaha and laypersons to enhance Buddhism through Amisa Nuggaha objects. Moreover, the Lord Buddha stressed the need for laypersons and members of the Sangha to rely on each other to flourish three kinds of Saddhamma for the Sasana.

Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture

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Ministers of Foreign Affairs send felicitations to the Union Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The following is the message of felicitations from the Minister of Foreign Affairs sent to Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Wunna Maung Lwin, on the occasion of the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr Vladimir Makei, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus sends the congratulatory message to Union Minister for Foreign Affairs

LET me cordially congratulate You on the occasion of the national holiday of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar — Independence Day.

I confirm the unchangeable adherence of the Republic of Belarus to the further development of Belarusian – Myanmar cooperation in trade, education and other spheres.

I am convinced that the continuation of constructive interaction between the foreign ministries of Belarus and Myanmar on international platforms will contribute to the fruitful cooperation between our countries.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Matriculation exam application deadline extends to 15 Jan

MATRICULATION exam applications can be submitted until 15 January 2022. Those who are facing difficulties in applying for matriculation exam can contact the Department of Myanmar Examinations (Nay Pyi Taw).

The deadline extension for the submission of matriculation exam aims to consider external students and the students in remote areas and Basic Education High Schools, private schools and monastic schools that are opening late amidst the pandemic in 46 townships in nine regions and states.

Matriculation exam submission is extended until 15 January, the DME released a statement dated 5 January.

The application submission period for 2022 Matriculation Exam was earlier set between 15 November and 30 December 2021, the Ministry of Education released a notification on 10 November 2021.

Those who find any problems in applying for the matriculation exam can contact the DME (Nay Pyi Taw) by dialling 067-3430583, 067-3430584, 09 2024297, DME (Yangon branch) via mobile numbers at 09 43140226, 09 261955559, and 09 443007864. — MNA

Authorities extend restrictions on travellers’ entry to 31 Jan

AUTHORITIES have extended restrictions on the entry of travellers until the end of January to prevent the spread of COVID-19, according to the statement of Myanmar’s Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment for COVID-19.

Foreigners travelling for urgent reasons, including diplomatic issues, may contact a Myanmar diplomatic mission to receive an exemption. However, the travellers must produce a negative COVID-19 PCR test result taken within 72 hours before arrival.

Besides, the flight suspensions have been also extended until 31 January 2022 to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus in Myanmar via air travel, according to the statement from the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

Myanmar has received US\$69.2 million as revenue from e-Visa and over 1.7 million tourists applied for e-Visa from 2016 to August 2020, according to the official data of the Ministry of Immigration and Population.

The Ministry of Immigration and Population is granting 14 types of entry visas. Of which, the on-arrival visa category was launched in 2012, it is learnt. — Aye Maung/GNLM

MTSH to receive MIC approval for Gyogon housing redevelopment project



Scale model buildings of the Gyogon Housing. PHOTO: KO NAING (BAGO)

MYANMAR Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Company Limited (MTSH) said it will soon receive the approval from the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) for the redevelopment of the Gyogon Housing Project in Insein Township of Yangon Region.

MTSH, which won the tender for the project on 5 March 2020, stated the information in its financial statements released for the financial year 2020-2021 for the information of shareholders.

The project will be devel-

oped in the short to medium term, with a return period of three to seven years, according to the financial statement. The company will continue to manage its existing operations to ensure its long-term sustainability and is paying special attention to the company’s reputation, financial situation and the risks of loss by overcoming the pandemic. It is also announced that MTSH will also adhere to the OECD guidelines on the code of responsible business conduct.

Gyogon housing redevelopment project is located near Yan-

gon Technological University, between Insein Road and Baho Road, close to Gyogon Railway Station and covers an area of 17 acres. The project will include relocated buildings for existing tenants in the housing complex, affordable housing, reasonable-price standard housing and commercial buildings such as shopping malls and shophouses, including socio-economic infrastructures such as schools and hospitals. An MTSH official told the media that the project would cost about K178 billion. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

133 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 5 January, total figure rises to 531,432

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 531,432 after 133 new cases were reported on 5 January 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 509,409 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,282 after 4 died.—MNA

Building the country peaceful and prosperous through our united strength

The Tatmadaw is always serving the interests of the State and the ethnic people in accord with the duty and obligations entrusted by the Constitution. Our government will continuously cooperate with the ethnic people in harmony for further peace and stability of the State, prosperity and food sufficiency. "As unity will reflect the prosperity", I would like to urge all to participate in building the country peaceful and prosperous through our united strength.

(Excerpt from the New Year Message delivered by
Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 1 January 2022)

Vinaya Pitaka treatise guides members of the Sangha to have mental and physical politeness: Bhamo Sayadaw

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U Aye Tun supplicated religious affairs and donated alms and rice to the Sayadaw. The congregation shared merits gained for all donations after listening to the sermon delivered by Secretary of SSMNC Abbot of Minkyaung Pathamabyan Buddhist learning centre in Thanlyin Township Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Sandima Bhivamsa.

The day meals donated by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and family members were offered to Ovadacariya Sayadaws of Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida, other members of the Sangha and the monks taking the 74th Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida selection examination. Alms such as robes



The Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida selection exam (written test) in progress.

and cash for nine prerequisites were offered to Ovadacariya Sayadaws.

The deputy minister viewed around 126 participants at the Tipitakadhara Tipitakak-

ovida selection examination. The examination takes place at Maha Pasana Cave on Kaba

Aye Hill in Yangon and it will last for five days from 5 to 9 January. — MNA

Coord meeting held to launch DICA Online Solution platform



THE Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and departments concerned convened a coordination meeting at the MIFER office on 5 January to implement DICA Online Solution (DOSo) system.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations gave a remark that the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) will launch the DOSo platform to facilitate the investments (in picture). Foreign and domestic investors can enquire about investment matters, rules and regulations through DOSo. Also, they can call for ideas and suggestions

from the officials concerned. The concerted efforts from all the stakeholders, including relevant ministries and governmental organizations, are required to successfully kick-start the DOSo.

Afterwards, respective ministries discussed matters to coordinate each sector. DICA Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin and Director Dr Wunna Aung explained the DOSo system and the attendees raised questions regarding the system and made suggestions.

The permanent secretaries, directors-general and high-level officials from ministries concerned and governmental organizations attended the coordination meeting. — MNA

MIFER holds COVID-19 Procurement Committee coordination meeting

A coordination meeting of the Procurement Committee on Medicines and Medical Equipment for COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment was convened at the office No. 1 of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER) yesterday afternoon.

Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo highlighted fruitful negotiations with the foreign counterparts in importation and distribution of the essential medical equipment and oxygen concentrators, liquid oxygen and pharmaceuticals and successful implementation of the subcommittees regarding transport, export/import matters and Customs regulations. Thanks to the coordination, the spread of COVID-19 was under

control, he added. Furthermore, he discussed future activities.

Then, Dr Aye Tun, Deputy Minister for Health, who is also a secretary of committee, elaborated preventive measures, activities of the procurement committee, vaccine administration situation and budget allotment.

Afterwards, committee members focused on concerning continuous actions for COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment, procurement of medicines and medical devices, donations of the COVID-19-related equipment from development partner countries and organizations, and future plans of the committee to purchase essential pharmaceuticals and related medical supplies.



The COVID-19 Procurement Committee coordination meeting in progress at the MIFER office yesterday.

The Union minister, deputy ministers, subcommittee members, senior officials and respective health representatives were present at the meeting. — MNA

418 community-based quarantine centres, 93 treatment centres set up to prevent COVID-19 mutation Omicron



The MoH Union minister inspects the precautionary measures against COVID mutation Omicron.

AT present, 418 community-based quarantine centres and 93 treatment centres have

been set up to prevent the COVID-19 mutation, named Omicron, which is currently preva-

lent in 135 countries around the world, according to the Ministry of Health.

Researchers have found that the COVID-19 mutation Omicron is highly contagious and that the symptoms are mild, so community-based quarantine and treatment centres have been expanded to accommodate laboratory-confirmed patients.

It is prepared to provide healthcare services to 28,019 patients in 418 community-based centres and receive 9,609 patients in 93 community-based treatment centres, officials said.

In addition, quarantine centres have been set up to accommodate laboratory-confirmed patients, returnees from abroad and their contacts. There are 706 quarantine centres in each state/region and they are ready

to accommodate up to 33,250 people, officials continued.

