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Message of Greetings sent by Chairman of State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on occasion of marking 74th Anniversary of Kachin State Day 10 January 2022

Esteemed ethnic national brethren in Kachin State,

The 10th of January, today is the 74th Anniversary of the Kachin State, auspicious for all ethnic national brethren in Kachin State.

On a significant day, I extended my greetings to all ethnic national people born in the Union including Kachin ethnics in Kachin State and pray for them to be auspicious and healthy for overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic.

Myanmar has been inhabited by all ethnic nationals since yore through thick and thin in standing tall in the world with prestige. At a time when the country was disunited with weakness in all aspects, it fell under British colonial rule which possessed a gigantic superior power and lost its sovereignty and independence to it. Despite falling under the colonialists, those from various areas of Myanmar not wishing to accept the enslavement fought against the colonialists with the sacrifice of their lives and patriotic spirit. Myanmar could stand tall as a sovereign country escaping from enslavement thanks to the Panglong Agreement which turns the Diamond Jubilee Union Day which will fall soon. It depends on the relentless perseverance, patriotic spirit, courage and unity of all ethnic national people.

After regaining independence, the 10th January was designated as “the Kachin State Day” in honour of forming the Kachin State government at the first meeting of the Kachin State Council

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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.

SAC members, Union Ministers meet with Lisu ethnic nationalities in Myitkyina, Kachin state

MEMBERS of the State Administration Council: Jeng Phang Naw Taung, U Mounng Har, U Sai Lone Hsai and U Shwe Kyein, together with Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Khin Yi and Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs U Saw Tun Aung Myint, Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan, Commander of Northern Command Brig-Gen Myat Thet Oo met local Lisu ethnic nationalities at the office of Lisu Literature and Culture Central Committee of Myanmar's office in Myitkyina yesterday.

At the meeting, SAC member Jeng Phang Naw Taung, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Tun



Chairman of Lisu literature and Culture Central Committee of Myanmar U Arphu Rilimi presents Lisu traditional Zar Zaws to SAC members and Union ministers.

Tun Naung, and U Saw Tun Aung Myint addressed the meeting, and Chairman of the Lisu Literature and Culture Central Committee of Myanmar U Arphu Rilimi expressed

words of thanks and handed over Lisu traditional Zar Zaws to the SAC members, the Union Ministers, the Chief Minister of the state and the commander. The meeting was also included Lisu traditional performances, and the performers were also awarded with cash awards.

Afterwards, the SAC members and Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung inspected the construction site of the Ayeyawady Bridge (2) in Myitkyina, visited the university library and met with the rector and professors of Myitkyina University, and the construction of 10-track 50m x 25m swimming pool of the Department of Sports and Physical Education in Myitkyina.—MNA

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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

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Nippon Foundation donates 2 mln Covaxin doses to Myanmar



Officials of Nippon foundation and MRCS are seen at handover ceremony of Covaxin vaccines at Yangon International Airport.

JAPAN'S philanthropic Nippon Foundation is to donate 2 million jabs of Covaxin to Myanmar this month, a total of 1 million jabs were delivered to Myanmar at the VIP lounge of Yangon International Airport at 10 am yesterday.

At the handover ceremony, Mr Mori Yuji, executive director of Nippon Foundation, handed over 1 million jabs of Covaxin to Dr Maung Maung Myint, President of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), in the presence of Mr Maruyama Ichiro, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar and Dr

Tun Min, Deputy Director-General of Yangon Region Public Health Department.

The officials from Japanese Embassy to Myanmar and Nippon Foundation, and MRCS also attended the ceremony.

The Nippon Foundation will contribute US\$17 million worth 2 million doses of Covaxin to Myanmar and 1 million doses arrived at the Yangon International Airport by Qatar Airways flight (QR8920) in the first batch. The second batch is scheduled to come by this airlines on 23 January with another 1 million doses.—MNA

Myanmar authorities
send back 145 Myanmar
migrant workers from
Thailand home

A total of 145 Myanmar returnees transferred by Thailand were sent back home after being under quarantine in Tachilek, Shan State (East) and being tested negative for COVID-19.

The returnees included Myanmar migrant workers and those who were released from prisons. Thailand transferred them to the Myanmar

authorities on 30 December 2021 via the Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge (2).

Chairman of the Township Administration Body U Tin Oo Kyaw and officials provided necessary assistance and arranged vehicles to repatriate them to their respective places.—Yar Sae (IRPD)/GNLM

Public request by Ministry of Health

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

- 1. Stay at home as much as possible.
- 2. Don't accept the guests at the house. You don't visit other houses.
- 3. The older persons above 65 or those suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart must be worn masks in the house. They must be placed at well-ventilated sites.
- 4. Wear masks if you go outside without fail. Systematically wash hands. Take a six-foot distance from others. Avoid visits to the rooms where ventilation is not good.
- 5. Avoid the crowds.

- 6. If possible, go shopping once a week. Don't buy anything from the vendors who don't systematically wear masks.
- 7. Take care of carrying the virus to the houses whenever return home from outside. Systematically discard the used masks and single disposable equipment outside the houses. Avoid close contact with family members before changing clothes or washing the body.
- 8. As the vaccines for your quota is the best, accept vaccinations for full time. Despite receiving the vaccination, you should abide by the protective ways.
- 9. Systematically cooperate in prevention, control and treatment of the disease with manpower, money, materials and expertise.

Ministry of Health (2-8-2021)

Value-added products must be exported

VALUE-ADDED products rather than the raw materials must be exported. It is necessary to seek ways for producing and exporting value-added products by effectively applying natural resources.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 4/2021 of Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 31-12-2021)

Message of Greetings sent by Chairman of State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on occasion of marking 74th Anniversary of Kachin State Day

10 January 2022

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Conference on 10 January 1948. The commemorative day of the Kachin State Day has been held yearly for 74 years. The Kachin State is home to Kachin ethnics such as Jingphaw, Rawam, Lisu and Zaiwah, Shan ethnics as Tailai, Tailon, Taisa and Taihkamti ethnics and Bamar ethnics in addition to other ethnics totalling over 1.7 million amicably.

The Kachin State is rich in valuable natural resources such as gold, jade and amber and scenic beauties of the natural environment as well. Moreover, the Kachin State is an origin of the Ayeyawady River, the main artery of Myanmar.

Traditional costumes, traditional dances and beauties, literature and customs of Kachin ethnics are happy and pleasant. The Kachin traditional Manaw festival and Htaungka dance are sorts of ethnic heritage that are attractive not only to local people but to international tourists.

Our all ethnic nationals always value their customs and nationalistic characters. Preserving and uplifting the national characters and national culture will help the patriotic spirit strong and dynamic and will bring many benefits to the country and the national. As our country is implementing peace and tranquillity, development and democracy, I'd like to notify all that now is important for fostering the nationalistic spirit.

The fascinating Kachin State with natural beauties and abundance of natural resources cannot fully enjoy the beauties of the natural environment because armed conflicts are yet to cease. Consequently, it cannot efficiently utilize natural resources in the development tasks of the state.

In implementing the development projects, only when the region is stable and peaceful with prevailing rule of law will it accomplish the missions. The ethnic people residing in the Kachin State who have understood the taste of peace are very keen to restore the peace at present. Hence, I believe that they would like to taste the fruits of sustainably perpetual peace.

The State is striving for building the Union based on democracy and federalism in accord with the wishes of ethnic national people. The main requirement for strengthening the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy and development of the nation is to ensure peace and tranquillity, rule of law, stability of the State and perpetual peace. Hence, we all emphasize the development of the peace process and sustainable and harmonious development for all ethnic national brethren.

Relevant organizations and stakeholders need to have the correct attitude and same wishes for achieving the success of the peace process. The government is controlling all the work process not to harm the peace process as much as it can. I'd like to urge ethnic armed organizations and all stakeholders not to derail from the path of NCA with conscience based on the nationalistic spirit due to terror acts, sabotages, internal and external instigation, incitement of media and various reasons.

Everybody knows that if the country is not stable and peaceful, building the Union based on democracy and federalism and development of the State will be far from the public aspiration. Individuals or in groups should not serve the State interests but all ethnic national people should do so through the united strength based on the nationalistic spirit.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren in the Kachin State,

Currently, the State Administration Council taking the responsibilities of the government in accord with the Constitution adopted the five-point road map and nine political, economic and social objectives with utmost for ensuring peace and stability of the State, development, and improvement of socio-economic development of ethnic national people as much as it can.

The government has adopted the plans on transport, electrification, agriculture, livestock, education, health and improvement of human resources for the development of multiple sectors across the nation, striving for implementing all sectors to improve the socio-economy.

In implementing the roadmap, I firmly believe that any difficulties and challenges will be firmly challenged with the patriotic spirit based on the genuine Union spirit of the ethnic nationals for the sake of the nation and the nationals.

