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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

Second batch of Sputnik Light COVID-19 vaccine arrives in Yangon

OFFICIALS from the Yangon Region Public Health and Medical Services Department received a total of 512,000 doses of Sputnik Light COVID-19 vaccines purchased from the Russian Federation yesterday morning at the Yangon International Airport.

Myanmar purchased a total of 1 million doses of the Russian-made COVID-19 vaccines, nearly a half of which 488,000 doses were transported to Myanmar in the first batch on 13 January, and this is the second batch.

Sputnik Light COVID-19 vaccine requires only one dose per person and will greatly contribute to the rapid coverage of the COVID-19 vaccine in Myanmar. The vaccines have been stored at the Central Vaccine Store Depot in Yangon and will be distributed to regions and states.—MNA

Packages of Sputnik Light COVID-19 vaccine purchased from Russian Federation are being unloaded from the aircraft at Yangon International Airport on 16 January 2022.

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

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

Information Team
State Administration Council

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

Yangon Mayor, economic minister inspect Hlaing river-Hlawga water supporting project

Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay and party hear reports on Hlaing River-Hlawga water supporting projects by officials.

YANGON Region Development Affairs Minister cum Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay and Yangon Region Economic Minister U Aung Than Oo inspected the Hlaing River-Hlawga water supporting project implemented in the Rice Research Centre compound in Hmawby.

The Mayor said as this is the time to upgrade irrigation canals for summer paddy, in addition to benefiting 100 acres, it will also be able to supply drinking water to Yangon. He instructed officials to do the restoration work better than before as it passes through Hmawby, and inspected completion of pre-soil sedimentation tank at the project site, digging of canals, construction of basement wall, chemical dosing facilities for water purification and the completion of a sub-power station for the raising pump.

Afterwards, the Mayor and party arrived at the Mingalar Lake in Mingaladon Township and inspected the completion of a water tank near the spillway and drainage canal, levelling for bike way on the tank in front of the Khayaybin Road, clearing of weed by aquamarine and amphibious excavators around the Mingaladon Nursery of the Forest Department.—MNA

Elephant Camp near Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda prepping for reopening

SHWESETTAW Mann River Elephant Camp in Minbu District, Magway Region is preparing to resume its tourism service, said U Hla Than, assistant manager of the Elephant Camp.

The elephant camp is aimed to attract the local travellers and tourists in the forms of forest-based tourism and ecotourism in the protect area of Myanma Timber Enterprise.

The camp was opened on 9 February 2019 and situated outside Padaung-Pyawbwe forest reserve eight miles away from the road to Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda in Minbu District. The COVID-19 negative consequences shut down the camp from 25 March 2020. It will be reopened along with the festival of Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda at which the footprints of the Buddha were enshrined.

"The camp is making readiness for the resumption of the tourism in line with the COVID-19 guidelines. Plantation of the shade trees and flowery plants are extended. A jetty, recreating sites, decoration and bunglows have been prepared near Mann creek in order to enjoy elephant bathing and river view," U Hla Than said.

The camp is available between 7 am and 6 pm. There are 11 elephants in the camp. A local visitor is charged K1,000 while the entrance fee for a tourist is K5,000. The elephant rides cost K5,000 for a local traveller and K10,000 for a tourist. There are 11 bungalows for accommodation. A bungalow can be rented at K30,000 per day.

There is a total of 22 elephant camps across the country. Myanmar implemented elephant-based tourism, created eco-tourism sites and opened the elephant camps near rivers and mountain ranges.—Maung Maung (Minbu)/GNLM

Elephants from camp are ready to give services to visitors at Shwesettaw Mann River Elephant Camp in Minbu Dirstrict. **PHOTO: MAUNG MAUNG (MINBU)**

All stakeholders and organizations are invited to join the peace talks

The year 2022 is of importance. Coming 12 February is the Diamond Jubilee Union Day and the 4 January 2023 will be the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day. As such, this year is the pre-Diamond Jubilee period. Hence, it is important to further strengthen the sovereignty of the State and progress of the nation with development fruits. So, we have to start the new paces for the restoration of the peace this year. As it is mentioned in the fourth point of the five-point road map, all stakeholders and organizations are invited to join the peace talks.

(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)

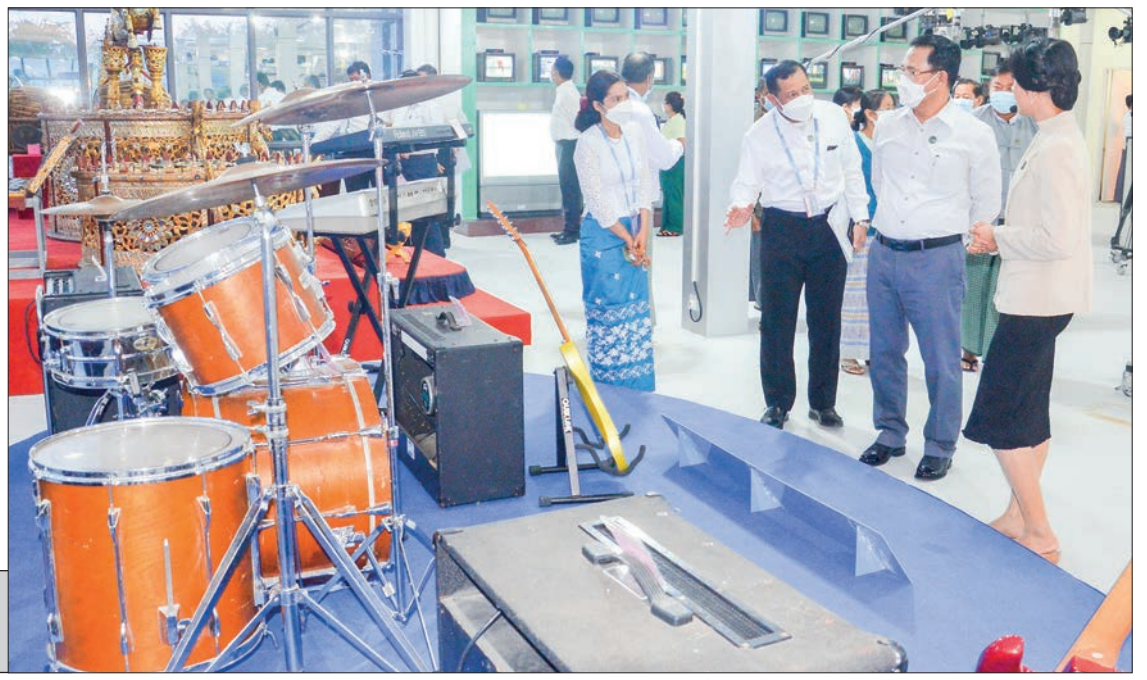
MoI Union Minister inspects MRTV in Nay Pyi Taw