As of 4 January, the Ministry of Health has reported a total of 442,923 confirmed cases and 104 deaths worldwide due to the COVID-19 mutation.

It has spread to 135 countries and regions in various parts of the world, including Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, North America, South America, Africa, and Australia.

There were 10,957 COVID-19 cases diagnosed in Myanmar and 144 confirmed cases on 4 January 2022.

The number of hospital admissions was 95.84 per cent with only one death due to the disease, and casualties have dropped significantly. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

COVID-19 immunization continues in various regions/states

TATMADAW has been working together with doctors, health workers and volunteers to carry out the COVID-19 immunization programme for people over the age of 40, including monks, nuns, religious leaders, civil service personnel, prisoners, persons with disabilities, ethnic armed organizations, people in IDP camps and students aged above 12 in regions and states.

A total of 1,187 people in

Shan State (North), 3,390 people in Kholan in Shan State (South), 3,325 people in Shan State (East), 762 people in Thaton, Mon State, 2,538 people in Myeik, Taninthayi Region, 4,111 people in Yangon Region, 27,805 people in Ayeyawady Region, 6,420 people in Rakhine State, 252 people in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region, and Haka Township, Chin State, 7,538 people in Manda-

lay Region, and one monk and 1,280 people in Bago Region received the COVID-19 vaccine yesterday.

In addition, 49 students in Monghkat Township and Mongpyin Township, Shan State (East), 955 students in Ayeyawady Region and 180 students in Gwa Township, Rakhine State, were also vaccinated yesterday.

Officials from the respec-



Inoculation drive is underway.

tive military commands encouraged and coordinated

where necessary, it is reported. — MNA

Public request regarding lower electricity production rate of power plants

5 January 2022

1. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy makes strenuous efforts for electricity generation and distribution from power plants for the people and industries in respective regions/states and also arranges to improve electricity supply in order to cover an annually increasing power consumption.
2. Normally, the maximum power generation capacity is about 4,200MW, but now about 750MW production of the LNG to power plants have been suspended due to a fourfold increase in gas prices. The annual maintenance works on Yadana offshore project were conducted between 27-11-2021 and 6-1-2022 like previous years and so the power generating rate of natural gas power plants decreased about 540MW, and the 230kV transmission tower of Balu Chaung hydropower station was exploded and about 180MW was reduced.
3. Moreover, the annual maintenance works are being undertaken at some gas-fired power plants and hydropower stations and due to the lower inflow of water to hydropower plants in the current open season and the reduction of hydropower generation at the reservoirs/dams to supply power in summer, the production is about 1,470MW lower than the total consumption. If the maintenance of the Yadana gas project completes, the power can be generated normally starting 7-1-2022, and although the repair works of destroyed towers are being made as quickly as possible, about 930MW will be still reduced.
4. Therefore, due to the adjustment for the stability of power system as per the amount of low power generation, there is a need to reduce the load during high power consumption hours between 7 am to 11 am and between 5 pm to 7 pm, and so the power outages occur in some places.
5. Of 10.9 million households in the country, about 6.6 million (60 per cent) currently have access to electricity from the National Grid. If these households use low-power-consumption LED bulbs/lights, it can save about 20W per household while 6.6 million households about 132MW. Moreover, if the households with high power consumption swift off unnecessary lights to save about 100W per household and about 300MW for three million households, and so it can fulfil the reduction of 432MW and the meter bill payment of one household will also be lower.
6. Therefore, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy raise a request to the public to understand if there are any inconveniences caused by the reduction of load in some areas for lower power generation for balance load and are working hard to supply power as quickly as possible and arranging new projects to produce power more from various sources, including solar and hydropower.

Ministry of Electricity and Energy

Myanmar border camps welcome returnees



Returnees are welcomed at the Chinshwehaw land border in northern Shan State.

THE border camps are receiving Myanmar returnees from foreign countries. A total of 16 Myanmar citizens — eight males and eight females — returned to Chinshwehaw in northern

Shan State and another 119 — 89 males and 30 females — to Laukkai on 4 January.

The health officials, Tatmadaw medics and other officials provided health-related matters

for quarantine. Then, township administration officials sent them to their respective towns by vehicle and those who have tested for positive are isolated at the designated places. — MNA

Myanmar to evacuate 56 nationals stranded in US, South Korea

THE relief flight of Myanmar Airways International (MAI) organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, will evacuate a total of 56 Myanmar nationals (12 from the USA and 44 from ROK) who have been stranded in the USA and South Korea for various reasons on 11 January. The embassy has been

arranging relief flights once a week under the guidance of the Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 to bring back Myanmar nationals from various countries, and this is the 91st relief flight for the repatriation of Myanmar nationals from South Korea. — Soe Myint Aung/ GNLM



Myanmar Motion Picture Organization rolls out cash support for over 75-year-old artistes

THE Myanmar Motion Picture organization provides cash assistance for the artistes over the age of 75 and the elderly can withdraw their financial assistance for December starting 5 January, according to the organization.

Cash assistance is presented to one of the above 75-year-old artistes. **PHOTO : KO NAING (BAGO)**

The organization makes cash contribution as usual and it announced via its Facebook page that the withdrawal of cash assistance for December is available starting 5 January.

The organization members aged 75 and above receive K15,000 per month and there are currently more than 50 elderly and they can withdraw their cash assistance in early period of every month. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

Quality assurance signals high price in Sino-Myanmar border

MYANMAR'S watermelons and muskmelons which are exported to China fetch a good price depending on their quality, Sai Khin Maung from the Khwanyo Fruit Warehouse.

Better quality adds value to over seven Yuan per kilogramme of watermelon.

Regardless of the quality determining the price, high transport cost and long queue posed burdens on traders. Some watermelons went off, Sai Khin Maung added.

"Watermelons and muskmelons are receiving handsome prices in the Wamting area. However, traders are taking a risk to convey watermelons to China amidst the high transport cost of Chinese short-haul trucks and unexpected delays," he stressed.

Long delay of trucks caused harm to watermelon quality and



China shut down all border posts with Muse city in the wake of COVID-19 impacts. Of them, the Kyinsankyawt border post between Myanmar and China, which was previously closed down from 8 July, has been reopened starting from 26 November on a trial run. — NN/GNLM

only one in five trucks heading to China remained undamaged with quality watermelons during the 2021-end period. It takes about 20 days from the farm to the Chinese market at present.

"Quality control can be assured only after reducing delays in China side, getting entry permit for Myanmar short-haul drivers to the market beyond Chinese drivers and cutting the red-tape and trade barriers in Myanmar side, he continued.

In addition to COVID-19

restriction measures, China's Customs regulations resulted in delays. China's Customs in the border post will practise higher import duty as if it does in maritime trade. Therefore, the trucks are waiting for new Customs regulations, the Khwanyo Trading Depot stated.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, trade facilitation is unlikely to happen according to China's trade policy. Trade will go back to normality after China eases rules and restriction measures for COVID-19.

China shut down all border posts with Muse city in the wake of COVID-19 impacts. Of them, the Kyinsankyawt border post between Myanmar and China, which was previously closed down from 8 July, has been reopened starting from 26 November on a trial run. — NN/GNLM

About 2,100 acres of three crops to convey to market by the end of Feb 2022

ABOUT 2,100 acres of sunflower, chickpea and wheat, cultivated in Paukinn farmland in ChaungU Township, are ready to convey to the market by the end of February 2022, said Paukinn farmland in-charge Assistant Director U Win Naing.

"These three crops are started cultivating on 2 November and completed on 10 November. It has been two months already on 10 January. These three crops were cultivated by the department's staff using department budgets. Now, these sunflowers, chickpea and wheat are produced abundantly. These three crops are ready to

convey to the market by the end of February," he added.

There are a total of 2,570 acres of land, including roads, creeks and canals in Paukinn farmland. Of which, about 2,100 acres are plantation lands. Currently, about 50 acres of sunflowers, 430 acres of wheat and 1,620 acres of chickpeas have been cultivated in Paukinn farmland using underground water.

"Germination, seed quality and seed-stage will be defined and they will be a sale under the department name. The department is only focusing on reproducing. It is a field that

produces the cheapest varieties of seeds for farmers to use so that they can get high yields," U Win Naing clarified.

After harvesting the current winter crops such as sunflower, chickpeas and wheat, the department will grow summer crops such as green gram, black bean and sesame in February and March.