I'd like to deeply urge all ethnic national people to participate in efforts to wipe out incitement and danger of violent attacks of terrorists undermining the peace and stability of the State and opposing the government.

As such, as now is time to restore the perpetual peace for the whole nation essential for building the Union based on democracy and federalism the entire people aspire, all ethnic national people in the Kachin State are to cooperate with the government in the peace process on the significant occasion of the Kachin State Day.

I send the message of greetings and pray that may all ethnic national people residing in the Kachin State be those capable of emerging the local stability and peace and development with momentum and be those capable of serving the interests of the state, people from the state, the country and the citizens.

*Sd/Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Prime Minister
Chairman
State Administration Council*

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

It is necessary for farmers to produce high quality, low-cost products: MoALI Union Minister says

UNION Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo met with state/district-level officials from the agriculture sector on 8 January in Kengtung Township, Shan State.

At the meeting, he said efforts should be made to develop agro-economic zones with the distinctive features of the region and to development the private sector, just as care needs to be taken to make agriculture and livestock systematic.

The Union Minister said the situation of local water and land should be utilized to make high quality products for farmers with low production costs, adding that it is necessary to make arrangements for farmers' access to land ownerships and land use rights in accordance with the existing laws, to increase production, to reduce input and labour costs, to use mechanized farming system and to choose good and pure



Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo meets departmental officials and local farmers in Kengtung on 8 January.

seeds and modern technology.

One of the main requirements in the livestock industry is inter-departmental cooperation for animal feed production, he highlighted. He also discussed

the need for training required for the development of skilled human resources and the effective use of information and communication technology.

In the afternoon, the Union

Minister inspected the coffee and tea business of Jadae Akha Company in Kengtung and its ability to export to European market and discussed the requirements.

He also visited the orange

farm of U Kyar Hay, a farmer in Nayawng Village-tract, operating 60,000 orange plants on 300 acres of land in accordance with the GAP practice and modern drip irrigation system. Napier grass is grown among the orange trees for animal feed and more than 300 local cattle are raised and cow dung is used as a natural fertilizer. It also produces high quality oranges and exports to the domestic market and neighbouring countries.

In the evening, the Union Minister met with Shan State Chief Minister Dr Kyaw Tun and Shan State Ministers in Tachilek and discussed the development of agriculture and livestock sector of Shan State, prevention of animal diseases, development of livestock industry for domestic meat consumption and export promotion, provision of knowledge and technology to develop animal feed systems.—MNA

Deputy commerce minister holds meeting with Mandalay industrial entrepreneurs, business owners



Industrial entrepreneurs and business persons meet in Mandalay via video conferencing with Deputy Minister for Commerce.

A meeting with industrial entrepreneurs and business owners was held yesterday morning through video conferencing at Pullman Mandalay Mingalar Hotel in Mandalay. At the meeting, Deputy Minister for Commerce U Nyunt Aung gave an opening speech on trade and commodity issues, the Joint Secretary of the Central Committee for on Ensuring the Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods and the secretary of the work committee explained the work of the committees.

Industrial entrepreneurs and business owners asked about the current trade issues, cash withdrawal issues to purchase raw materials for factories and to pay for salaries, banking matters, trade barriers, transportation challenges, and

officials responded to the questions.

The Deputy Minister said businesspersons may dial the Central Committee Telephone No. 067-409671 and 067-409672 and Working Committee Telephone No. 09-664075683 and 09-664596327 if there is any difficulty in trade and flow of goods.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar Daw Than Than Swe, Mandalay Region Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Kyaw Kyaw Min, Mandalay Region Economic Minister U Thein Htay, Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry and officials from factories, companies and organizations.—MNA

137 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 9 January, total figure rises to 532,062

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 532,062 after 137 new cases were reported on 9 January 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 510,128 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,291 after 1 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 8-1-2022, a total of 21,017,026 people have been vaccinated. Of them, 16,593,440 people have been vaccinated two times and 4,423,586 people once.—MNA

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CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 454237515

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmnews@gmail.com
www.gnlm.com.mm
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Union Industry Minister inspects factories and plantations in Shan State, Mandalay Region

UNION Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than paid a visit to Shan State on the morning of 7 January.

He visited Ngwe Yee Pearl Co., Ltd.'s Crown Cement Plant in Nawnghkio Township and inspected the process of cement production.

During the inspection, he said that quality control systems should be put in place at every stage of production to ensure the quality of imported substitute products. He also asked officials to openly address the problems they are facing and coordinated the submissions.

Next, the Union Minister inspected Sammas sugarcane plantation and said that it is necessary to expand the cultivation so that there is no vacant land.

After that, the Union Minister visited No. 2 Sugar Mill (Inwaing) in Inwaing Village-tract, Nawnghkio Township, Kyaukse



Union Minister Dr Charlie Than visits No 2 Sugar Mill (Inwaing) in Nawnghkio Township.

District, and inspected the stages of the sugar production process and the No. 3 Sugar Factory Project (Inwaing) project which is producing 12,000 tons of sugar

per day.

At the soap factory (Mandalay) and inspected the production process and provide subsidies to the staff.

At No 33 Heavy Industry in Kyaukse Industrial Area, the Union Minister instructed officials to coordinate the supply of electricity from the waste-to-energy

power plant to the grid and not to harm the natural environment. He also said that efforts should be made to meet the domestic demand for cement and to participate in regional development activities as much as possible.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party inspected sewing of H @ M brand warm jacket, shorts, long pants and women's clothing at the sewing factory leased to Sein Shwe Aung Myin Company Limited.

Next, they visited a bicycle factory leased to Win & Win Co., Ltd., which manufactures a variety of footwear that is being exported to over 100 countries, including Europe.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister arrived at the Home Appliance Factory (Minsu) and inspected various home appliances made of steel, and production of various hospital equipment plus plastic products.—MNA

YGEA strives for price stability as bulk purchases on gold causes price rally

BUYING gold in bulk hikes up the price in domestic market, said U Myo Myint, chairman of Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) at the annual dinner held on 8 January at Western Park Ruby Restaurant in the People's Park in Yangon.

The Central Bank of Myanmar sold 20 to 30 million dollars every week to steer the local currency value. Consequently, the prices of gold slide. Simultaneously, the association makes effort to meet the demand of gold raw materials in the market.

The buyers offer highly competitive prices. For instance, someone gave K1.8 million per tical (0.578 ounce, or 0.016 kilogram), and another one offered higher price. The sellers are rarely found at the present time, U Myo Myint explained.

Additionally, some goldsmiths made verbal transactions over calls without having any physical stocks. YGEA called for the members to make gold transaction with only immediate payment and avoid that kind of verbal transactions.

In a bid to control the price fluctuation, the member shops

Aung Thamadi, Zwe Htet, Shwe Sin Academy and Ayar U Soe Naing sold 20 viss (5 viss each) per day.

They sell the gold to other traders and members. YGEA announced that about 50 viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg) can be daily traded to deal with market volatility when gold price reached a peak of K2.2 million per tical. As a result of this, the price has fallen. The association ensures the inventory control to stabilize the price and govern price manipulation. Then, the prices returned to normal, U Myo Myint elaborated.

The prices of precious yellow metal stand at K1,820,000 per tical at the moment. The demand on safe asset is growing.

"I found the gold shops along Maha Bandoola Road were unexpectedly packed with buyers as if it offered for free," Daw Yee Khin, a resident in Kyauktada Township surprisingly stated.

As per YGEA's data, gold price was closed at K1,821,500 per tical on 31 December 2021. On 7 January 2022, the prices moved in the range of K1,822,700-K1,824,500 per tical.—Ko Naing/GNLM

Authorities seize illegal timber, goods

UNDER the guidance of illegal trade eradication steering committee, a team led by the Department of Forest inspected the vehicles on 5 and 6 January at the Koesu checkpoint in Patheingyi Township and near Meikthalin village, Yekyi Township acting on the tips-off. The authorities seized 53 tonnes of illegal teak and eight tonnes of other type of timber, totaling 61 tonnes.

Similarly, following a piece of secret information, about 1.8 tonnes of other timber were confiscated on 7 January at Nayla Thitsar inspection gate in Kyaukse village of Taungup town,

Rakhine State.

The authorities arrested K14 million worth of wooden pattern making machine, approximately K16 million valued motorcycle spare parts and over K3.07 million worth consumer goods at the terminal of Myanmar Industrial Port on 8 January, which are imported by China without mentioning in customs declaration form. The overall value of illegal goods is estimated K33.172 million. The authorities filed those criminal cases.

Afterwards, on 9 January, a team led by Forest Department investigated the forest reserves

in Thayawady and Tounghoo districts, Bago Region following the tip-off and illicit logging and extraction were found. The authorities seized about 6.35 tonnes of illegal timbers.

Between 5 and 9 January, a team led by Forest Department, under the guidance of illegal trade eradication steering committee, confiscated 69.15 tonnes of various timbers. On 8 January, the authorities seized illegal goods with an estimated value of K33.172 million. They proceed to file the cases under the existing law.—MNA



Photo shows illegal timber and goods seized by authorities.