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn visited the Myanma Radio and Television (MRTV) in Tatkon, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday afternoon, and cordially met with the staff.

At the meeting, he said the role of the media is very important in modernizing the nation. The MRTV News Channel is being expanded to broadcast new and interesting programmes, which must be made available to the public in the form of public service media, he said.

He urged them to make efforts through media means to make the people get the right thinking as the role of the people is crucial in building democracy, as well as to raise the prestige of the State and the reputation of the department, and for stability and development of the country.

Afterwards, he presented the awards to the staff members through Director (TV) Daw Moe Thuzar Aung. The Union Minister and party also inspected the construction of the MRTV Diamond Jubilee Museum and gave necessary instructions.—MNA



Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn views round musical instructments displayed at MRTV Diamond Jubilee Museum.

Over 1,900 buses installed YBS card payment system

YBS buses are parking at the terminal waiting for their turn to transport passengers in Yangon City. **PHOTO: KO NAING (BAGO)**

CARD payment system has been installed on more than 1,900 buses under YBS system and the negotiations are being undertaken with the related bus lines, according to Yangon Region Transport Committee (YRTC).

At present, 608 vehicles operated by YPBC, 304 by Bandoola, 700 by YUPT, 265 by Ludu and 27 by JYCT were equipped with the machine, said the joint secretary of YRTC.

Under the instruction of Yangon Region Transport Authority, Asia Starmar Transport Intelligent Co. Ltd was selected as the tender winner for implementing the YBS payment service project.

The company launched card system at the two years of YRTA on 16 January 2019. However, YRTA was abolished in May 2021 and YRTC is newly formed. At present, YRTC is planning to sign with Asia Starmar Company which entered into contract with the then Yangon Region government, he added.

YPS cards are available at G&G convenience stores at K2,000 and the consumers can deposit from a minimum of K3,000. Twenty-five more shops will be extended to sell YPS cards. Asia Starmar and YBS lines agreed to collect bus fare depending on the travel distance, YRTC stated.

The cashless payment system is more convenient and secure for passengers as they do not need to find small notes and it can prevent COVID-19 infections from the notes, the joint secretary said. Additionally, this move aimed to eliminate bus conductors in the bus lines to avoid unnecessary arguments between the conductors and passengers. Some conductors ask extra charges.

This being so the digital payment is practised in the lines to facilitate the daily commuters.

At present, 98 bus lines are operating 2,700 buses. The number of daily commuters has been estimated at over 500,000. —Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

123 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 16 January, total figure rises to 533,144

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 533,144 after 123 new cases were reported on 16 January 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 511,211 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,302 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 15-1-2022, a total of 21,361,785 people have been vaccinated. Of them, 17,558,113 people have been vaccinated two times and 3,803,672 people once.—MNA

Meeting held for compliance with rules and laws of relevant ministries and MEC in industrial registration

COORDINATION meeting was held on 14 January in Yangon for compliance with the rules and laws promulgated by the Ministry of Industry and relevant ministries and the Myanmar Engineering Council in carrying out industrial registration activities.

At the meeting, Deputy Minister for Industry U Ko Ko Lwin presented procedures for industrial registration, industrial inspections, boiler inspection and electrical inspection; the situation of the State policy; the process of drafting the new Private Industry Law. The Director-General of the Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department discussed the steps to be taken in registering the industry.

The President of the Myanmar Engineer Council discussed the prohibited activities and permitted activities included in the provisions of the Council Rules, and the Joint Secretary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry discussed the difficulties encountered in carrying out industrial activities, its efforts to spread modern technology, and the provision of necessary assistance to local private entrepreneurs.

The meeting also discussed matters related to the systematic development of local industries, the quality product production and environmental issues.

On the afternoon of 15 January, Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than, accompanied by Deputy Minister U Ko Ko Lwin and the Economic Minister of the Mon state government, visited No 22 Heavy Industry (Bilin) in Mon State. During the visit, the Union Minister said the Government is supporting development of agro-based industries, adding that arrangements must be made to sell high quality products at low prices, reduce waste in order to minimize production cost per unit, increase production activities, establish quality assurance systems to improve the quality of products, and conduct continuous market research in order to meet the needs of consumers in a timely manner.

While in Bilin, the Union Minister visited Distillery Factory (Bilin), and Sugar Mill (Bilin).—MNA

Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than views round production process at No 22 Heavy Industry (Bilin).