The Paukinn farmland yielded about 120 kilogrammes per acre of sunflower, 20 baskets per acre of wheat and 12 baskets per acre of chickpea (one basket is equivalent to 46 pounds), it is learnt. — Lu Lay/GNLM

Black sesame price remains stable



Sesame is cultivated in the country throughout the year. Magway Region, which has gained a reputation as the oil pot of Myanmar, is the main producer of sesame seeds. The seeds are also grown in Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

THE price of black sesame (Fair and Average Quality) remains unchanged at K140,000-190,000 per three-basket bag when both the supply and demand decrease.

Meanwhile, the various sesame seeds priced at between K120,000 and 170,000 per bag are highly demanded.

The supply of newly harvested sesame seeds cut the prices to K240,000 per three-basket bag in November and shortly thereafter, the price gradually went down. The consumers are buying less black sesame (FAQ) so the supply decreases, Soe Win Myint pulses depot in Mandalay stated.

Normally, Myanmar exports about 80 per cent of sesame production to foreign markets. Normally, Myanmar's sesame is shipped to China, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Singapore, European Union countries and China Taipei (Taiwan).

The EU markets prefer organic-farming sesame seeds from Myanmar. Japan prefers Myanmar black sesame seeds, cultivated under good agri-

cultural practices (GAP), and purchases them after a quality assessment.

At present, the country is relying solely on the Chinese market and facing a hurdle to place the sesame on other foreign countries. Both raw sesame seeds and value-added sesame seeds are conveyed to China. When the COVID-19 cases fall and transportation barriers are eased, the sesame market will raise its head again for sure, a depot owner from the Bayintnaung wholesale market said.

Sesame is cultivated in the country throughout the year. Magway Region, which has gained a reputation as the oil pot of Myanmar, is the main producer of sesame seeds. The seeds are also grown in Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

Of the cooking oil crops grown in Myanmar, the acreage under sesame seed is the highest, accounting for 51.3 per cent of the overall oil crop plantation. About 600,000-800,000 tonnes of sesame seeds are yearly produced. — KK/GNLM



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Number of companies registered on MyCO tops around 8,000 in 2021: DICA

THE number of companies registered on the online registry system, MyCO, exceeded 8,000 in 2021, the statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) indicated.

The registration and re-registration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018 keeping in line with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

Last year, the number of registered companies on MyCO was 1,373 in January, 188 in February, 163 in March, 254 in April, 686 in May, 775 in June, 433 in July, 360 in August, 733 in September, 1,027 in October, 936 in November and 1,083 in December, totalling 8,011 the DICA's statistics showed.

At present, 100 per cent

of the applicants are using the online registration platform, the DICA stated. The figures of registered companies stood at 15,080 in 2020, 17,380 in 2019 and 8,506 in 2018, as per statistics of the DICA.

When the online registry was launched in August 2018, the previously registered companies also had to make re-registration on MyCO, with 46,377 companies between 1 August 2018 and 31 January 2019.

In addition, all registered companies need to file annual returns (AR) on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation, and at least once every year (not later than one month after the anniversary of the incorporation), according to Section 97 of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.



The Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

According to Section 266 (A) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, public companies must submit annual returns and financial statements (G-5) simultaneously.

All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within

28 days of the financial year ending under Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

According to DICA's report, about 16,000 companies were suspended so far for failing to submit AR forms within the due date.

Newly established compa-

nies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

The DICA has notified that any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A). If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the system will show the company's status as suspended. Companies can restore their status only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for AR fee, K100,000 for reinstatement of the company on the Register, and K100,000 for late filing of documents.

If a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the register, according to the DICA notice. —NN/GNLM

Myanmar-Thai border trade hits \$1.1 bln this mini-budget



Myawady border trade zone.

MYANMAR-THAILAND border trade has increased by US\$350 million and stands at \$1.1 billion between 1 October and 24 December this mini-budget period, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Last year, the bilateral border trade hit \$761 million. The country's export to neighbouring Thailand reached \$713.64 million while its import shared \$398.54 million.

Myanmar is carrying out border trade with the neighbouring country Thailand through seven border posts – Tachilek, Myawady, Myeik, Mawtawng, Hteekee, Kawthoung and Meisei border areas respectively.

Myawady border trade accounted for the largest volume of trade with Thailand, followed by Hteekee, according to the statistical report of the Myanmar Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar's exports to Thailand were primarily agriculture and livestock products, and im-

ports from Thailand were mainly non-alcoholic beverages, fabric and yarn, motorcycles and related parts, and construction materials.

Between 2016-2017 FY and the mini-budget period of the 2021-2022FY (as of December), Thailand has been Myanmar's largest trade partner among the ASEAN states, followed by Singapore and Malaysia.

The bilateral trade between Myanmar and Thailand stood at \$3.26 billion in FY2020-2021 (as of July), \$5.1 billion in FY2019-2020, \$5.5 billion in FY2018-2019, \$2.9 billion in the mini-budget year of 2018 or transitional period from April to September this year, \$5 billion in FY2017-2018, \$4.3 billion in the 2016-2017FY, \$4.8 billion in the 2015-2016FY, \$5.7 billion in the 2014-2015FY, \$5.6 billion in the 2013-2014FY, \$4.7 billion in the 2012-2013FY, and \$4.5 billion in the 2011-2012FY, according to the Myanmar Ministry of Commerce. — ACM/GNLM

Rice prices climb up on strong demand

THE prices of rice and rice crops jumped in 2021 as against the rates recorded in 2020 on the back of strong demand in domestic and external markets.

The prices of rice in domestic markets increased by over K10,000 per bag in 2021. At present, rice worth K43,000-50,000 per bag is highly demanded in the domestic market. The prices of high-quality rice move in the range of K43,000-58,000 per bag, Bayintnaung Rice Wholesale Centre's price data indicated.

Meanwhile, the prices of low-quality rice are relatively low at K2,2500-2,3500 per bag. Low-quality rice was mostly purchased by Chinese traders yet COVID-19 restriction measures negatively affected the border trade between My-

anmar and China, causing the price drop.

Pawsan rice crops also touched a high of around K950,000 per 100-basket in 2021, whereas it fetched only K685,000-786,000 in 2020. However, high input costs cut the benefits of the growers.

The prices of low-quality rice crops stayed unchanged last year amidst the suspension of border posts. Consequently, traders turned to maritime trade for rice export. Myanmar shipped rice and broken rice to China, regional countries and European Union countries through maritime trade.

High transportation rates, inflation, banking restrictions, high input cost and transport barriers owing to the COVID-19 negative consequences and political instability are con-

tributing factors to the rise in commodity price last year, a trader from the Bayintnaung wholesale market pointed out.

Myanmar has shipped more than 500,000 tonnes of rice and broken rice to foreign trade partners between 1 October and 30 November in the current mini-budget period (2021-2022), the Myanmar Rice Federation stated.

The country sent over 27,000 tonnes of rice and broken rice to the neighbouring countries through border trade, whereas it placed over 470,000 tonnes in the international market via maritime trade.

Myanmar also generated an income of US\$700 million from 2 million tonnes of rice exports to the foreign countries in the past 2020-2021 financial year.—KK/GNLM



The prices of rice in domestic markets increased by over K10,000 per bag in 2021. At present, rice worth K43,000-50,000 per bag is highly demanded in the domestic market.

Aspire to the greatest prospect to restore perpetual peace

THE word of Peace covered all pages of publications as well as on the air in the broadcasting of radio and television images all over Myanmar during the whole last year. Such a process continues this year as of New Year Day. It is expected their dreams come true for restoration of the peace through the talks with the participation of, the government, the Tatmadaw and relevant stakeholders, focusing on common interests for the nation to be able to enjoy the taste of perpetual peace.

The government is always keen to restore perpetual peace for the sake of the people and the nation and all stakeholders as well.

All the stakeholders to restore the peace need to keep the same attitudes and set aside the different opinions. They all need to talk about the peace issue based on the same attitudes while negotiating the different opinions related to peace through compromises. They all have to march forwards to the goal of restoring peace inch by inch.

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They all have invaluable time. They spend their spare time in peace talks. As such, the restoration of peace is invaluable. Everybody should notice the important role of valuable time for peace. If they totally agree to the restoration of peace across the nation, it will be the greatest victory for all national brethren of the country.

■ ■ ■

World Braille Day: Pandemic shows importance of information access for all

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how critical it is to ensure essential information is accessible to everyone, including people living with disabilities. On World Braille Day, observed on 4 January, UN agencies have been highlighting how they are promoting a disability-inclusive response to the crisis.