2021 trading value indicates 63 per cent drop on YSX

ONLY K4.63 billion valued 887,969 shares by seven listed companies were traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) in 2021, showing a significant drop of 63 per cent as against 2020, according to the annual report released by the exchange.

In 2020, K12.6 billion worth of 1.87 million shares by six listed companies were traded on YSX, whereas over 2.4 million shares from five listed companies, valued at K13.39 billion, were traded on the exchange in 2019.

Both continuous trading and block trading on YSX fell in 2021 despite the debut of Amata Holding Public Co., Ltd. (AMATA) on the exchange on 3 June 2021.

At present, shares of seven listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd (TMH), the Ever Flow River Group Public Co., Ltd (EFR) and Amata Holding Public Co., Ltd. (AMATA) — were traded in equity market.

The share prices per unit were closed at K8,400 for FMI, K3,100 for MTSH, K7,900 for MCB, K19,500 for FPB, K2,600 for TMH, K2,900 for EFR and K6,000 for AMATA respectively in December 2021.



Yangon Stock Exchange is tackling trade of shares at listed companies.

In January 2021, 121,893 shares, with estimated value of K640 million, were traded in equity market. Then, it plummeted into K442 million worth of 77,388 shares in February. The figures extended further drops to K110 million worth of 19,816 shares in March 2021. Then, the market slightly rose in April with K280 million worth of 42,964 shares. The stocks maintained in the bull market in May with 78,642 shares worth of K432.448 million as well. In June, 79,296 shares worth of K430.285 million were traded on the exchange. Then, the volume of shares traded in equity market plunged into 36,855 shares in July 2021 and the trading value also slipped to K198 million.

It climbed up in August 2021 compared with those registered in the last two months, with over K300 million worth of 49,191 shares traded on the exchange. It edged up to a record high in September, with over K825 million worth of 193,353 shares. However, the trading volume plunged to 99,837 shares with estimated value of K561 million in October and touched a two-month low of K219 million, with 45,446 shares of the six listed companies traded on the equity market. It continued downward trend in December with K191 million worth of 4,428 shares, the YSX's monthly report indicated.

The stock markets worldwide have reported their larg-

est declines since the 2008 financial crisis. Similarly, the local equities market was also scared by the COVID-19 crash in the previous months, a market observer points out.

People like to keep emergency savings and purchase the safe heaven asset gold, rather than make investment amid the COVID-19 crisis and current political conditions.

Unexpectedly, people turned to stock market when the prices of gold remarkably gained in September. However, the stock market was back to down side in October, he continued.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis and political changes, Myanmar's securities market has been able to continue operat-

ing without stopping trading.

In 2020, the value of stocks traded on the exchange reached a peak of K1.48 billion in February, whereas trading on the exchange registered an all-time low of K552.9 million in November due to the COVID-19 resurgences in Myanmar, the exchange's monthly report showed.

Next, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) has allowed foreigners to invest in the local equity market from 20 March 2020.

Furthermore, YSX launched pre-listing board (PLB) on 28 September 2020 in order to provide unlisted public companies with fund-raising opportunities and build a bridge toward listing on YSX, YSX stated.

The YSX was launched four years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment seminars. The stock exchange has also sought the government's support to get more public companies to participate in the stock market and help more institutional investors, such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies, to emerge.—KK/GNLM

GAP certified for over 2,000 crop acres in Monywa District



Local farming workers are carrying out farming works.

THE crop acreage certified under the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) has exceeded 2,000 in Monywa District, Sagaing Region so far.

"GAP adoption commenced on mango cultivation

in Sagaing Region in the 2016-2017 Financial Year. The acreage under GAP have increased year over year on account of the benefits of GAP. Over 3,000 acres of 17 types of crops in the district are engaged in GAP

system and more than 2,000 have been granted GAP certificate. Agriculture Department is making efforts to issue GAP certificate for the remaining," said an officer of GAP section under Sagaing Region Agricul-

ture Department.

A total of 2,507.5 acres have been certified GAP as of the last week of December 2021, with 891 monsoon paddy acres, 30 acres of summer paddy, 217 acres of summer sesame, 210 acres of monsoon peanut, 15 acres of chili, 20 acres of pigeon pea, 50 acres of banana, 217.5 acres of pre-monsoon green gram, 464 acres of winter sesame, 50 acres of winter peanut, 43 acres of watermelon, 183 acres of cucumber and 117 acres of mango.

The region department is implementing GAP acreage in a bid to ensure food safety, worker safety in the supply chain, conservation of the environment and reduce input cost.

Furthermore, the GAP growers can get more market access, locally and internation-

ally, according to the Agriculture Department.

Additionally, the region department has introduced digital touch for seeking GAP certificates to cut unnecessary red tape and bring smooth and quick service to the growers.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has encouraged farmers to use its GAP protocol in a bid to boost productivity, profitability, market access, and competitiveness in the agricultural sector. The Agriculture Department raised awareness of GAP among growers by providing courses. The GAP protocol and guidelines include the most consumed and major export items — mango, pomelo, honeydew, watermelon, avocado, chili, tomato, onion, cabbage, corn, sesame, various beans, rice, and coffee.—Lu Lay/GNLM

Mobile market trucks offer food at fair prices

MOBILE market trucks are back to their businesses and they offered staple food at fairer prices on 7 January in the five townships (Dala, Seikkyi Khanaungto, Twantay, Kyimyindine and Kamayut), Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) stated.

The consumers can buy rice at K1,000 (low-quality rice) and K1,700 (Pawsan variety) per condensed milk can, edible oil at K1,850 per 50-viss bottle, egg at K1,300 per 10 pc and other meat such as mutton, beef with the mobile market trucks.

“The mobile market makes shopping more convenient and safer. Consumers do not need to go to the crowded market during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most importantly, the price is cheaper. We can buy most of the items at



Mobile market truck sells meat, rice and cooking oil to local consumers.

one place,” said Daw Thida Oo who lives in Dala Township.

In a bid to reduce the crowd at markets, bringing fresh food to

the consumers and containing the possible spread of the coronavirus in the region, the mobile market was started to run in the townships,

arranged by Yangon City Development Committee and the affiliated associations of UMFCCI.

The trucks will offer the

packaged CP chicken, pork, beef, mutton, fresh and saltwater fish, egg and vegetables at a fair price.

The mobile market plan will proceed to other townships in four districts of the Yangon Region. The UMFCCI will update the daily sales plans through their Facebook Page and CITY FM programme. The trucks are hanging mobile market vinyl and the respective officials from YCDC are monitoring them.

The management team of the mobile truck will accept the goods supplied by the registered farmers only. The team will also set a fair price in certain wards for low-income people. Those truck operators must strictly adhere to the traffic rules, the rules set by the municipal, and the health guidelines for the coronavirus, the UMFCCI stated. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

Myanmar ships about 4,000 tonnes of honey yearly



Photo shows export quality honey bottles in various sizes. PHOTO: KANU

APPROXIMATELY 4,000 tonnes of Myanmar’s honey is conveyed to foreign trade partners every year.

The natural resources in developing countries are favourable for the production of organic honey. Myanmar’s small-scale beekeepers and beekeeping businesses under the Apiculture Division under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation yearly produces over 6,000 tonnes of honey, with 2,000 for domestic consumption and 4,000 for the external market. The department is arranging 1.5 million acres of crops for the bees to be pollinated.

“Myanmar has regular trade partner countries. Expansion of business is required to increase

foreign income. Sagaing Region is the main producer of honey. Mon State also started engaging in honey production as well.

Advanced beekeeping techniques should be adopted for higher honey production in the private sector as it could effectuate the development of the rural community,” said U Kyaw Kyaw Oo, in charge of the Apiculture Division under the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

The beekeeping business commenced in 1979 in Myanmar and Myanmar’s honey penetrated the foreign market in 1985. It is commonly delivered to Japan, China, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand. Sunflower honey, palm honey and sesame flow-

er honey are preferred in the market.

Of them, sunflower honey is highly demanded in the international market. China is the biggest exporter of honey in the world and Viet Nam, Myanmar and Thailand are the largest producers among the regional countries.

The agriculture sector is the backbone of Myanmar’s economy and the country is making efforts to boost honey production.

The farmers practise beekeeping in the mixed farming system. Enzymes that are added to the nectar by bees helps break down complex sugar into simple sugar. Floral scent influences honey taste and colour. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

Potato prices soar from border closure

CLOSURE of border post between Myanmar and China hiked up prices of potato in the domestic market this year, allowing the growers from Pinlaung area to earn a handsome profit, the growers stated.

The potato can be imported owing to the trade suspension in the Sino-Myanmar border, causing price rise in the domestic market, Khun Aung Kyaw Zaw, a potato trader explained.