Illegal foodstuff seized in Bago Region

UNDER the supervision of the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, effective action is being taken to prevent illegal trade in accordance with the law.

Under the supervision of Anti-Trafficking Task Force from Bago Region, and leadership of the Customs Department, officials made an inspection between Nyaungkhashe and DaikU near 19/6th-mile of road and 30 packages of 25-kilo FUFENG brand seasonal powder packets without documents in two passenger vehicles (Toyota Hiace), 75 packs of LIPO Vitan-D, 80 packs of Lactasoy and 29 packs of Sue Sat brand soap worth a total of K3,385,000 were seized.

According to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, action is being taken in accordance with the procedures of the Customs Department.—MNA

Photo shows seized cartons of Lactasoy.

Bottles of LIPO Vitan-D were seized at checkpoint.

MoC oversees daily import of anti-COVID-19 equipment

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

Anti-COVID-19 equipment was imported by one company using one vehicle. A total of five tonnes of masks were imported via Chinshwehaw trade camp yesterday.

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

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

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

Records on 11th press conference held by Information Team of the State Administration Council on 14 January

LEADER of the Information Team of the State Administration Council Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun and member of the Union Election Commission U Khin Maung Oo replied to questions raised by media at the 11th press conference at the hall of the Ministry of Information on 14 January.

The leader of the information team explained the working visit of Prime Minister of Cambodia Chairman of ASEAN Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN to Myanmar on 7 and 8 January 2022. Myanmar and Cambodia established the diplomatic relations on 12 July 1955. During the visit of the Cambodian Prime Minister, the guests donated anti-COVID-19 equipment to Myanmar. Myanmar and Cambodia join the ASEAN, GMS and Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS). With regard to the visits of the Cambodian Prime Minister, the countries standing with Myanmar are uplifting the Myanmar's role in the global community while others posing pressure on Myanmar are still doing so. Myanmar will further enhance relations with the countries which have good looking over Myanmar. Good results could be seen at the joint statement on the visits.

Myanmar government released the statement on ceasefire with ethnic armed organization (EAO) till the end of February 2022 and agreed to further extend the ceasefire till the end of 2022. The request was released to all stakeholders for serving the interests of the State and the people and to stop and control the ceasefire as much as possible. Both leaders will encoruage the holding of a meeting among ASEAN special envoy, ASEAN Secretary-General, representatives from AHA, Myanmar Red Cross Society and UN agenceies to hold a meeting. The government welcomed appointment of Deputy Prime Minister and ASEAN Special Envoy Mr PRAK Sokhonn, Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Myanmar will contribute to the ASEAN Special Envoy to implement five-point ASEAN concensus.

On 2 December last year, the National Defence Authorization Act-NDAA of the US approved five more per cent of defence budget of the United States than that of the previous year. Hence, it set to spend US$7.1 billion on Indo-Pacific region and arranged to spend US$0.3 billion on Ukraine issue and US$4 billion on Europe. Spending of the budget is designed to control China. On 15 September 2021, the US, the UK and Australia formed the AUKUS, the trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. QUAD was formed in 2017 aimed to dominate regional countries and control China. The US holding up the double standard attempts to dominate the countries which do not synchronize with attitude of the US by applying the democracy and human rights. Myanmar has good relations with China.

Leader of Information Team of State Administration Council Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun makes clarification at 11th press conference on 14 January.

The five-point road map comprises that upon completion of the state of emergency when the governing is being carried out in accord with the 2008 Constitution, the election will be held. Myanmar being a country joined the ASEAN. It is necessary to pay respect to the representation of the country. Subpara 1 of Para 2 from the UN charter mentioned that "the UN is based on equalty of sogereignty of all UN member states." Hence, if one does not acknowledge the sovereignty, independent cooperation cannot be done among the countries and the international law does not need to come out. Likewise, ASEAN countries have equal rights. Its policy mentions not to interfere in internal affairs. Myanmar will emphasize recommendations and proposals of ASEAN but will choose the best standing without derailment from policy and procedures of the ASEAN charter. Myanmar firmly believes Cambodia taking alternate chairmenship of ASEAN will be capable of bringing victories to the ASEAN.

In the new year message of greetings sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing stated that "The year 2022 is of importance. Coming 12 February is the Diamond Jubilee Union Day and the 4 January 2023 will be the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day. As such, this year is the pre-Diamond Jubilee period. So, we have to start the new paces for restoration of the peace this year. As it is mentioned in the fourth point of the five-point road map, all stakeholders and organizations are invited to join the peace talks." The government opens all the ways to the peace. Efforts will be made for ceasing armed conflicts and restoration of internal peace and stability as well as peace to some degree. The united strength from the peace will be applied in the development tasks.

The National Unity and Peace Coordination Committee held the meetings with NCA signatories for 16 times, NCA non-signatories for nine times, political parties for six times, and religious leaders and peace negotiators for two times from 8 March to 27 December 2021 to discuss progress of peace process and future plans. On 15 and 16 December 2021, the committee held a meeting with representatives from UWSA, NDAA, MNDAA, ULA/AA, TNLA and SSPP/SSA to talk about peace process, health and regional development, minimizing armed conflicts, future plans for peace, drug control and peace and stability at border regions informally. The government does not have any plan to hold talks with illegal CRPH and NUG formed with NLD extremists and PDF terrorists. If some EAOs give training and install arms to terrorists, the consequence will derail from the NCA route and it will be the act of opposing the perteual peace the entire people aspire. The government believes it will restore the peace to some degree in 2022.