BRaille is a tactile language used by blind and partially sighted people. Combinations of raised dots represent each letter and number, and even musical, mathematical and scientific symbols, so that books and periodicals can be read through touch. The system was invented by Frenchman Louis Braille nearly 200 years ago.

In a post on Twitter, the President of the UN General Assembly, Abdulla Shahid, commended Braille as a tool for freedom of expression, access to information and social inclusion.

“This has never been truer than in the times of isolation brought on by #COVID19,” he wrote.

Access for all

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates at least one



A student in her classroom in Paraguay, learning how to read and write Braille. PHOTO: UNICEF/BRIAN SOKOL

billion people globally have a near or distance vision impairment that could have been prevented, or has yet to be addressed.

Life under lockdown has posed challenges for the visually impaired, including in terms of

independence and isolation, according to the UN.

COVID-19 has also revealed the importance of having information available in Braille and audio formats, otherwise many persons with disabilities could

face higher risk of contamination. The pandemic has also underscored the need to ramp up digital accessibility for all people.

Disability-inclusive response

During the pandemic, several

UN agencies have been implementing good practices towards a disability-inclusive response and disseminating information in Braille.

For example, in Malawi, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has produced more than 4,000 braille materials on awareness and prevention of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, in Ethiopia, the UN human rights office, OHCHR, disseminated audio information, as well as education and communication materials, to media professionals, and developed Braille versions of the educational messages.

The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has also produced guidance notes in multiple languages and accessible formats, including Braille and ‘easy-to-read’ versions.

Its note on COVID-19: Con-

siderations for Children and Adults with Disabilities addresses issues that include access to information; water, sanitation and hygiene; healthcare, education, child protection, and mental health and psychosocial support.

Awareness of human rights

The UN General Assembly established World Braille Day in 2019 to raise awareness of the role Braille has in the full realization of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the blind and partially sighted.

Braille is essential in the context of education, freedom of expression and opinion, as well as social inclusion, as outlined under article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

SOURCE: UN

Study finds COVID-19 may trigger self-attacking antibodies

A NEW study has found that infection with coronavirus can trigger an immune response that lasts well beyond the initial infection and recovery, whether the symptoms are mild or asymptomatic. The research has been published in the ‘Journal of Translational Medicine’. When people are infected with a virus or other pathogen, their bodies unleash proteins called antibodies that detect foreign substances and keep them from invading cells. In some cases, however, people produce autoantibodies that can attack the body’s own organs and tissues over time.

Autoantibodies

The Cedars-Sinai investigators found that people with prior infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, have a wide variety of autoantibodies up to six months after they have fully recovered. Prior to this study, researchers knew that severe cases of COVID-19 can stress the immune system so much that autoantibodies are produced. This study is the first to report not only the presence of elevated autoantibodies after mild or asymptomatic infec-

tion but their persistence over time. “These findings help to explain what makes COVID-19 an especially unique disease,” said Justyna Fert-Bober, PhD, a research scientist in the Department of Cardiology at the Smidt Heart Institute and co-senior author of the study. “These patterns of immune dysregulation could be underlying the different types of persistent symptoms we see in people who go on to develop the condition now referred to as long COVID-19,” Fert-Bober added.

Previous infection

To conduct their study, the Cedars-Sinai research team recruited 177 people with confirmed evidence of a previous infection with SARS-CoV-2. They compared blood samples from these individuals with samples taken from healthy people prior to the pandemic. All those with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection had elevated levels of autoantibodies. Some of the autoantibodies also have been found in people with diseases in which the immune system attacks its own healthy cells, such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. “We found signals of autoantibody activity that are usually linked to chronic

inflammation and injury involving specific organ systems and tissues such as the joints, skin and nervous system,” said Susan Cheng, MD, MPH, MMSc, director of the Institute for Research on Healthy Aging in the Department of Cardiology at the Smidt Heart Institute and co-senior author of the study. Some of the autoantibodies have been linked to autoimmune diseases that typically affect women more often than men. In this study, however, men had a higher number of elevated autoantibodies than women. “On the one hand, this finding is paradoxical given that autoimmune conditions are usually more common in females,” Fert-Bober said. “On the other hand, it is also somewhat expected given all that we know about males being more vulnerable to the most severe forms of COVID-19,” Fert-Bober added.

Long-haul

COVID-19 symptoms the research team is interested in expanding the study to look for the types of autoantibodies that may be present and persist in people with long-haul COVID-19 symptoms.

Because this study was in people infected before the advent of vaccines, the researchers will also examine whether autoantibodies are similarly generated in people with breakthrough infections. “If we can better understand these autoantibody responses, and how it is that

SARS-CoV-2 infection triggers and drives these variable responses, then we can get one step closer to identifying ways to treat and even prevent these effects from developing in people at risk,” Cheng said.

SOURCE: ANI



After declining most of the fall, COVID-19 cases are rising again in many parts of the US PHOTO: VALERIE MACON/AFP

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education Department of Higher Education Announcement Opening of University Day Classes

ALL the universities, degree colleges and colleges under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, will open the following bachelor and master day classes for the Academic Year 2019-2020 and the Academic Year 2021-2022 on 6 January 2022.

- (a) Fourth Year (Law) Semester II
- (b) Fourth Year (Education) Semester II
- (c) Third Year (Honours) Semester I
- (d) Master (Qualifying) Semester I
- (e) Master (1st Year) Semester I
- (f) Master (2nd Year) Semester I

Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Education

Yezin Agricultural University to reopen undergraduate, postgraduate classes

1. Yezin Agricultural University under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will open the following undergraduate and postgraduate classes for the Academic Year 2019-2020 and the Academic Year 2021-2022 on 6 January 2022.
 - (a) Fourth Year (Semester II)
 - (b) PhD (Semester I)
 - (c) Master (Semester I)
 - (d) Postgraduate Diploma (Semester I)
 - (e) Postgraduate Master of Philosophy (Semester I)
2. Vaccination must be reported at the time of enrolment with the immunization card. If the vaccine has not been administered yet, officials will continue to work with the Ministry of Health as soon as possible to provide the vaccine.
3. Details will be posted on the website www.yau.edu.mm. For more information, please call 0925-4325-155 and 0925-4023-383.

Yezin Agricultural University



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 5 January 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 6 January, 2022: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan, Chin, Kayin, Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Generally fair in the whole country.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6 January 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6 January 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6 January 2022: Generally fair weather.

NEWS

IN BRIEF

China plans missions to moon's south pole

China has approved the fourth phase of its lunar exploration programme, including a basic model of a research station built on the moon over the coming decade, according to the China National Space Administration.

Wu Yanhua, deputy director of the administration, said China would carry out lunar exploration in the future Chang'e-6, Chang'e-7 and Chang'e-8 missions. As planned, Chang'e-7 probe will be launched to the south pole of the moon first. Since Chang'e-6 is a backup of Chang'e-5 sample-return mission, it will be launched after Chang'e-7 to bring back samples on the lunar south pole. Chang'e-6 mission will be followed by Chang'e-8, a step toward building a model of a lunar scientific research station. "We also prepare to work with Russia to build the basic model of the lunar research station," Wu said in a recent interview. "The construction of the station will lay a solid foundation for us to better explore the lunar environment and resources, including how to use and develop lunar resources peacefully." —Xinhua ■

Rare leopard captured in northern Iraq

AN endangered leopard captured in Iraq's mountainous north had its hind leg amputated on Friday following a trap-inflicted wound, an AFP photographer said.

The Persian leopard, taken in a day earlier in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region near the border with Turkey, had injured two people, said Colonel Jamal Saado, head of the environmental protection police in Dohuk province. Residents of a village near the town of Zakho lost around 20 sheep before realizing a leopard was attacking their flocks, he said. The big cat sustained a wound to its back leg when it was caught in a shepherd's trap, but managed to escape before villagers helped police track it down. Saado said the leopard was given anaesthetic before it was captured. —AFP ■

Herd the moos? Latvia's symbolic blue cow back from the brink

ONCE a rarity, cows with light blue or dark ultramarine hides may again be glimpsed grazing on the Latvian countryside among the regular brown, black or white spotted cattle. The unique and hardy breed, driven to near extinction during the Soviet era, has made a comeback over the last few decades as an unlikely symbol of Latvian national identity.