“Growers from Pinlaung area primarily deliver potato to Bayintnaung, Thiri Mingala and Danyingon markets in Yangon and Aungban town in Shan State. It is an exorbitant price. We have never experienced anything like that. The prices

were estimated only K800-1,000 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes), whereas it rises to over K2,000 per viss at present”, he said.

The growers sell potatoes at above K50,000 per 32 or 33 visses bags in the Pinlaung area.

Potato prices moved in the range of K1,650 to 4,000 per viss depending on quality and size in the retail market.

Chinese potato has been flooded in the domestic market since 2015, making the potato market sluggish.

Potato is grown in Shan, Mon and Kayin states and Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady regions. — Aik Thon/GNLM



Bags of potato are ready to be sent to the market.

Prevent depletion of fish resources

THE various species of water creatures from the seas and oceans as well as rivers, creeks and lakes more than the animals from land are contributing much to the food sufficiency of humans.

A two-third of the world is covered with ocean waters inhabited by various kinds of water creatures. Those water animals not only from the oceans but from rivers and creeks benefit the life of humans.

As foods obtained from the land are gradually shortages, humans rely more on the water creatures which contain an abundant percentage of protein. At present, seafood is the favourite meal among global countries.

Myanmar set the non-fishery period from May to July every year to conserve the fish resources in the waters. During the period, any fishing trawlers do not leave for the seas. The authorities also take action against the offenders. Meanwhile, not only authorities but local people release fingerlings into the natural waters. Systematic fishing laws and rules help Myanmar conserve its water territory filled with abundant water creatures.

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Everybody needs to take care of the cause and the effect of doing something. They have to calculate the possibilities in all arenas by avoiding two edges of the way. They all need to seek the best way between the consumption of seafood and conservation for water creatures.

■ ■ ■

How China is keeping to its strict 'zero Covid' strategy

China has a formula it calls "dynamic zero" for curbing outbreaks: strict lockdowns and immediate mass testing.

THE distressing case of a pregnant Chinese woman miscarrying after a strict lockdown delayed her access to medical treatment has reignited debate over the limits of China's zero-tolerance approach to Covid-19.

The country where the coronavirus was first detected in 2019 is now among the last places still hewing to "zero Covid", placing millions under quarantine even as Beijing prepares to host next month's Winter Olympics.

How is China maintaining 'zero Covid'?

China has a formula it calls "dynamic zero" for curbing outbreaks: strict lockdowns and immediate mass testing.

Unlike softer lockdowns elsewhere, people in China can be banned from leaving their buildings or forced to remain inside hotel rooms if they are considered high-risk contacts.

The historic city of Xi'an, home to the famed Terracotta Warriors, was locked down in December, forcing its 13 million residents indoors after around 150 cases were detected.

The similarly sized city of Zhengzhou tested every resident after just 11 cases.

International flights are a

fraction of pre-pandemic levels with arrivals undergoing strict weeks-long quarantine.

Mandatory track-and-trace apps mean close contacts are usually detected and quarantined quickly.

Does it work?

China's official tally since the start of the pandemic -- just over 100,000 -- is a fraction of the record one million cases logged by the US in a single day earlier this month.

The official death toll has stayed under 5,000.

Although cases from the chaotic initial outbreak in Wuhan in early 2020 are widely believed to have been under-reported, life since then has largely returned to normal.

"There is still no ability to stop single local cases from appearing, but we have the ability and confidence to quickly extinguish the outbreak when a local case is found," National Health Commission official Liang Wannian told reporters last month.

Who pays the price?

"Zero Covid" comes at a cost. Border areas, especially near Myanmar, have endured almost constant lockdowns and seen an exodus of businesses.

Locked-down communities

have complained of poor access to food, supplies and medical treatment.

Meanwhile, migrant workers have been left stranded from families for months due to onerous travel rules and restrictions.

Heavy-handed enforcement has sometimes sparked outrage, such as when health workers beat a corgi to death after the owners were sent to quarantine.

Analysts say repeated shutdowns of factories and businesses have contributed to the country's slowdown, despite China being the only major economy to expand in 2020.

Will China ever reopen?

"China certainly has shown it is feasible to continue the zero Covid strategy almost indefinitely," Ben Cowling, an epidemiologist at Hong Kong University, told AFP.

The country effectively cut itself off from the world in March 2020 and virtually banned foreigners from entering.

Since then, travel restrictions have eased slightly.

But international tourism is non-existent and the government has said it will not renew expiring Chinese passports unless the holder has a good reason for travel.

The country will not reopen



Residents queue up for nucleic acid test at a residential area in Xi'an, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, 21 December 2021. Xi'an launched a new round of all-inclusive nucleic acid testing since new locally transmitted confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported. PHOTO: XINHUA

until at least after the upcoming Winter Olympics and Paralympics in Beijing, with the government anxiously guarding the capital and tightening restrictions ahead of the Games.

Those who question "zero Covid" have faced a nationalistic backlash.

Prominent Chinese medical expert Zhang Wenhong wrote in July that countries must eventually "learn to coexist with the virus" -- prompting attacks from online trolls.

What will happen if China opens up?

Peking University researchers have warned China could suffer a "colossal outbreak" that would overwhelm its medical system if it relaxed restrictions to a similar level as Europe and the US.

But Ivan Hung, an infectious diseases expert at Hong Kong University, said second generation vaccines targeting the Delta and Omicron variants -- as well as close to 100 percent vaccination rates -- could ward off a disaster.

In this scenario, "it's likely that Covid will turn out to be similar to influenza," Hung said.

But letting the virus in could be risky for President Xi Jinping as he seeks a third term in October after billing himself as a leader that will always keep China safe.

"When it does come, the transition may not be easy because Chinese society has gotten quite used to a low level of transmission," University of Oxford's Thomas Hale told AFP.

SOURCE: AFP

Women's periods may be slightly late after Covid vaccine: study

WOMEN vaccinated against Covid-19 saw a slight delay in their period of almost a day compared to those who were unvaccinated,

a US government-funded study said Thursday.

But the number of days of bleeding was not affected, ac-

cording to the research carried out on nearly 4,000 individuals and published in "Obstetrics & Gynecology."



Many people have reported changes to their periods after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. What do experts have to say about this phenomenon? PHOTO: AFP

Lead author Alison Edelman of the Oregon Health & Science University told AFP the effects are small and expected to be temporary, a finding that is "very reassuring" as well as validating for those who experienced changes.

The study can also help counter anti-vaccine misinformation on the topic, which is rampant on social media.

The slight increase in menstrual cycle length is not clinically significant. Any change of fewer than eight days is classified as normal by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics.

Period cycles generally last about 28 days, but the precise amount varies from one woman to another, as well as within an individual's lifetime. It can also change during times of stress.

For their study, the scientists analyzed anonymized data from a fertility tracking app, among

women aged 18 to 45 who were not using hormonal contraception.

Some 2,400 participants were vaccinated -- the majority with Pfizer (55 percent), followed by Moderna (35 percent) and Johnson & Johnson (seven percent).

About 1,500 unvaccinated women were also included as a comparison.

Among the vaccinated group, data was collected from three consecutive cycles before vaccination and from three more consecutive cycles, including the cycle or cycles in which vaccination took place.

For unvaccinated individuals, data was collected for six consecutive cycles.

Immune response to vaccine

On average, the first vaccine dose was associated with a 0.64-day increase in cycle length and the second dose with a 0.79-day increase, when comparing the

vaccinated to unvaccinated group.

The immune system's response to the vaccine could be behind the change.

"We know that the immune system and the reproductive system are interlinked," said Edelman. A revved-up immune system might have an impact on the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis -- what Edelman calls the "highway of how your brain talks to your ovaries, talks to your uterus," or simply the "body clock."

Specifically, the production of inflammatory proteins called cytokines appears to disrupt the way this axis regulates the timing of menstrual cycles.

The changes seem most pronounced when vaccination takes place early in the follicular phase, which starts on the first day of the menstrual period (bleeding) and ends when ovulation begins.

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 9 January 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a partly cloudy to 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 NOON OF THE 10 January 2022: Light rains are likely to be isolated in Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Yangon, Taninthayi and regions and Chin State 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: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 January 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 January 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 January 2022: Generally fair weather.

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YCDC Chairman inspects development activities in Dagon Myothit townships



Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay views expansion of Highway in Dagon Myothit Township in Yangon Region on 9 January.

CHAIRMAN of the Yangon City Development Committee Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay, accompanied by Vice-Mayor, Secretary, Committee members, and relevant officials, inspected the leveling of the Betan creek banks after completing excavation to straighten the curve of the creek in Sport Complex in ward (27), Dagon Myothit (North) Township yesterday.

Afterwards, the Mayor and party visited the Dagon Myothit (South) Township Public Rental Housing Project site and inspected the housing construction.

The project is being implemented on the 171 acres of land on the road to Thayatpin Chaung village from No (2) Highway and No (7) Highway intersection. As

the first phase, 194 buildings, 3,104 units are under construction.

The Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation and the Myanmar Licensed Contractors Association (MLCA) are constructing 97 buildings each, which is now 48 % complete.

The Mayor and party also inspected the extension of concrete paving to widen 46 feet 4-lane road at No (7) Highway between the No (2) Highway in Dagon Myothit (South) Township and Bayintnaung Road in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township, and the concrete mixer of the Engineering Department on Pyidaungsu Road in Thingangyun Township and made necessary orders.—MNA

MOEAF warning job scams involving social network

MYANMAR migrant workers and those who want to work abroad should be alert to recruitment scammers who are preying on labourers with the use of social network, Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation (MOEAF) reported.

“The majority of Myanmar migrant workers primarily go to Thailand and secondly to Malaysia and other foreign countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand on overseas employment has fallen off. However, such an event does not hesitate the scammers to attempt to trick the potential victims and get your money. Fraudulent cases are detected in other countries. We are also focusing on investigation of job scams,” said an official of MOEAF.

Myanmar officials and Thailand counterparts are still in negotiation on overseas employment under a Memorandum of Understanding to secure the life of the migrant workers. The related department is working together with the authorized overseas employment agencies regarding COVID-19 test, vaccination, quarantine cost and service charges.

As a result of this, Myanmar workers are warned of fake job interviews and job postings online and they are encouraged to cross-check with the recruiter’s name with the business profiles to spot fake job offers. Thailand has not issued any demand letter for the foreign workers yet. Similarly, Malaysia has not allowed to recruit new Myanmar workers yet due

to COVID-19 restrictions and measures. Bangladesh and Indonesia initially permitted only the agricultural workers. The Ministry of Labour will keep posted regarding a legitimate recruitment and detailed plan, he added.

The ministry is screening the demand letters from Singapore’s enterprises submitted by the legal overseas recruitment agencies, and sending Myanmar workers. The employers and agencies have to strictly adhere to the COVID-19 protocols of the designated countries. Additionally, Myanmar workers are also required to link with the registered agencies for overseas employment. They can make inquiry about the agencies through the official website of the ministries and MOEAF.—Aik Thon /GNLM

Mandalay Region allocates K900 million social pensions for over 32,000 elderly people during mini-budget period

MANDALAY Region Department of Social Welfare (DSW) has been providing more than K900 million social pensions allocated under 2021-2022 mini-budget to 32,028 elder people aged above 85.

“According to social pensions scheme, the DSW has been providing monthly cash contribution to the elderly people aged above 85. There are 32,028 elderly people in 28 townships in the region. They receive K30,000 each in three months. The social pensions amounted to K968 million during the six-month mini-budget (October 2021-March 2022). The number of elder people has increased in the region and mortality among elderly people has fallen on account of health care improvement, said U Zaw Min, director of region DSW.

For first three months of this mini-budget (Oct-Dec 2021), the department has completed this

scheme across 24 townships in the region and contributions are still being undertaken in Kyaukpadaung, NyaungU, Myingyan and Meiktila townships.

“Elderly people must be supported for their well-beings. Older people play a big role in the society as they have rich skills and experiences. The state commits social pension support to older people for their social protection. I am glad that the elder people receive the contributions for health and well-beings, he added.

In the second half of 2021-2022 financial year, regional DSW contributed over K900 million to 32,028 older people (9,907 male and 22,121 female). An individual elderly person aged above 85 received social pensions of K120,000 per year, in coordination with the township, ward and village administrators.—Aye Chan/GNLM

Drugs seized in Myeik, Nawngkhio, Pathein and Hopong townships

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force made inspections in Kangyi Ward, Myeik Township at 10 am on 8 January.

A search of Yin Htay, a pedestrian on the strand road, turned up 50,000 stimulant pills in a plastic bag he was carrying, police force said.

According to the link, Than Htoo Aung was arrested at 11:30 am during a search of Hotel Room No. 104 on Bandoola Road, Yaypon Quarter.

According to the investigation, the combined team raided Tun

Naing’s house in Kalwin village in Myeik Township at 2 pm, and seized 120,000 stimulant tablets and 2.72 kilograms of opium speciosa worth K510.136 million.

Similarly, a motorcycle driven by Wai Phyto (a) Shorty and another motorcycle driven by Hla Tun and followed by Htun Lin Aung were stopped and inspected near Milestone No. 79/1 on Muse-Mandalay Road in Nawngkhio Township, at 12 noon on 8 January.

A total of 66,000 stimulant tablets in Wai Phyto (a) Shorty’s backpack

were seized and a search of house of Kyaw Zeyar Lin (a) Maung Kyaw (a) Hnokkhamhmwe at 1st Aung Chanthar Street, No. 6 Ward, Pathein, at 4 pm that day turned up 2,860 stimulant tablets.

A search of the house of Sai Thant Zin (a) Tafis in Naungkaw village, Paunglin Village-tract, Hopong Township on the night of 7 January turned up 11,600 stimulant tablets, and they are being prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, according to the Police Force.—MNA



More than 100,000 march in France against Covid vaccine requirements

MORE than 100,000 people across France protested Saturday over what they say are government plans to further restrict the rights of the unvaccinated, days after French President Emmanuel Macron vowed to “piss off” those refusing the jab.

The turnout was four times higher than the numbers who answered the December 18 call to protest, when 25,500 people marched across the country, according to government estimates.

The protests oppose a planned law that will require individuals to prove they are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus before they can eat out, travel on inter-city trains or attend cultural events.

On Thursday, France’s lower house of parliament passed the

controversial bill in a first reading. The government has said it expects the new requirements to be implemented by 15 January, although lawmakers in the Senate could now delay the process.

Interior ministry officials said 105,200 people participated in Saturday’s protests across France, 18,000 of them in the capital Paris, where police reported 10 arrests and three officers slightly injured.

Elsewhere there were 24 arrests and seven police officers lightly injured according to the ministry.

Among the larger demonstrations, around 6,000 demonstrators turned out in Toulon, while in Montpellier police used teargas during clashes with protesters.

France recorded 303,669



Demonstrator holds a banner reading “No to health pass” and “Truth” during a protest against the health pass and COVID-19 vaccines at Place du Palais-Royal, Paris, on 8 January 2022. PHOTO: AFP

The Paris protesters, many of them unmasked, braved the cold and rain brandishing placards emblazoned with the word “truth” and “No to vaccine passes”. — AFP ■

US President Biden says he doesn’t think COVID is here to stay



People wait to enter a Nike store at SoHo in New York, the United States, on 30 July 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden on Friday said that he doesn’t think that the COVID-19 is here to stay, but added that he does think it will remain around the world.

ing, according to The Hill. “COVID as we’re dealing with it now is not here to stay, the normal doesn’t have to be. We have so many more tools we developed and we continue to develop that can contain COVID and other strains of COVID,” the President added, according to The Hill.

Biden’s remarks come amid a severe surge of the coronavirus in the United States and across the globe due to the highly transmissible omicron variant. The US government awarded a contract worth over 50 million USD for the distribution of over-the-counter COVID-19 test kits on Friday (local time). — ANI ■

Thailand maintains suspension of quarantine-free entry amid new COVID-19 case spike

THAILAND announced on Friday to maintain the suspension of its quarantine exemption program while upgrading pandemic control measures amid a surge in new COVID-19 cases.

New applications for Thailand’s Test & Go quarantine exemption scheme will not be approved until further notice, said Taweessin Visanuyothin, spokesperson of the Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA), the country’s COVID-19 taskforce.

Those who have received approvals can still enter Thailand without quarantine until 15 January, Taweessin told a press



A man receives the COVID-19 vaccine in a mobile vaccination unit in Bangkok, Thailand, on 17 September 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA

conference.

On Friday, Thailand reported 7,526 new confirmed cases, the highest daily tally since 8 November, 2021, and more than doubled from a daily average of more than 3,000 during the past week. — Xinhua ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Fifth COVID-19 wave hits Hungary

THE fifth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic driven by the Omicron variant has hit Hungary, Bela Merkely, rector of Semmelweis Medical University in Budapest and leader of the Clinical Epidemiology Working Group, said on public television M1 on Friday. Merkely said that since the Omicron coronavirus variant is highly contagious, tens of thousands of new cases can be expected in the country in the coming days and weeks.

“The Omicron variant typically causes only mild upper respiratory infections in vaccinated people – runny nose, sore throat, headache and fever lasting for a day or two,” he explained, warning that the hospitalization rate for unvaccinated people may increase. — ANI ■

COVID-19 vaccines in high demand in Cameroon ahead of AFCON

CAMEROON’S Minister of Public Health Manoauda Malachie said on Friday that vaccines against COVID-19 are in high demand in the country ahead of the kick-off of Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) on Sunday.