Myanmar allowed Yuan/Kyat direct payment programme at Myanmar-China border trade process. As of 11-1-2022, seven kinds of export and 31 kinds of import have been allowed to apply the banking payment services at Muse border trade process. In so doing, the Myanmar and Chinese banks will use the Yuan/Kyat direct payment system. In the future, all export and impot processes will use the banking system. Such system aims to promote Myanmar-China bilateral trade, ensure smooth flow of commodities, smoothen the payment and accounts clearance between the two countries, and reduce reliance on US dollar. The Central Bank of Myanmar released that permission to use the direct payment of Yuan and Kyat at China-Myanmar border regions under notiofication 48/2021 dated 14 December 2021.

On 23 July 2021, Myanmar faced 41 per cent of infectous rate of COVID-19. In late 2021, Omicron, a variant virus of COVID-19 was found. Its infection rate exceeded the Delta variant. Omicron variant virus was found at four Myanmar returnees from UAE on 28 December 2021, 12 returnees on 7 January, three returnees on 11 January, two returnees on 12 January and 42 more returnees on 13 January, totalling 63. The World Health Organization recommended to inject booster dose to the people due to emergence of Omicron variant. The infectious disease cannot easy to touch the persons with high immune efficiency. If the people are vaccinated the booster dose, it is expected to mitigate the severe infection and dead rate of the pandemic. Hence, it is necessary to especially beware of Omicron. The fourth wave of the pandemic happen in neighbouring countries. Hence, all the people are requested to live in accord with the health restrictions for COVID-19. The Ministry of Health has distributed the announcements on the revised programme on travel restrictions and performing laboratory tests on the travellers leading to Myanmar via border gates and international gates to the embassies, UN agencies and international organizations.

Diagnostic tests were performed on a US diplomat passport holder who arrived in Myanmar by air on 2 January and a diplomat of US embassy who entered the nation on 3 January and COVID-19 virus found. Those confirmed patients were informed to receive treatment at the designated hospitals in accord with the norms of the Ministry of Health but a US embassy staff and pary took back two US citizens from the hotel for providing treatment under their arrangements. Their acts may cause severe impacts on public health of respective country and violation to the existing laws and guidelines of the host country as well as provisions of the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations. Hence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly objected it and further informed them about strictly abiding by the Myanmar's COVID-19 prevention and control dsciplines.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

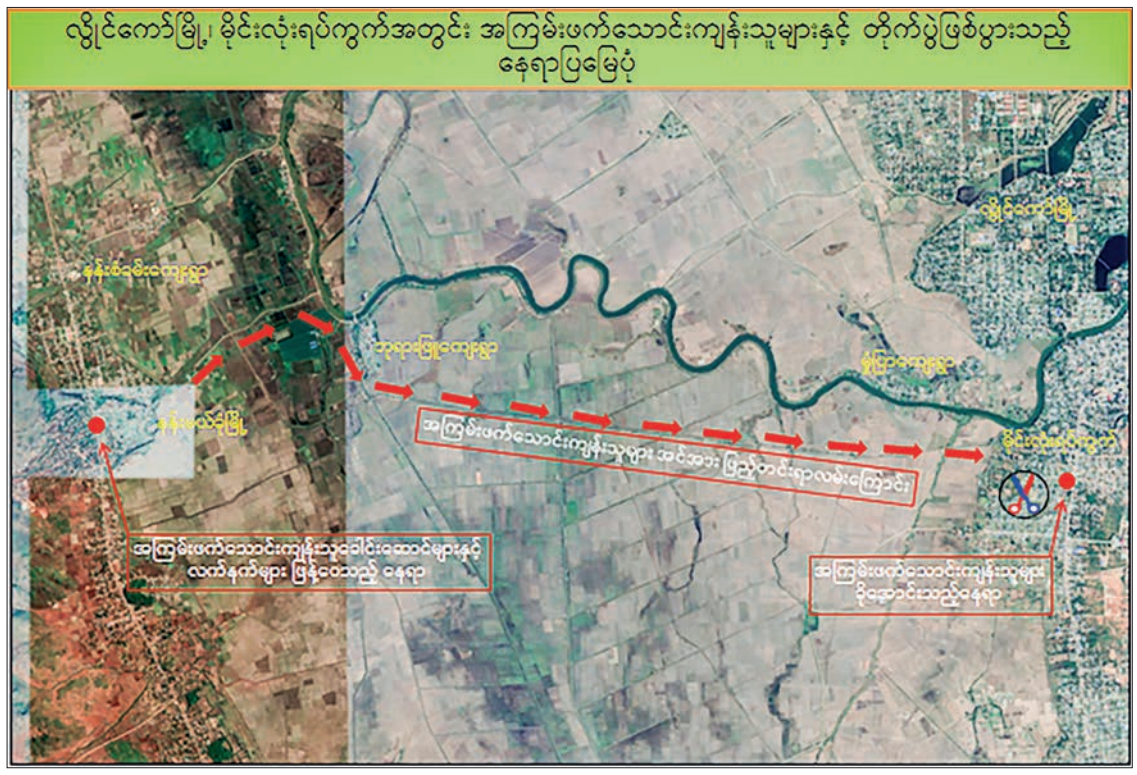
Security forces stepping up security measures to prevent terrorists' violent acts in Loikaw

FOLLOWING the declaration of a state of emergency under the Constitution and taking over the responsibilities of the State, the Tatmadaw has been making efforts to bring about regional stability and the rule of law throughout the country. Terrorist groups such as CRPH, NUG and their affiliates, the so-called PDF terrorists, are committing to destabilize the country and to make the people panicked with various forms of terrorism in cities, towns and villages.