"Their worst days are over," said Arnis Bergmanis, head of the Ciruli animal park in the vil-

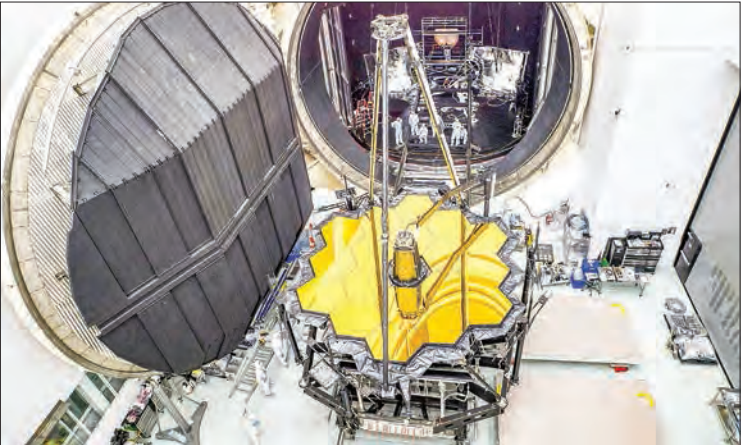
lage of Kalvene, which serves as a breeding facility for the cattle. "Blue cows are unique and wonderful. I'm glad we can help them thrive," he told AFP while examining a baby calf.

In 2000 there were only 18 blue cows in Latvia, but today they number around 1,500 — thoroughbreds as well as hybrids. Originally found only on the Baltic coast in the Kurzeme region, they are increasingly popular in central areas too. —AFP ■



Under the Soviets, emphasis was placed on mass production of beef and dairy, favouring more generic cattle and causing the blue cow to almost go extinct. **HOTO: AFP**

Webb telescope fully deploys sunshield in mission milestone



Deploying the James Webb Telescope in space will be one of the most challenging feats ever to be undertaken. **PHOTO: NASA/AFP**

THE James Webb Space Telescope fully deployed its tennis-court sized sunshield Tuesday, a critical milestone for the success of its mission to study every phase of cosmic history, NASA said.

"All five layers of the sunshield are fully tensioned," said an announcer at the observatory's control centre in Baltimore, where team members cheered, a live feed showed.

The 70-foot (21 meter) long, kite-shaped apparatus acts like

a parasol, ensuring Webb's instruments are kept in the shade so they can detect faint infrared signals from the far reaches of the Universe.

Each of the layers was unfolded one by one over two days. Working together they offer an SPF (sun protection factor) of about one million.

Because the telescope was too large to fit into a rocket's nose cone in its operational configuration, it had to be transported folded, origami style. Unfurl-

ing is a complex and challenging task, the most daunting such deployment NASA has ever attempted.

"This is the first time anyone has ever attempted to put a telescope this large into space," Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for NASA's science mission directorate, said in a statement. "The success of its most challenging deployment — the sunshield — is an incredible testament to the human ingenuity and engineering skill that will enable Webb to accomplish its science goals."

Hillary Stock, a sunshield deployment specialist for Northrop Grumman, told reporters on a call: "It was a wonderful moment. There was a lot of joy, a lot of relief." The most powerful space telescope ever built and the successor to Hubble, Webb blasted off in an Ariane 5 rocket from French Guiana on 25 December, and is now more than halfway to its orbital point, a million miles (1.5 million kilometres) from Earth. —AFP ■

Will Beijing's 'green Olympics' really be green?

CHINA wants to use the Beijing Winter Olympics to showcase its green credentials but there are concerns over the environmental cost of a Games relying on artificial snow in one of the driest places in the country.

It is difficult to independently verify Beijing's claims around the Games, which begin on 4 February, and environmentalists told AFP they fear a backlash from authorities if they analyse Beijing's green targets.



Staff members transport equipment during a testing programme for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games to root out problems and accumulate data at the Genting Snow Park in Chongli District of Zhangjiakou, north China's Hebei Province, 19 February, 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA/HE CHANGSHAN**

What is China promising?

China has pledged to power the Games using only wind, hydro and solar energy — despite relying on coal to power nearly two-thirds of its economy.

The city of Zhangjiakou, one of the three Olympic hubs, has installed wind farms spanning hundreds of acres that can produce 14 million kilowatts of electricity — similar to the power Singapore can produce.

Authorities have also covered mountain-sides with solar panels that they say will generate another seven million kilowatts.

The Beijing Olympics organising committee told AFP that China built a "dedicated power plant that takes on power generated from renewable sources, stores it and transmits it to all venues". This should ensure uninterrupted power supply, it said.

But China's economy has relied on decades of coal-fuelled growth and is still building more coal-fired power plants than the

rest of the world combined.

Will smog affect the Games?

In an attempt to clear Beijing's notoriously smoggy skies before the Olympics, coal stoves in 25 million households in northern China were replaced with gas or electric. Tens of thousands of factories were also fined for exceeding emissions limits. —AFP ■

China locks down city of 1.2 million after three virus cases

MORE than one million people in a city in central China were being confined to their homes on Tuesday after three asymptomatic coronavirus cases were recorded in the country's latest mass lockdown.

Beijing has pursued a "zero Covid" approach with tight border restrictions and targeted lockdowns since the virus first emerged. Yuzhou, a city with a population of around 1.17 million people in Henan province, announced that from Monday night all citizens were required to stay home to control the spread of the virus. The announcement

was triggered by the discovery of three cases in the last couple of days. People in the central area "must not go out", according to a statement posted Monday, while all communities will set up "sentinels and gates to strictly implement epidemic prevention and control measures". The city had already announced that it was halting bus and taxi services and closing shopping malls, museums and tourist attractions.

China reported another 175 new Covid-19 cases on Tuesday, including five in Henan province and eight more in a separate cluster linked to a garment factory in

the eastern city of Ningbo.

Although the reported cases are low compared with elsewhere in the world, new coronavirus infections in recent weeks have reached a high not seen in the country since March 2020.

There were 95 fresh cases recorded in Xi'an Tuesday — a historic city of 13 million people in neighbouring Shaanxi province — which has been under lockdown for nearly two weeks.

Xi'an has reported more than 1,600 cases since 9 December, although numbers in the last few days have started to slide compared to last week's figures.



Pix for representational purpose only: More than one million people in a city in central China were being confined to their homes on Tuesday after three asymptomatic coronavirus cases were recorded in the country's latest mass lockdown. **PHOTO: AFP**

Local authorities deemed to have failed in preventing virus outbreaks in China are often fired or punished, prompting a

series of ever-stricter responses from provincial governments as they try to stamp out any cases quickly.—AFP ■

Arrests, clashes in Netherlands Covid protest



Demonstrators gathered in one of Amsterdam's main squares. **PHOTO: PHIL NIJHUIS ANP/AFP**

THOUSANDS of protesters defied authorities and gathered in the Dutch capital Amsterdam on Sunday to oppose coronavirus restrictions, leading to clashes and arrests.

"This is Holland! Power to the people!" chanted one protester.

The demonstrators rallied in one of the city's main squares, according to an AFP journalist, despite Dutch authorities banning the protest beforehand.

Clashes with police left several people with minor injuries and security forces made ar-

rests, public broadcaster NOS reported.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte announced a lockdown one week before Christmas on December 25 in response to a fresh wave of Covid infections fuelled by the Omicron variant.

Non-essential shops, restaurants, bars, cinemas, theatres and museums remain closed until 14 January and schools until 9 January.

Only two people may meet outdoors, with an exception for burials, but no travel restrictions were imposed.—AFP ■

US FDA authorizes Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 boosters for children aged 12-15 amid Omicron surge

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Monday expanded the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine boosters to children aged 12 to 15, as schools reopen amid a winter surge of new infections driven by the Omicron variant.

The FDA also shortened the time for booster shots from at least six months after completion of the initial series to at least five months, for everyone aged 12 and older.

The decision was based on FDA's review of real-world data from Israel, including safety data from more than 6,300 individuals 12 through 15 years of age who received a booster

dose of the vaccine at least 5 months following completion of the primary two-dose vaccination series.

The agency has determined that the protective health benefits of a single booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to provide continued protection against COVID-19 and the associated serious consequences outweigh the potential risks in individuals ages 12 to 15. The agency said that it found "no new safety concerns" following a booster shot in young teenagers, and that there were no new reports of two types of heart inflammation called myocarditis or pericarditis linked to the boosters.—Xinhua ■

Australia's Omicron surge drives infections record, testing rush

AUSTRALIA reported a record daily tally of nearly 50,000 Covid-19 cases Tuesday as the Omicron variant raced through the population and sent people scrambling for tests.