“Following the high demand for COVID-19 vaccination observed in accredited centers, measures have been taken for the delivery of health passes,” Malachie said in a statement 48 hours to the start of Africa’s biggest football festival.

The government has created an online platform to permit people register to be vaccinated and tested “quickly”. Only those who have been vaccinated and tested will obtain a “health pass” which will permit them to enter the stadium, the minister said. — Xinhua ■

Japan to toughen COVID-19 rules in 3 prefectures

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Friday that COVID-19 restrictions in the prefectures of Hiroshima, Yamaguchi and Okinawa will be tightened from 9 January.

“We decided today to introduce tougher anti-coronavirus measures in Hiroshima, Yamaguchi and Okinawa from 9-31 January,” he told a COVID-19 response meeting. The three prefectures saw a record number of cases of infection on Thursday, with the country confirming over 4,000 daily for the first time since mid-September.

American military bases have been widely blamed for viral spill-over after it was revealed that US personnel deployed to Japan had not been tested for coronavirus since fall. — ANI ■

Sri Lanka enters strategic oil deal with India

SRI Lanka and India launched a joint venture Thursday to revive a strategic British colonial-era oil storage facility and strengthen energy security in the region, a senior minister said.

The deal is seen as countering China's rising influence in the region and comes two days ahead of a visit to the Indian Ocean island nation by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Energy minister Udaya Gammanpila said the agreement signed with the Sri Lankan unit of the Indian Oil Corporation would involve the refurbishment of tanks near the eastern port of Trincomalee that were used during World War II by Allied forces. "Agreements to develop



Sri Lanka and India have created a joint venture to revive the World War II-era oil storage facility near the port of Trincomalee **PHOTO: AFP**

Trinco Oil Tank Farm signed this evening," the minister said on

Twitter. Under the joint venture, Sri Lanka will hold 51 percent and

India will hold the rest. The minister did not say how much each

side would invest. Earlier this week, Sri Lanka's cabinet had approved plans to develop the tanks, which have a capacity of eight million barrels. The Indian High Commission in Colombo called the agreement a "new milestone" in economic partnership between the two South Asian neighbours.

The tank farm, located about 260 kilometres (160 miles) north-east of Colombo, was largely abandoned after the end of the war, but the Indian Oil Corporation has been using 14 tanks since 2003 under a previous agreement.

The facility originally had 100 tanks, but one was destroyed when a Japanese aircraft bombed it in April 1942, the energy ministry said. — AFP ■

NEWS

IN BRIEF

World gets taste for Japanese gin as exports hit record high in 2021

GIN produced in Japan, especially craft gin, has gained popularity overseas in recent years for its distinct flavour, with exports of the distilled alcoholic beverage hitting an all-time high in 2021.

According to Osaka Customs, Japan exported 3,714 kiloliters of gin between January and October in 2021 worth about 2.57 billion yen (\$22 million). The export value in the first 10 months of 2021 surpassed the 2.28 billion yen logged in the whole of 2019, the previous all-time high.

Export Value

While the export value was only 1 million yen in 2011, there has been a significant increase in shipments since 2016 on the back of a global boom in demand for gin, the government customs agency said.

Europe and North America accounted for over 60 per cent of Japan's gin exports in the January-October period of 2021 in terms of value. The United States imported 19.3 per cent, while 13.3 per cent and 11.0 per cent were shipped to the Netherlands and France, respectively. — Kyodo ■

Record year for illegal cryptocurrency payments: study

CRYPTOCURRENCY-BASED crime hit a record high in 2021 as overall legal payments also reached an all-time peak, data group Chainalysis revealed on Thursday.

Criminal transactions, involving bitcoin and its peers, totalled \$14 billion, up 79 per cent from 2020, according to the group's analysis.

Total cryptocurrency payments meanwhile rocketed 567 per cent to \$15.8 trillion year-on-year, Chainalysis said, as the sector won some strong support from traditional finance.

Cybercriminals

"Given that roaring adoption, it's no surprise that more cybercriminals are using cryptocurrency," the group concluded.

"In fact, with the growth of legitimate cryptocurrency usage far outpacing the growth of criminal usage, illicit activity's share of cryptocurrency transaction volume has never been lower."

Illicit transactions amounted to 0.15 per cent of the total. Despite the lower percentage, "criminal abuse of cryptocurrency creates huge impediments for continued adoption, heightens the likelihood of restrictions being imposed by governments, and worst of all victimizes innocent people around the world", the report stressed. — AFP ■

China's home appliance sector sees output growth in Jan-Nov 2021

CHINA'S home appliance sector saw output growth in the first 11 months last year, data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology showed.

During the period, the output of air conditioners and washing machines totaled 197.41 million and 78.33 million sets, respectively, up 11.4 per cent and 11.1 per cent year on year.

Going against the trend, China's refrigerator makers saw their output fall 0.2 per cent year on year to 82.53 million sets during the period, the ministry said.

In November alone, China's air conditioner output came in at 16.63 million sets, up 3.7 per cent year on year, while the output



An employee works at a washing machine production facility in Tianjin. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

of washing machines saw a 1.5 per cent yearly drop to total 8.44 million sets, according to the min-

istry. China is the fastest-growing home appliances market in the world. — Xinhua ■

Oil prices jump over Kazakhstan unrest, while uranium less affected

UNREST in OPEC+ member Kazakhstan has pushed up oil prices as investors fear supply interruptions, but the uranium

market appears less affected despite the Central Asian country being the world's second largest producer.

"Riots obviously can stop production and exports," said Bjarne Schieldrop, an analyst at Swedish bank SEB.

Over the week, crude prices gained about five percent and on Friday Brent exceeded \$83 per barrel, "putting it at its highest level since the price slide triggered by the first appearance of the Omicron variant in late November," said Carsten Fritsch, commodities analyst at Commerzbank. Protests spread across the country of 19 million this week in outrage over a New Year increase in prices for liquid petroleum gas (LPG), which many use to fuel cars. — AFP ■



Protests spread in Kazakhstan after a New Year increase in prices for liquid petroleum gas. **PHOTO: AFP**

Humanoid robot Ameca shown to public at CES 2022

BRITAIN’S Engineered Arts’ humanoid robot, Ameca, made its first contact with the public at the 2022 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) this week, the largest technology fair on the planet.

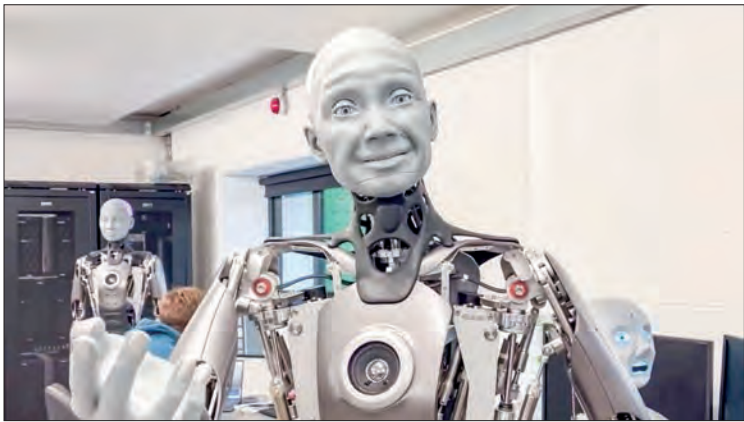
During the event, a large crowd gathered around to watch Ameca almost every second and interacted with the robot whose facial features are surprisingly vivid and emotive.

Ameca can not only respond to visitors’ questions with no more troublesome than Alexa, Amazon’s cloud-based AI voice service available on

hundreds of millions of devices, but also respond to conversations with proper recreated expressions.

Ameca has teeth. Ameca’s body is all metal and plastic, its face is a deliberately genderless and nonhuman gray. It has 17 individual motors inside its head controlling its movements and expressions.

Despite dazzling spectators with the eerily lifelike expressions on its mobile silicon face, the robot is still unable to walk. According to the company, walking is a challenging task and it is in development plans.



Engineered Arts wants to make its ‘Ameca’ robot a platform for AI development. **PHOTO: AFP**

Ameca blinked its way into public consciousness in late 2021 when a video of its facial expressions went viral on social media. Elon Musk responded to the video with

one word, “Yikes.” This isn’t the first hauntingly humanoid robot Engineered Arts has released. For the past four years, the company has been creating a line of lifelike Mesmer robots.

Besides Ameca, Hong Kong-based engineering and robotics company Hanson Robotics designed and released in 2016 a similar humanoid robot, Sophia, who was named the United Nations Development Programme’s first Innovation Champion in 2017, becoming the first non-human to be given a United Nations title. — Xinhua ■

Three Gorges hydropower station generates over 100 bln kWh of electricity in 2021



File photo taken on 10 July 2012 shows water gushing out from the Three Gorges Dam in central China’s Hubei Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

THE Three Gorges Hydroelectric Power Station on China’s Yangtze River has generated 103.6 billion kWh of electricity in 2021, according to the China Three Gorges Corporation.