According to a report on insurgents who were preparing to carry out terrorist activities by taking refuge in people's homes in Monglon Ward in Loikaw, Kayah State, yesterday afternoon, The Tatmadaw and security forces systematically intervened to ensure the lives and property of the people not be damaged. However, as terrorists used heavy/small arms to attack the security forces who were conducting the security operations, clashes took placed from 12:25 pm until 2:30 pm.

In addition, according to the report on terrorists who were gathering in Nanmeikhon to distribute ammunition and recruit more terrorists into Loikaw, and some were on the way to accelerate terrorist acts in Loikaw, the Tatmadaw attacked the terrorists with the air supporting fire and artillery fire in order to prevent their terrorist activities.

It is reported that the Tatmadaw and security forces are working together with the people who do not want acts of violence and stepping up security measures.—MNA



The map shows the clash between security forces and terrorists in Monglon Ward of Loikaw in Kayah State.

Firefighters are putting out ablaze LPG bowser on Myawady Kawkareik Asian Highway.

PDF terrorists attack LPG bowsers in Myawady

TWO bowsers carrying LPG from Myawady, Kayin State, were reportedly fired upon by PDF terrorists yesterday afternoon.

One 12-wheel bowser from Aw Ra Company and one 12-wheel bowser from Chit Lin Myaing Company were attacked by PDF terrorists about 2,500 metres west of Outer Kwingale village near Myawady-Kawkareik Asian Highway at around 1:00 pm. Due to the shooting and arson attack, the drivers died of gunshot wounds and burns. One of the bowsers was destroyed by fire and the other was hit by small arms fire.

Security forces rushed to the scene to provide the necessary security services and put out the fire together with the fire brigade, the perpetrators of the acts of terrorism will be identified and arrested as soon as possible and security measures are being taken in the area.—MNA

Terrorists detonate hand grenade near Maha Muni Buddha Image precinct in Mandalay

A landmine exploded near the compound of Maha Muni Buddha Image in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay Region on the evening of 14 January.

Security forces investigated the incident, as two terrorists riding a motorcycle fired a homemade mine north of the Maha Muni Buddha Image at around 5 pm on 14 January.

The homemade mine exploded in a flower patch in front of the dormitory inside the precinct of the image and no human and animal were injured.

Terrorist groups CRPH, NUG and PDF abduct and kill monks, and monasteries are set on fire.

It is reported that the whole people are disgusted with the attempt to destroy the religion and cause panic among the people near the pagoda, which is worshiped by the whole people.—MNA

Methamphetamine worth K19.8 billion seized in Kyaukse Township

Four suspects are arrested together with Methamphetamine worth K 19.8 billion in Kyaukse Township.

A total of K19.8 billion worth of Ice (Methamphetamine) were seized in Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Region, according to the Myanmar Police Force.

The incident took place at 10:30 am on 13 January as drugs were reportedly trafficked on Yangon-Mandalay Highway near Zale village, Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Region.

Soe Myint and Tun Lin, who were reportedly carrying drugs, were arrested in a DONG FENG 22-wheeler and seized 990 kilograms of Ice (methamphetamine) worth K19.8 billion and K2.2 million cash on the vehicle.

According to the investigation, the seized Ice (methamphetamine) was being trafficked from Shan State (North) to Kayin State. The four are being prosecuted and the perpetrators are still being investigated.—MNA

153.5 acres of perennial mulberry thrive in Mandalay Region

THERE are 153.5 acres of perennial mulberry cultivation for cocoon production in Mandalay Region, said Daw Moe Moe Win, Assistant Director of Sericulture Research and Technical Development Centre in PyinOoLwin.

There are five state-owned farms in the region including the Research Centre, silk ginning factory and silkworm cocoon research farm and the three other sericulture farms. Kaung Myat Aung private company is also engaged in mulberry cultivation. Those farms yearly produce over 6,000 pounds of silkworm cocoons.

Mulberry plants are thriving in the farm for sericulture industries in PyinOoLwin Township. **PHOTO : MIN HTET AUNG**

"The mulberry is perennial and it is mostly cultivated in May-June period. Beyond silkworm production, mulberry cultivation can also produce nutritious mulberry tea leaves, wine and jam as it can bring health benefits. Furthermore, cosmetics such as soaps and shampoos are also manufactured from cocoons. Different growing methods are utilized in the farms. The growers prefer the distance to plant at 3 by 3 feet, she explained.

There are 14 types of mulberry plants in Myanmar and the hybrid species imported by China are cultivated lately.

There are more than 5,600 acres of mulberry across the country, with yearly production of 750,000 pounds of cocoons.

The silkworm cocoon is sent to the domestic silk ginning factories and silk are on sales under bidding system. Myanmar companies convey dried silkworm cocoons to China.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay sub-printing house)/GNLM

80 per cent of businesses adhere to mandatory labelling

TO facilitate the consumers, labelling requirement is obligatory and 80 per cent of employers are found to obey obligatory labelling requirement, said U San Myint, director of the Consumer Affairs Department said.

"The majority of them are complying with the law and only some are lacking. Amidst the political changes, we have not taken any legal action for the remaining enterprises. We have warned them of legal actions. The large enterprises are found to obey the regulations. Some small businesses have not realized the obligatory labelling requirement," he said.

The provisions stipulated in the Consumer Protection Law 2019 have been effective from 15 March 2020 (one year after the ratification of the law) and the companies must strictly adhere to the rules including mandatory labelling requirements (Chapter 18).