While the Omicron surge has apparently left relatively few dangerously ill, it has driven a rush on increasingly scarce self-administered rapid antigen kits and created hours-long queues at centres providing more reliable PCR tests. Australia had successfully suppressed infections for much of the pandemic through border closures and aggressive testing and tracing.

But an earlier wave fuelled by the Delta variant dashed zero-Covid ambitions in much of the country, including the major cities Sydney and Melbourne. Now, like many countries, it relies on

vaccines for protection with 91.5 per cent of the over-16 population fully vaccinated. About 2.5 million people have received a booster. Deputy chief medical officer Sonya Bennett said Australia had recorded 47,738 infections in the past 24 hours, up from about 38,000 cases the previous day, as

the Omicron variant took hold.

Covid cases being treated in hospitals across the country had nearly doubled in a week to 2,362 infections, she said. But the number in intensive care was much smaller: 184. And of those, 59 were on a ventilator — unchanged from a week ago.—AFP ■



Australia's Omicron surge has created hours-long queues at centres providing PCR tests. **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD FAROOQ/ AFP/FILE**

US triumphs over Canada in first dispute under new trade deal

THE US government on Tuesday said it had won its fight with Ottawa over restrictions in the Canadian dairy market, claiming victory in the first-ever dispute under the revamped North American free trade pact.

But rather than remove a point of conflict between the trading partners, the issue may exacerbate stresses, since both sides have vowed to fight to protect their own industries and workers.

US Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai called the ruling under the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement a “historic win” that “will help eliminate unjustified trade restrictions.”



This undated photo shows a milk transport truck in Canada.
PHOTO: S.D. & G. MILK TRANSPORT/AFP

The finding, which could lead to punitive American tariffs on Canadian goods, comes amid growing trade frictions between

the neighbours over issues ranging from lumber to milk, as well as newer disputes over solar panels, electric cars and taxes on tech

giants.

The conflicts soared under former president Donald Trump, who forced a renegotiation of the two-decade old North American Free Trade Agreement.

The end result was known in the United States by the acronym USMCA and in Canada as CUSMA, but the tensions it was meant to address have not abated under US President Joe Biden.

‘Trump light’

The agreement came into force in July 2020, and since then, Washington has also used the provisions to pressure Mexican auto factories to protect workers’

rights to organize.

Biden in November held a summit with Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexico’s President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador to try to smooth relations.

But William Reinsch, a trade policy expert at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, said the Biden administration’s approach to trade is sometimes viewed as “Trump light”.

“The rhetoric is different... it’s a more rational, less impulsive policymaking process,” he told AFP. But, “Their mindset is in some respects... not that different from Trump’s.”—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lebanese currency drops to record low

THE Lebanese pound on Tuesday crossed the symbolic threshold of 30,000 to the dollar on the black market in a new record low, according to websites monitoring the exchange rate.

The pound now trades at 20 times the official peg value of 1,500 pounds to the greenback, with no end in sight to the economic and political crisis plunging ever growing numbers into poverty.

The currency has lost more than 95 per cent of its value on the black market in the past two years.

The purchasing power of people has plummeted, and the minimum monthly wage of 675,000 pounds is now worth just \$22.

Activists have called for rallies outside the central bank headquarters in Beirut on Saturday to protest the devaluation of the currency.

According to the United Nations, four in five Lebanese are now considered poor.—AFP ■

Palestine’s economy expected to grow by 4% in 2022: PM

THE Palestinian economy is expected to see a 4-per-cent increase this year, Prime Minister Mohammed Ishtaye said here on Monday.

During a weekly meeting of the Palestinian cabinet, Ishtaye said he expected the value of the gross national income and the total national disposable income to increase by 3.2 per cent and 4.2 per cent respectively in 2022, according to an official statement.

The total consumption in 2022 is likely to grow by 2 per cent year-on-year, the prime minister added.—Xinhua ■

Japan regional banks launch system to monitor ship-to-ship transfers

AT least 12 regional banks in Japan have introduced a system to monitor ship-to-ship transfers of cash and gold earned through illicit means as part of their efforts to combat money laundering, bank officials said Wednesday.

The introduction of the system of IHS Markit, an information-providing firm headquartered in London, comes as an intergovernmental body tasked with combating money laundering and terrorist funding has indicated Japanese regional banks’ anti-money laundering measures were insufficient.

According to its 2021 report on Japan, the Financial Action Task Force said some financial institutions in the country other than megabanks have a limited understanding of money laundering and terrorism financing risks that have become a global issue.

The 12 banks which introduced the system include Hiroshima Bank, Hyakujushi Bank



The 12 banks which introduced the system include Hiroshima Bank, Hyakujushi Bank and Fukuoka Financial Group Inc., with many based in areas where shipbuilding and shipping business prosper. **PHOTO: KYODO / FILE**

and Fukuoka Financial Group Inc., with many based in areas where shipbuilding and shipping business prosper. The monitoring system allows them to confirm locations and speeds of ships, as well as changes in waterlines of vessels which indicate loading and offloading of cargos, via satellites and antennas installed in various locations.

The system alerts its users when the speed of a vessel dips below its setting. U.S. and European financial institutions as well as major Japanese institutions started introducing the monitoring system after the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States as part of their anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing measures.—Kyodo ■

China to provide anchor mechanism for RCEP, says Singaporean scholar

CHINA will provide an anchor mechanism for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world’s

China will provide an anchor mechanism for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world’s largest free trade pact which came into force on 1 January. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

largest free trade pact which came into force on 1 January, a Singaporean scholar said recently.

As the world’s second largest economy which possesses very strong bases in consumption, production and innovation, China will provide the anchor mechanism for RCEP, said Professor Lawrence Loh, director of Center for Governance and Sus-

tainability at National University of Singapore’s Business School.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Loh added that “there’s a lot to gain for all parties concerned riding on China as the anchor country in this agreement.” The timing of RCEP taking effect could not have come at a better time, as “we are on the verge of moving from pandemic to endemic,” Loh said.—Xinhua ■



Space business: The final (profitable) frontier

THE snub-nosed craft resembles a shuttle-airplane mashup, and is the latest entrant in a profit-seeking push with staggering potential — and risks — for humans to visit, work or even live in space.

The display of technology like the life-size model “Dream Chaser” ship at the CES tech show in Las Vegas is a sharp signal that the commercial space era is upon us.

Experts see a path for companies to power an unprecedented era of rapid advances, but with the near certain peril that space disasters will occur and lives will be lost.

Sierra Space, a subsidiary of private aerospace contractor Sierra Nevada Corp., plans to



The Dream Chaser space plane is designed to return cargo to Earth by landing on a runway, allowing for rapid access. **PHOTO: SIERRA NEVADA CORPORATION/AFP**

have the 30-foot (nine-metre) “Dream Chaser” flying missions this year, making the reusable spacecraft key to its off-Earth ambitions.

“Before governments were the only ones that

could do it. Now, it’s getting down to regular human beings who can get a ride to space,” Neeraj Gupta, the company’s general manager of space destinations, told AFP. The craft is meant to carry peo-

ple and equipment to and from commercial space installations the company envisions building in the next decade, including a system of inflatable structures to house humans in orbit.—AFP ■

Sony to launch firm to explore making electric cars



Sony Group CEO Kenichiro Yoshida unveils the group’s prototype electric vehicle in Las Vegas, Nevada, on Tuesday. **PHOTO: KYODO**

ELECTRONICS giant Sony unveiled Tuesday a new prototype of its Vi-

sion-S electric vehicle and announced the founding of a company to explore

jumping into the rapidly growing market.

The Japanese firm, better known for its TVs and video game consoles, will create the Sony Mobility subsidiary in spring 2022 as it weighs entering the field. Sony chief executive officer Kenichiro Yoshida unveiled at the CES tech show in Las Vegas the Vision-S 02, a new version of the firm’s first prototype that has begun road testing. Through this new branch, the electronics

giant “intends to explore entry into the EV market,” it said in a statement. The Vision-S is packed with internal and external sensors and is used by Sony to test its autonomous driving technologies. The company is also working on entertainment systems. The electric vehicle sector is still small, accounting for only about three per cent of current sales in the United States but it is attracting a lot of interest and investment.—AFP ■

Thai central bank views Omicron outbreak as key risk to economic recovery

THE spreading of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in Thailand could have more severe and prolonged impact than expected on the country’s economic recovery, according to the minutes the Bank of Thailand released on Wednesday.