The clean energy it produced is estimated to be equivalent to the electricity generated by 31.8 million tonnes of standard coal, respectively reducing carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide emissions by 86.9 million tonnes and 19,400 tonnes, said Chen Hui, head of the Three Gorges hydroelectric plant.

In 2020, the hydropower station had generated 111.8 billion kWh of electricity, beating the previous world record for hydropower generation of 103.098 billion kWh set by Brazil’s Itaipu hydroelectric plant in 2016.

With 34 hydropower generating units, the hydropower station has a generating capacity of 22.5 million kilowatts.— Xinhua ■

Unvaccinated Citigroup workers may lose jobs by end of month

CITIGROUP, the US third largest banking institution, reiterated its vaccination mandate and told its U.S.-based workers to vaccinate before 14 January, or they will be fired by the end of the month, according to media reports.

Bloomberg cited a Citigroup spokesperson as saying that the company will place workers who refuse to get vaccinated against COVID-19 by 14 January on unpaid leave, then their employment will be terminated at the end of the month.

Headquartered in New York, the bank rolled out the vaccination mandate two months ago, requiring all of its US-based employees to be vaccinated as a condition of their employment.

Citi’s Head of Human Resources Sara Wechter wrote on LinkedIn in October that there were two key factors behind the mandate: the bank has an obligation to comply with the White House mandate

that individuals supporting government contracts be fully vaccinated; a vaccinated workforce ensures the health and safety of Citi staff when returning to the office. She also explained that Citi will assess all requests for religious, medical or any other accommodation required by state or local law on a case by case basis.

Citigroup has some 70,000 US

employees, and so far about 95 per cent of them have been vaccinated, according to media reports quoting sources familiar with the matter.

The US Supreme Court has heard arguments concerning President Joe Biden’s mandate that all US companies with at least 100 employees have them either be vaccinated or subjected to weekly tests.— Xinhua ■



File photo taken on 5 December 2012 shows a man standing outside a Citibank branch in New York, the United States. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Foreign trade of China’s Inner Mongolia up 17.2 pct

FOREIGN trade volume of north China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region reached over 112 billion yuan (about 17.6 billion US dollars) from January to November 2021, up 17.2 per cent year on year, the regional commerce department said Friday. The region’s imports in the first 11 months of 2021 reached about 69.2 billion yuan, up 8 per cent year on year, while its exports soared 36 per cent year on year to 42.9 billion yuan. The main export products included oxyamino compounds, steel, and freight vehicles; and the main imported commodities were copper ore, milk and cream, logs and potash fertilizer. — Xinhua ■

Nippon Life to encourage more firms to reduce CO2 emissions

NIPPON Life Insurance Co will urge foreign companies it invests in to bring carbon dioxide emissions to net zero by 2050, expanding its existing request for domestic firms to do so, the insurer’s President Hiroshi Shimizu said.

The major Japanese institutional investor, which holds about 10 trillion yen (\$87 billion) worth of equities and corporate bonds in the country, will draw up an interim target for 2030 in the near future to achieve a decarbonized society and request investees to take measures to cut CO2 emissions, Shimizu said. — Kyodo ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (002N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (002N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

NEWS
IN BRIEFDakar rally blast
'embarrassment'
for Saudi Arabia:
analysts

AN explosion that badly injured a French driver at the Dakar rally has embarrassed Saudi Arabia, which is seeking to position itself as a global sports hub, analysts said.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Friday that Paris was considering cancelling the rally under way in the kingdom.

His comments come after French prosecutors said Tuesday that they had opened a terrorism probe over the December 30 blast.

Driver Philippe Boutron, 61, was seriously wounded in the explosion, which the Saudi authorities insist was accidental. — AFP ■

Brazil cliff collapse
kills at least seven

AT least seven people were killed and three were missing after a cliff collapsed onto boats carrying tourists on a lake in Brazil, authorities said Saturday.

Rescue teams including a dive squad and members of the Brazilian Navy rushed to Furnas Lake in Minas Gerais state, where panicked tourists had watched helplessly as a large rock fragment broke off a ravine and plunged atop three boats.

The latest official toll is "seven dead and three missing," Minas Gerais firefighters' spokesman Pedro Aihara said on Saturday night.

Another 32 were wounded, including nine who had to be hospitalized, authorities said.

Firefighters had initially reported 20 missing, but "that number was substantially reduced because a good part of the victims who were unaccounted for were people who moved by their own means to hospitals," Aihara said in a voice message sent to reporters.

Tourists flock to see the rock walls, caverns and waterfalls that surround the green waters of Lake Furnas, formed by the hydroelectric dam of the same name.

Dramatic videos shared on social networks caught the exact moment when the cliff fell on the three boats. — AFP ■

Mother Teresa charity in India gets back access to foreign funds



Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize and was later declared a saint. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

The Indian government renewed permission for late Catholic nun Mother Teresa's charity to receive

foreign funds, weeks after rejecting it, the organisation said Saturday. On Christmas Day the Nar-

endra Modi government moved to cut off foreign funding to the Missionaries of Charity and refused

to renew its licence under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

Charities and non-profit firms need to register under FCRA to receive money from abroad.

"The FCRA application has now been renewed," Sunita Kumar, a close aide to Mother Teresa, told AFP.

The Missionaries of Charity, which runs shelter homes across India, was founded in 1950 by the late Mother Teresa, a Catholic nun who devoted most of her life to helping the poor in the eastern city of Kolkata.

She won the Nobel Peace Prize and was later declared a saint.

India's home ministry issued a statement in December saying it was rejecting the renewal application because the charity did not meet "eligibility conditions" and that "adverse inputs were noticed". — AFP ■

Bosnia Serbs mark national day amid fears of secession

ON the eve of the Serbs' national day in Bosnia, Mira Vuletic is not in a festive mood as talk of secession lingers again, stirring fears the country is set to return to the dark years of intercommunal conflict.

The holiday, which falls on Sunday, marks the creation of the Republika Sprska (RS), Bosnia's Serb entity that was declared three decades ago — one of the events seen as putting the country on the path to a war in the 1990s that killed over 100,000 people.

"They're stirring up panic and that scares me," says Vuletic, a 70-year-old pensioner, one of the few willing to give her name in eastern Sarajevo, an area that falls under RS jurisdiction.

"But I think they do this to hide their schemes and theft," Vuletic added, pointing the blame at leaders from all of Bosnia's ethnic groups for endemic corruption.

Tensions have been rising for months in Bosnia with the Serb's political leader Milorad



Tensions have been rising for months in Bosnia with Serb political leader Milorad Dodik threatening to secede. PHOTO: AFP

Dodik setting in motion plans last month to withdraw from the country's central institutions including the army, the judiciary and the tax system. The move earned fresh sanctions

from the US on Wednesday, with Washington chiding him for attempting to undermine the landmark Dayton Peace Accords that brought an end to fighting in Bosnia in 1995. — AFP ■

Chinese filmmaker Zhang Yimou to direct Olympic ceremony again



Acclaimed Chinese film director Zhang Yimou masterminded the spectacular opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

ACCLAIMED Chinese film director Zhang Yimou, who masterminded the spectacular opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics, will reprise that role for next month's Winter Games in the capital, organisers have announced.

Zhang, 71, promised a "totally innovative" unveiling, while conceding that the global pandemic and colder weather will limit its scale compared to 14 years ago, when 15,000 performers took part.

"Being simple, just as in martial arts films, is like a mas-

ter's sword," Zhang told state-run Xinhua news agency in an interview released late Friday.

"It looks like a very simple stab, but with fateful power."

The director of Chinese classics such as "Red Sorghum", "Raise the Red Lantern" and martial-arts epics like "Hero" and "House of Flying Daggers" said around 3,000 performers would take part.

Zhang said it would feature "a bold idea" for the lighting of the Olympic torch that will take in concepts such as "environmental protection and low carbon emission." — AFP ■

US, Russia hold high-stakes talks on Ukraine war fears

THE United States and Russia open talks Sunday in Geneva on soaring tensions over Ukraine, with Moscow seeking a wide-ranging new security arrangement with the West but facing strong pressure to pull back troops.

The high-level discussions start a week of diplomacy in which Russia will meet with NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with the US trying to assure European allies they will not be sidelined.