Companies need to provide product info in the Myanmar Language and another one or more languages on the label, as per the notification (2/2019) of the Myanmar Consumer Protection Commission dated 3 December 2019. Eighty per cent of the businesses have been adhere to the law within two years.

"Even the medicines are labelled in Myanmar. Some electronic appliance is still found with Chinese label. There are 20 cases reported to the Department of Consumer Affairs for now. The number of complaints dropped significantly from 100 in the difficult times of COVID-19," he added.

In a bid to ensure food safety and quality, the goods must be affixed the label in Myanmar language, proving information enough to identify the goods. The department is raising awareness of labelling requirements and disseminating the info to the consumers through talk shows. It is also supervising trade facilities in the domestic market.—Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

Onion prices in bear market even when winter growing season starts

ALTHOUGH the winter onion growing season commenced in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Region, the prices are on the downward trend. Additionally, the onions still remain in the growers' hands, forcing them to sell the onions at the prevailing prices not to suffer losses, said U Tun Shein from U Sein warehouse in Kyaukpadaung Township.

The onion growers as well as traders have been experiencing market fallouts due to the lack of foreign demand and the closure of the events and festivals amidst the COVID-19 impacts, the growers stressed.

"We face high input costs including wages and fertilizer. Onion cultivation costs K2 million per acre," said a grower U Tin Tun.

At present, onion is worth only K300 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg) in maximum in Kyaukpadaung. Therefore, the growers are struggling to make capital for the next season.

In early 2020, the onion fetched K1,200-1,300 per viss. Then, the price drastically fell in the COVID-19 crisis. Earlier, onions were highly demanded by Bangladesh and India.

Next, Bangladesh's demand for Myanmar's onions coupled with high demand in the local market hiked up prices, soaring up to K4,000 per viss on 15 November 2019, according to the Mandalay commodity depot.

The high demand by foreign markets and remarkable rise in price prompted the growers to expand the onion cultivation in 2020. Unfortunately, the market is getting worse amidst the COVID-19 negative consequences.

The prices of domestic onions exceeded K3,000 per viss in 2015, 2018, and 2019.

The onions are primarily grown in Mandalay, Magway and Yangon regions, Nay Pyi Taw and Shan State.— Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM

Croplands are placed under onion plantations in winter cultivation season in Kyaukpadaung Township in Mandalay Region. **PHOTO : KO HTEIN (KPD)**

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

17 JANUARY 2022
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Carry on reform process without bias

Today's new one will be tomorrow's old one. Tomorrow's new one would be old the other day. It is a universal truth that is also mentioned in the Buddhist literature preached by the Lord Buddha more than 2,560 years ago.

Nobody should hug anything for a long time. If a person hugs an object seemed like a new one, the person deceives himself to see the object as a new one but it would really be an old one because of timeframe. As such, anything cannot exist as a new one for a long time. Everybody needs to accept it.

> That is why the reform process is acceptable for all. The useful old one should be reformed to be a new one as well as still a useful one. The good things appropriate for society should be reformed to be better things in the future. If so, society will always be fresh, modern, active and developed thanks to the reform process.

Hence, all the persons from the society need to consider how to reform the old ones to be new ones. They all need to seek the best way for the reform process which must be done in the secular world. Indeed, it is not the attachment to the new one as well as the old one. They all should accept a concept to improve the old ones to be useful like a new one for the society. Nobody should hug any situation forever.

The word 'reform' is crucial in society. It is beneficial to the modernity of society. Every society is formed with various tangible and intangible things. The new one would become the old one. Then, it would gradually change to the rare one and the ancient one. Various tangible and intangible things which could be beneficial to society would exist for a long time. It will be recorded in history.

That is why the reform process is acceptable for all. The useful old one should be reformed to be a new one as well as still a useful one. The good things appropriate for society should be reformed to be better things in the future. If so, society will always be fresh, modern, active and developed thanks to the reform process.

Surely, the reform process would leave useless ones, unbeneficial ones, unnecessary ones and inappropriate ones. Truly, the reform process is to choose the best and selected ones for the future days. These selected ones would conform with forthcoming events of coming days. Practically, those who faced loss in the reform process would not be satisfied with the progress of the reform process. Hence, the society members will face challenges in the reform process with opposing those holding different opinions.

■ ■ ■

Pandemic Deaths Rise By 12 Percent As Cases Soar

The average number of new daily coronavirus cases climbed to a record 2.78 million, a 44-percent increase compared to the previous week, according to an AFP count.

The number of COVID-19 cases continued to soar around the world this week, with the death rate taking off again and rising 12 percent.

Here is the global state of play from an AFP database:

44-Percent Increase

The average number of new daily coronavirus cases climbed to a record 2.78 million, a 44-percent increase compared to the previous week, according to an AFP count to Thursday.

The confirmed cases only reflect a fraction of the actual number of infections, with varying counting practices and levels of testing in different countries.

People queue outside a pharmacy for Covid-19 antigenic testing on Monday in Marseille, as France announces plans to bolster its testing capacity amid a surge fuelled by the Omicron variant. **PHOTO: AFP**

Rocketing Infections

With the Omicron variant now present in most countries, flare-ups took place in every region of the world.

The number of cases soared by 210 percent in Asia, 142 percent in the Middle East, 126 percent in the Latin America-Caribbean region and 59 percent in Oceania.

In the United States (US) and Canada cases rose 31 percent and they were up a quarter in Europe.

Africa stood alone in seeing an improvement, with an 11-percent drop.

Main Spikes

The Philippines saw the biggest increase of 327 percent in new cases.

It was followed by India with 321 percent, Kosovo with 312 percent, Brazil with 290 percent and Peru with 284 per cent.