“Although under the

baseline scenario the Omicron outbreak would not derail the overall Thai economic recovery, the outbreak situation remained highly uncertain,” wrote the minutes of the central bank’s monetary policy meeting. The spread of the Omicron variant is a key risk that could hinder

the economic recovery going forward, and thus warrants close monitoring, it said, adding that the severity of the outbreak and the strictness of government’s containment measures will define the level of impact that Omicron has for this year’s economic rebound. The

central bank expected the Thai economy to expand 3.4 per cent and 4.7 per cent in 2022 and 2023, respectively, with growth driven by domestic spending, a gradual improvement in foreign arrivals, as well as the recovery in various business sectors.—Xinhua ■

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
DEPARTMENT OF POWER TRANSMISSION
AND SYSTEM CONTROL

Invitation for Expressions of Interest (EOI) –
Consulting Services

Date	: Thursday, 6 January 2022
Tender No	: 12(T)/DPTSC(PSD)/2021-2022(Mini)
Title of Assignment	: In-house Consultancy Services for the Development of Power System, and the Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Existing SCADA-EMS Myanmar
Deadline for Submission of EOI	: [8 th February 2022, 14:00 hr]

1. Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC) of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (“the Client”) invites firms to submit EOIs for Selection of Consulting Services for: In-house Consultancy Services for the Development of Power System, and the Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Existing SCADA-EMS Myanmar.
2. The consulting service of the project is required to assist DPTSC and MOEE throughout the implementation of the Power System Development Project and the Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Existing SCADA-EMS Myanmar. The main tasks are; (i) to enhance the utilization capacity of NEPLAN Software for Power System Analysis, (ii) to set up Centralized Disturbance Fault Recording Management System, (iii) the scheduling for tertiary frequency control activation to all possible imbalances affected by active and reactive power, (iv) the discrimination and coordination of protective relaying scheme, (v) transmission system outage planning, for each and every aspects of maintenance methodologies, (vi) upgrading and rehabilitation of the existing SCADA-EMS system, (vii) to assist the proceeding of contract management for the Project (viii) to support the Quality Control, Quality Assurance and Least Cost Management of the Project and (ix) transfer of know-how, advanced planning and analysis software and tools and training.
3. The location of the Assignment is in Myanmar, and the duration is five years.
4. Quality-Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) process will be used and only the short-listed firms will be invited to submit the Request for Proposal (RFP).
5. DPTSC will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by firms in connection with the preparation or submission of EOIs.
6. Further information and Terms of Reference (TOR) can be obtained by sending the official request via email at the address below during office hours, 09:30 to 16:30 hours. The TOR will be sent by email.
7. EOI documents must be delivered in a written form to the address below by mail or in person before [8th February 2022, 14:00 hr].

Director General
Department of Power Transmission and System Control
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V KOTA HALUS VOY.NO. (KHLU0193N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HALUS VOY.NO. (KHLU0193N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **6-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** 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 ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

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NEWS
IN BRIEF

24,000 evacuated, two dead in Indonesian floods

About 24,000 people have been evacuated and two children killed in floods on Indonesia's Sumatra island, officials said Tuesday, with environmental campaigners blaming deforestation for worsening the disaster.

Torrential rains have hammered the island for days, causing rivers to burst their banks and sending water levels surging in residential areas, the national disaster agency said.

"We experience flooding at least five to eight times a year — but (this) is one of the most severe," said Muzakkir, from Pirak Timur in hard-hit Aceh province, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. Syarifuddin, from the village of Lhok Sukon in Aceh, said the "floodwaters just kept rising — at my house, they are up to my chest". —AFP ■

Bolsonaro will not undergo surgery: doctors

BRAZILIAN President Jair Bolsonaro will not need surgery, his doctors said Tuesday, a day after the far-right leader was rushed to the hospital with a partially blocked intestine.

"President Jair Messias Bolsonaro's intestinal subocclusion has been eliminated, with no need for surgery," the Vila Nova Star hospital in Sao Paulo said in a statement.

"The patient is making satisfactory progress in both clinical evaluations and laboratory exams, and will begin a liquid diet today."

There is no date set for his release, it added.

Bolsonaro, 66, developed abdominal pain during a New Year's beach vacation in the southern state of Santa Catarina and was rushed to the hospital early Monday on the presidential jet. —AFP ■

Canada court awards compensation for families over jet downed by Iran

A Canadian court has awarded more than \$80 million in compensation to the families of six people who died when Iran shot down a Ukrainian airliner almost two years ago, according to a decision made public Monday.

Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 was shot down shortly after take-off from Tehran on 8 January 2020, killing all 176 people aboard — including 85 Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Three

days later, the Iranian armed forces admitted to downing the Kyiv-bound plane "by mistake." Ontario Superior Court Judge Edward Belobaba had previously ruled that the strike on the civilian aircraft "constituted terrorist activity", paving the way for bereaved families to seek compensation.

In the decision publicly shared Monday, he awarded the plaintiffs \$107 million Canadian dollars (\$83 million), plus interest. —AFP ■



Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 was shot down shortly after take-off from Tehran on 8 January 2020, killing all 176 people aboard. **PHOTO: NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE COUNCIL OF UKRAINE/AFP/FILE**

Hong Kong tests 3,700 on 'nowhere cruise' ordered back to port



'Spectrum of the Seas' is one of the vessels offering cooped-up Hong Kongers a 'cruise to nowhere' that sails into international waters for short trips. **PHOTO: AFP**

A Hong Kong cruise ship carrying 3,700 people was ordered back to port on Wednesday for virus testing after nine people were found to be close contacts in an Omicron variant outbreak.

Like mainland China, Hong Kong pursues a zero-Covid policy and maintains some of the world's

strictest measures — including virtually closed borders, weeks-long quarantines, targeted lockdowns and mass testing. The city has recorded 114 Omicron cases, with the vast majority identified at the airport or during the 21-day hotel quarantine that is mandatory for most arrivals. But a small

community outbreak traced to Cathay Pacific airline staff has sparked mass testing and contact tracing in recent days. On Wednesday, those tracing efforts reached the "Spectrum of the Seas", one of the vessels offering cooped-up Hong Kongers a "cruise to nowhere" that sails into international waters for short trips. Health authorities said nine people on the cruise, which left on Sunday, were classified as close contacts and ordered the ship back to port a day early.

All on board — 2,500 passengers and 1,200 crew — must test negative before they can disembark. An AFP reporter outside the cruise terminal on Wednesday could see guests relaxing and exercising on their outdoor balconies. "A lot of dining tables and seats in the theatre were sealed, and we have wristbands that can help track our movements on board," one passenger on board, who asked for anonymity, told AFP by phone. —AFP ■

Swiss tourism back on an uphill trend



A gondola in the Alpine resort of Verbier, Switzerland. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Swiss tourism sector had a more positive start to the key winter season than had been expected, despite the Omicron variant of Covid-19, the Switzerland Tourism agency said Tuesday.

"In comparison with the previous winter holiday season, overnight stays should be up by 10 to 15 per cent, with the return of foreign tourists," the agency said, citing first estimates.

It said the number of overnight stays were at 90 per cent of the levels reached in 2019, so

"a certain optimism is therefore perceptible".

Reservations, and cancellations alike, were notably made at short notice, following the ebb and flow of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, hoteliers, particularly in the mountains, witnessed a return of European tourists, especially from Germany, France and England, while domestic visitors have remained loyal.

Omicron had Swiss ski resorts rattled in early December when the government imposed

10-day quarantine restrictions on arrivals from countries with the variant of concern.

That included Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands — the three major sources of ski tourists.

Some hotels and ski schools saw their bookings with British customers plunge by 50 per cent in 48 hours. But Bern reversed its decision once it was clear that Omicron was already spreading within Switzerland. Most cases are now due to Omicron. —AFP ■

Kazakhstan president sacks cabinet in bid to head off protests

KAZAKHSTAN’S president sacked the Central Asian country’s cabinet Wednesday in a bid to head off unprecedented unrest across the nation that followed an energy price hike.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev imposed states of emergency in the largest city Almaty, the financial capital, and the western province of Mangystau Wednesday after protests saw thousands take to the streets and demand the government’s resignation.

A separate order published on the presidential website Wednesday morning said Tokayev had accepted the resignation of the cabinet headed by Prime Minister Askar Mamin.