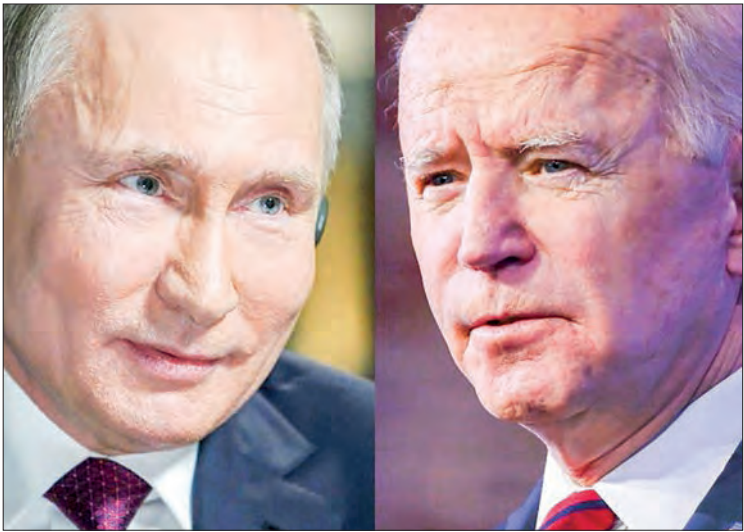
Russia since late last year has amassed tens of thousands of troops at the Ukrainian border and demanded guarantees that NATO will not expand eastward or set up further bases in the former Soviet Union.

The United States, to be represented by Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, agreed to talks even though it made plain that many of Moscow's proposals are non-starters.

Originally scheduled to start on Monday, Sherman is now due to have a working dinner with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov on Sunday evening, said a State Department spokesperson.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, dismissing Moscow's demands as "gaslighting", has insisted that talks will yield no progress so long as Russia has a "gun to Ukraine's head".

"We're prepared to respond forcefully to further Russian aggression. But a diplomatic



Russian leader Vladimir Putin (L) and American President Joe Biden. **PHOTO: AFP**

solution is still possible and preferable if Russia chooses it," Blinken said Friday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin met his US counterpart

Joe Biden in Geneva in June and agreed on regular "stability" talks between Sherman and Ryabkov, who will again lead the Russian delegation. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

India announces election schedule for 5 states amid COVID-19

ELECTIONS will be held in five states between 10 February and 7 March in up to seven phases, India's Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sushil Chandra said on Saturday.

Elections are to be held in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa.

He added that vote counting will take place on 10 March. Most probably final results will be announced on the same day, as voting will be held through electronic voting machines (EVMs).

Uttar Pradesh, the biggest among all the five states, shall witness polls in all the seven phases, while Manipur will have voting in two phases, and the rest three states in one phase each. — Xinhua ■

West African leaders to discuss Mali crisis in key summit



The situation in Mali has put ECOWAS' credibility on the line as it seeks to uphold fundamental principles of governance and contain regional instability. **PHOTO: AFP**

WEST African leaders will gather Sunday to discuss Mali's political crisis, with the military

after its first proposal was rejected.

The extraordinary summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) bloc in Ghana's capital Accra is expected to discuss possible sanctions on the Sahel state over potentially delayed elections, among other issues.

The meeting comes after months of increasing tensions over the timetable for restoring civilian rule in Mali after a military takeover in 2020.

In August that year, army officers led by Colonel Assimi Goita toppled the elected president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita amid street protests against his unpopular rule.

Under threat of sanctions, Goita subsequently promised to restore civilian rule in February 2022 after holding presidential and legislative elections.

But he staged a de facto second coup in May 2021, forcing out an interim civilian government.

The move disrupted the reform timetable, and was met with widespread diplomatic condemnation.

ECOWAS insisted that Mali hold elections in February.

But the government then said it would only set an election date after holding a nationwide conference — arguing that a peaceful vote was more important than speed. — AFP ■

'Old man out!': Anger in Kazakhstan focuses on ex-leader

AS protesters armed with sticks and discarded police shields prepared to storm the mayor's office in Kazakhstan's largest city Almaty, they marched to chants of "old man out!"

They were not referring to President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, 68, but Nursultan Nazarbayev, the octogenarian who after more than a quarter-century in office picked career diplomat Tokayev as his loyalist successor in 2019.

Since Kazakhstan's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Nazarbayev has been synonymous with the world's ninth-largest country, a majority Muslim Central Asian state rich in oil.

But the 81-year-old has yet to appear in public since the country was plunged into unprecedented chaos this week when armed clashes between protesters and police escalated from demonstrations over a New Year fuel price hike. For many residents of the city of 1.8 million people, the strongman who styles himself as a force for stability in the wider region is an increasingly incendiary and divisive figure. — AFP ■

Japan struggling to hold Coming-of-Age Day events due to COVID surge

JAPANESE cities and towns are struggling to safely organize Coming-of-Age ceremonies in the wake of another wave of COVID-19 cases, with many of them holding the upcoming events virtually or in separate groups, if not cancelling them.

The nationwide tally of infections hit a four-month high of over 6,200 on Friday, three days before this year's Coming-of-Age Day.

All of Okinawa and parts of Hiroshima and Yamaguchi prefectures, especially affected by the spread of the Omicron variant triggered by infections among US military personnel, will be placed under a quasi-state of emergency through the end of this month from Sunday, and a number of municipalities have hastily de-



Women in kimono walk near the venues of a coming-of-age ceremony in Yokohama near Tokyo on 11 January 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

cided to cancel or postpone the annual ceremonies.

One of the exceptions is the remote island of Ishigaki in Okinawa, where a ceremony was held on Tuesday for about 430 new adults, who were all required to submit negative PCR test results beforehand. — Kyodo ■

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.

Myanmar striker Aung Kyaw Naing joins Thai League-2 club Ranong United FC



Myanmar striker Aung Kyaw Naing holds the insignia of the Ranong United after signing contract with the team. **PHOTO: RANONG UNITED**

THAI League 2 club Ranong United signed Myanmar striker Aung Kyaw Naing for the second round of 2021-2022 season.

Aung Kyaw Naing played for Thai League 3 club Pattaya Dolphins at the beginning of this season but moved during the mid-season transfer window.

Aung Kyaw Naing has experience

playing in foreign clubs as he returned to play for the clubs in 2021.

After playing for Singapore and Thai clubs a few years ago, Aung Kyaw Naing returned to Myanmar and also played for Ayeyawady United and Yangon United.

Most Myanmar footballers

are playing for Thai clubs this season, and Aung Thu is also playing for Thai League-1 Club Buriram, Maung Maung Lwin in Thai League 2 clubs Lamphun, Zaw Min Tun in the Trat FC, Kyaw Ko Ko in Rayong FC, Aung Kaung Man in Udon Thani FC and Swan Laman is playing in the Navy FC respectively.—Ko Nyi Lay/ GNL

Barty sends Australian Open warning with Rybakina demolition

WORLD number one Ashleigh Barty showed why she is the Australian Open favourite when she demolished Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina in the final of the Adelaide International on Sunday.

Barty took just 64 minutes to see off the seventh seeded Rybakina 6-3, 6-2 and claim the 14th singles title of her career.

The 25-year-old Australian has been in superb form this week and has had to beat a host of top players in a stacked top half of the draw.

She received a first round bye, but then faced Coco Gauff (world number 22), Sofia Kenin (12) and Iga Swiatek (9) on her way to the decider.

"We've obviously had a brilliant week, been able to work progressively through each match," Barty said.

"I got better and better."

Against the big-serving Rybakina, the world number

14, Barty dominated every aspect of play and took control of the match midway through the first set.

Both players started well, dropping only two points each on serve in their first three games, so it came as a surprise when at 3-3, Barty stumbled slightly and found herself at 15-40.

But Rybakina was unable to convert either break point and Barty made her pay.

She held her serve then pounced immediately as Rybakina seemed to lose focus, breaking and then holding to love to take the first set in 29 minutes.

Barty was in complete control by this stage as she went on a run of seven straight games.

She broke Rybakina's first two service games of the second set to take a stranglehold on the match as she raced away to a 4-0 lead. — AFP ■

Newcastle stunned by Cambridge in FA Cup

NEWCASTLE'S miserable season on the field sunk to a new low on Saturday as the Magpies were dumped out of the FA Cup 1-0 by League One Cambridge, while non-League sides Kidderminster and Boreham Wood also booked their places in the fourth round.

England international Kieran Trippier made his debut as Newcastle's first signing since a controversial takeover by the Saudi sovereign wealth fund.

But Newcastle have still won only one match all season

and were embarrassed by a side two divisions below them in front of a furious full house at St. James' Park.

Joe Ironside scored the only goal 11 minutes into the second half as he swivelled to fire home from close range after a goalmouth scramble.

Newcastle had two goals ruled out and Joelinton was thwarted by a great save by Dimitar Mitov deep into stoppage time.

But they were shown no mercy by the disgruntled home

fans at full-time as they now have to lift themselves to try and remain in the Premier League.

Sixth-tier Kidderminster overcame the 79 places separating them from Reading in the English football period to beat the Championship side 2-1.

George Puskas put the Royals ahead at the Aggborough Stadium, but Sam Austin levelled before Amari Morgan-Smith struck the winner eight minutes from time.

The full-time whistle sparked a pitch invasion from



Cambridge got a shock 0-1 victory at Newcastle in the FA Cup. **PHOTO: AFP**

fans of both sides with some angry Reading fans confront-

ing their own manager Veljko Paunovic. — AFP ■