Drop Across Southern Africa

Eswatini, formerly Swaziland, registered the biggest drop in new cases for the second week in a row, with a fall of 45 percent.

Zambia came next with 30 percent fewer cases, South Africa (27 percent less), Namibia (minus 26 percent) and the United Kingdom (UK) (minus 25 percent).

The four southern African nations were among the first countries hit by the Omicron variant in early December, while the UK was the first to be badly affected in Europe.

US Still Has Most Cases

The US remains by far the country with the biggest number of new cases with 796,500 per day on average, an increase of 34 percent.

Next in line came France with 293,900, an increase of 43 percent, and India with 172,700 cases, 321 percent more.

On a per capita basis, the country with the biggest number of new cases this week was Ireland with 3,087 per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by France with 3,047, Cyprus with 2,993 and Denmark and Montenegro with 2,490 each.

Deaths On The Rise Again

At a global level the number of COVID-linked deaths took off again, rising 12 percent to 6,911 per day after dropping for several weeks.

The US mourned the most daily deaths with 1,762, followed by Russia (765) and Poland (301).

The countries reporting the highest death rates in proportion to their population were Trinidad and Tobago with 10.1 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, Bulgaria (7.7), Georgia (6.9), Croatia (5.9) and Poland (5.6).

SOURCE: AFP

Study finds one in 10 people might still be infectiousfor COVID after 10 days

Conventional PCR tests work by testing for the presence of viral fragments. While they can tell if someone has recently had the virus, they cannot detect whether it is still active, and the person is infectious. The test used in the latest study however gives a positive result only when the virus is active and potentially capable of onward transmission.

A new study has found that one in 10 people might have clinically relevant levels of potentially infectious SARS-CoV-2 past the 10 day quarantine period.

The study has been published in the 'International Journal of Infectious Diseases.

The study, led by the University of Exeter and funded by Animal Free Research UK, used a newly adapted test that can detect whether the virus was potentially still active. It was applied to samples from 176 people in Exeter who had tested positive on standard PCR tests.

Clinically-relevant levels

The study found that 13 per cent of people still exhibited clinically-relevant levels of virus after 10 days, meaning they could potentially still be infectious. Some people retained these levels for up to 68 days. The authors believe this new test should be applied in settings where people are vulnerable, to stop the spread of COVID-19. Professor Lorna Harries, of the University of Exeter Medical School, oversaw the study. She said, "While this is a relatively small study, our results suggest that potentially active virus may sometimes persist beyond a 10 day period, and could pose a potential risk of onward transmission. Furthermore, there was nothing clinically remarkable about these people, which means we wouldn't be able to predict who they are".

Viral fragments

Conventional PCR tests work by testing for the presence of viral fragments. While they can tell if someone has recently had the virus, they cannot detect whether it is still active, and the person is infectious. The test used in the latest study however gives a positive result only when the virus is active and potentially capable of onward transmission.

Lead author Merlin Davies, of the University of Exeter Medical School, said, "In some settings, such as people returning to care homes after illness, people continuing to be infectious after ten days could pose a serious public health risk. We may need to ensure people in those setting have a negative active virus test to ensure people are no longer infectious. We now want to conduct larger trials to investigate this further."

Focusing exclusively on human biology

Animal Free Research UK CEO, Carla Owen, said, "The University of Exeter team's discovery is exciting and potentially very important. Once more, it shows how focusing exclusively on human biology during medical research can produce results that are more reliable and more likely to benefit humans and animals."

SOURCE: ANI

People gather to buy lucky bags during the first selling in the New Year's Day at a department Store in Tokyo on January 1 amid continuing worries over COVID-19 omicron variant. **PHOTO: AFP**

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 16 January 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 17 January 2022: Weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region. Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in (Southern and Eastern)Shan and Kayah states, scattered in Kachin and Northern Shan states and isolated in the remaining regions and states. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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 slight decrease of night temperatures in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin and Shan states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17 January 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17 January 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17 January 2022: Partly cloudy.

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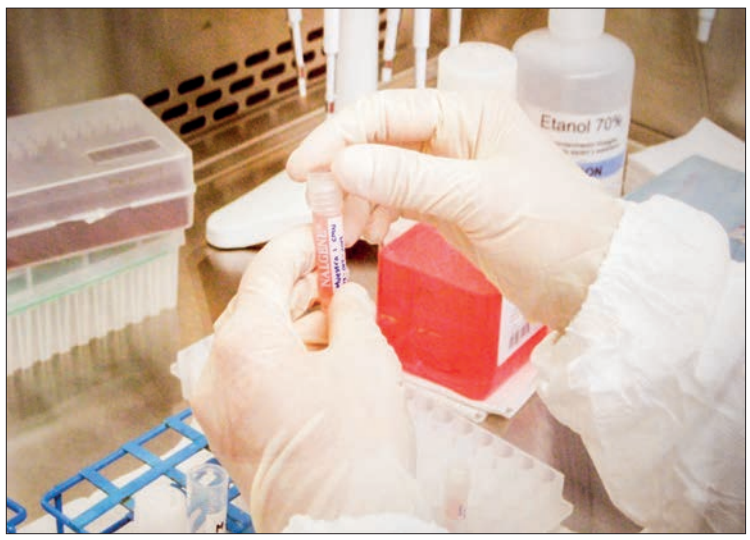
Epstein-Barr virus leading cause of multiple sclerosis: study

MULTIPLE sclerosis, a neurodegenerative disease that has no cure and affects some 2.8 million people in the world, is largely driven by infection with the Epstein-Barr virus, according to a new paper by Harvard researchers.