Deputy prime minister Alikhan Smailov will perform the PM’s role on an acting basis



Protesters attend a rally in Almaty on 4 January 2022, after energy price hikes. Police fired tear gas and stun grenades in a bid to break up an unprecedented thousands-strong march in Almaty, Kazakhstan’s largest city, after protests that began over fuel prices threatened to spiral out of control. **PHOTO: AFP**

until a new cabinet was formed, the order stated.

The southeastern city of Almaty was in chaos from late Tuesday as police fired tear gas and stun grenades to quell unrest that began in the west of

the country over a spike in local prices for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

States of emergency in Almaty and Mangystau are effective from 5 January until 19 January, the presidential web-

site reported.

An overnight curfew will be in place in both territories from 11:00 pm to 7:00 am, with restrictions on movement in and out of the cities falling under the orders.

Tokayev had hours earlier called for a return to calm in a video posted on Facebook by his press secretary Berik Uali.

“The government will not be felled, but we don’t need conflict,” Tokayev said in the address.

An AFP journalist in Almaty saw police firing stun grenades and tear gas into a disorganized crowd of more than 5,000 people that grew in size as protesters marched through central streets shouting anti-government slogans and sometimes attacking vehicles.—AFP ■

EU’s Borrell visits Ukraine in show of support amid Russia fears

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell arrived in Ukraine Tuesday in a show of support for Kyiv, as the West warns Russia against launching any attacks on its ex-Soviet neighbour.

The visit comes after months of tensions, with the West threatening Moscow with a massive coordinated sanctions response if it invades Ukraine.

“With Russia’s increased military build-up, I am here to show EU support for Ukraine’s

sovereignty and territorial integrity,” Borrell said on Twitter.

The US and its allies have accused Russia of planning an invasion after massing some 100,000 troops near Ukraine’s border. High-ranking officials from the United States and Russia are set to hold two days of talks in Geneva on the crisis starting Sunday after the Kremlin issued a raft of demands to Washington. Brussels fears it is being sidelined as the US and



The security package is designed to bolster Ukraine’s self-defence capability. **PHOTO: /AFP/FILE**

Russia discuss the balance of power in Europe, with Borrell insisting that “any discussion about European security must happen in coordination with and participation of EU”.

Ukraine’s foreign ministry said in a statement that his visit “aims to confirm the support of our state from the EU against the background of the aggressive actions of Russia.” —AFP ■

N. Korea fires suspected ballistic missile toward Sea of Japan



People watch a television news broadcast showing file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a railway station in Seoul on 5 January 2022, after North Korea fired what appeared to be a ballistic missile into the sea off its east coast according to the South’s military. **PHOTO: JUNG YEON-JE/AFP**

NORTH Korea fired what appeared to be a ballistic missile toward the Sea of Japan on Wednesday, its first launch of a projectile since last October, the Japanese and South Korean governments said, a move likely to prompt Tokyo to further study acquiring enemy base strike capabilities.

Japan’s Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi told reporters that the projectile was likely launched from an inland area of North Korea toward the east and was presumed to have landed outside the Japanese exclusive economic zone. Kishi said the latest launch

took place around 8:07 am and follows the launch by Pyongyang of some 40 missiles since May 2019 to ramp up the development of its missile technology.

The Japanese defence minister said details of the launch are still under analysis but if the warhead flew on a normal trajectory, it would have travelled about 500 kilometres. “Given these situations, we will consider all options, including the possession of so-called enemy base strike capabilities, and will continue to work to drastically strengthen our defence ability,” Kishi said.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Peru president to face collusion investigation after term ends

PERUVIAN prosecutors said on Tuesday that they will investigate President Pedro Castillo when his term ends for the alleged crimes of influence peddling, collusion and illegal sponsorship.

Attorney-general Zoraida Avalos Rivera “opened a preliminary investigation” into the president “for allegedly committing the crimes” of aggravated influence peddling, as perpetrator, and collusion, as participant, the agency said in a statement.

But the proceedings will be suspended until Castillo’s five-year term ends in 2026, as the president has “absolute immunity that transcends the scope of criminal proceedings” in Peru.—AFP ■

Macron hints at re-election campaign ahead of April vote

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron wants to stand for a second term in April presidential elections but will only declare his intentions once he is sure, he said in an interview with the Le Parisien newspaper published Tuesday.

“There is no false suspense. I want to,” Macron, the last of the major hopefuls in the election yet to declare their candidacy, told the paper when asked if he planned to stand.

“Once the health situation allows it and I have made everything clear – inside myself and with respect to the political equation – I will say what it (the decision) is.”

He added: “This decision is solidifying deep inside me. I need to be sure that I am able to go as far as I want.”

The comments to Le Parisien represented by far Macron’s clearest indication yet he plans to stand – while not ending the suspense over his intentions.

Macron, who swept to power in 2017 on a pledge to reform France and restore its status as a global power, is the overwhelming favourite to win the election but analysts caution his victory is far from certain.—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.

- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

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

Two ASEAN-level Futsal competitions to be held this year

THE ASEAN Football Federation will host both ASEAN Futsal Championships this year, according to the federation officials.

The football federation will hold the ASEAN Futsal Championships for its member countries and ASEAN Futsal Club Championship for ASEAN Futsal clubs. The COVID-19 pandemic has prevented some competition in recent years.

The ASEAN Futsal Championship was cancelled in 2020 and 2021, and the ASEAN Futsal Club Championship could not be held in 2020 but was resumed in 2021.

Myanmar teams are com-

peting in both tournaments.

Myanmar national Futsal team will compete in the ASEAN Futsal Championship, while the team that wins the domestic Futsal league will be sent to the ASEAN Futsal Club Championship.

The ASEAN Football Federation is scheduled to host the ASEAN Futsal Championship in April and the ASEAN Futsal Club Championship in August in Thailand.

The ASEAN Futsal Championship was launched in 2001 and the Myanmar team started competing in 2006.

This year will be the 17th edition with Thailand winning

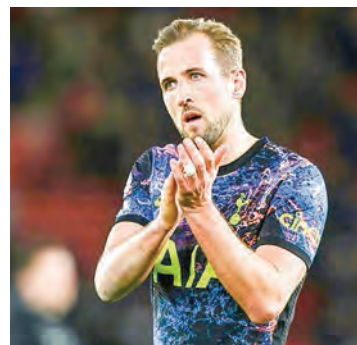
15 times and Indonesia winning once. The Myanmar team won the second and third twice and reached the finals for the first time in 2016.

The ASEAN Futsal Club Championship was launched in 2015 and Myanmar clubs have competed in all but not in 2021 competitions.

In all six previous events, only Thai clubs have won and the Myanmar Futsal club MIC team won the third prize in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019.

The PU team of Myanmar that competed in the 2017 tournament was eliminated from the group stage. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Kane 'totally involved' in Spurs project, says Conte



Tottenham forward Harry Kane. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

TOTTENHAM boss Antonio Conte says Harry Kane is "totally involved in this project" at the club after the England captain attempted to engineer a move to Manchester City during the summer transfer window.

Chairman Daniel Levy

stood firm and the 28-year-old forward, who is under contract until 2024, was forced to stay at Spurs.

Kane had a slow start to the season but has recovered his scoring touch under Conte, who replaced Nuno Espirito Santo as manager in early November.

Conte, whose side visit his former club Chelsea in the first leg of their League Cup semi-final on Wednesday, said Kane was a key part of his plans.

"I knew the situation in the summer and, when Harry decided to stay in Tottenham, I found a player totally involved in this project now," he said. — AFP ■

Premier League club Southampton sold to Solak's Sport Republic

SOUTHAMPTON have been taken over by Serbian businessman Dragan Solak's Sport Republic investment firm, the English Premier League club announced Tuesday. Sport Republic, who specialize in sport and entertainment investments, have purchased the 80 per cent shareholding in the south coast side previously owned by Jisheng Gao.

But while the Chinese businessman, who purchased his stake in 2017, is bowing out, Katharina Liebherr has retained her 20 per cent share in the Saints.

Solak is the lead investor in London-based Sport Republic, a company founded by Ras-

mus Ankersen — who recently stepped down as Brentford co-director of football — and Henrik Kraft. "My partners and I have experience in long-term investments in the sports and entertainment industry and Sport Republic has been founded to combine this expertise and deliver something unique to the market," said Solak in a Southampton statement.

"Southampton has so many of the qualities we have been looking for in a major sports organisation."

The Saints are currently 14th in the Premier League, 10 points above the relegation zone. — AFP ■



Southampton are currently 14th in the Premier League, 10 points above the relegation zone. **PHOTO: GLYN KIRK / AFP/FILE**