Their findings, published in the journal Science this week, appear to settle a long-standing but hard to prove hypothesis, and were welcomed by outside experts who said attention should now turn to preventions and cures.

"This is the first study providing compelling evidence of causality," said Alberto Ascherio, a professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard Chan School and senior author of the study, in a statement.

"This is a big step because it suggests that most MS cases could be prevented by stopping EBV infection, and that targeting EBV could lead to the discovery of a cure for MS."



EBV is a herpes virus that can cause infectious mononucleosis – sometimes called kissing disease – and stays in the host for their whole life. **PHOTOH: SPH.HARVARD.EDU/AFP**

EBV is a herpes virus that can cause infectious mononucleosis — sometimes called kissing disease — and stays in the host for their whole life.

MS is a chronic inflammatory disease that destroys the myelin sheaths protecting neurons in the brain and spinal cord, causing problems with vision, balance and mobility. The idea of a link between the two had been explored for years, but it was difficult to establish definitively, partly because EBV is extremely common, reaching around 95 percent of adults, and MS symptoms begin to develop a decade after infection.

To study the question, the researchers looked at more than 10 million young adults on active duty in the US military over a 20 year period, and identified 955 who were diagnosed with MS during their period of service.

They analyzed blood serum samples taken every two years, determining the soldiers' EBV status at the time of the first sample, and the relationship between EBV infection and MS onset. — AFP ■

Strongest winds in 14 years batter Latvia's capital

People play in the snow in Riga, Latvia, on 4 December 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

RIGA, the capital of Latvia, was battered by gale-force winds on Friday during the strongest storm that hit the city in 14 years, the Baltic country's meteorological service said.

According to the Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Center, the speed of wind gusts in the city center reached 25.3 meters per second in the morning. The city last saw a comparable storm on Feb. 23, 2008, when the wind speed reached 27.5 meters per second.

The northwesterly wind wreaked havoc in the city center, breaking tree branches and ripping the roof off one of the pavilions of Riga Central Market, the State Fire and Rescue Service said. Hundreds were evacuated but no injuries were reported.

The strongest wind gusts were recorded on Friday morning, when a cold front bringing rain passed through Latvia from the north. In the southwestern port city of Liepaja, wind speeds reached 31.4 meters per second and in the northwestern port of Ventspils 29 meters per second.

The storm disrupted power supply to some 4,000 households, mainly in the central and southern parts of the country, the national power grid operator Sadales Tikls said. — Xinhua ■

Russian baby tiger fights for life after frostbite, surgery

RUSSIAN animal rescuers said Wednesday they were fighting for the life of an Amur tiger cub who had been found dying from exhaustion and frostbite in the country's far east.

An emaciated female tiger cub aged around four or five months and suffering from severe frostbite and injuries was found by a local fisherman on a river bank in the south of the Primorye region late last year.

The fisherman reported the find to wildlife carers who evacuated the cub to a rehabilitation centre, said Amur Tiger Centre.

"External examination showed that she was severely exhausted as a result of which the tip of her tail was frostbitten," the centre said, adding that the cub's lower jaw also became necrotic after an injury.

The tiger, who weighed just around 20 kilogrammes (44 pounds) — roughly half the norm — when she was found, underwent an intense rehabilitation course and gained about 10 kilogrammes in preparation for surgery. The dead tip of her tail was also cut off.

Late last week the cub underwent a 2.5-hour operation, with doctors transplanting healthy tissue to repair her jaw.

The surgery was successful but it is too early to make any predictions and say if it will be possible to release the cub back into the wild, said Amur Tiger Centre.

The tiger cub receiving treatment from veterinary doctors at the rare breeds rehabilitation centre in the village of Alekseevka in Russia's Far East. **PHOTO: AMUR TIGER CENTER/AFP**

"The most important thing right now is to halt the tissue necrosis and save the tiger's life," said Sergei Aramilev, the centre's head. "People are doing their best." — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Huge Tonga volcanic eruption felt around the world

THE massive underwater volcanic eruption in Tonga was so powerful it was recorded around the world and triggered a tsunami that flooded Pacific coastlines from Japan to the United States, scientists said Sunday.

Dramatic satellite images showed the long, rumbling eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano spew smoke and ash in the air, with a thunderous roar heard 10,000 kilometres (6,000 miles) away in Alaska.

The US Geological Survey recorded Saturday's eruption as equivalent to a 5.8 magnitude earthquake at zero depth.

But the full extent of the damage in Tonga was unclear Sunday with communication lines down. A 1.2 metre (four-foot) wave swept ashore in the Tongan capital Nuku'alofa with locals reporting they had fled to higher ground, leaving behind flooded houses, some with structural damage, and with small stones and ash falling from the sky. — AFP ■

On the prowl: Mali child cat hunters honour age-old tradition

FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD Kadi Ben Wahab puffs out his chest and poses for a photo with several friends, before setting off to hunt cats in northern Mali's Timbuktu.

As part of an age-old tradition in the city, in the desert north of the troubled Sahel state, Kadi and his band of hunters hit the streets after dark in order to trap, skin and cook cats.

They dance and sing after a successful hunt, throwing the skins of their prey over the electric cables that hang over the alleyways.

"I killed this one a few days ago," says Kadi, pointing to a cat skin hanging nearby – not an uncommon sight in Timbuktu.

The boy says he is the best cat hunter in his neighbourhood and, as such, is the leader of his gang.

The children standing beside him are between six and 12 years old. — AFP ■

China's economy grew 8% in 2021 but property, virus threats loom: AFP poll

China's strong recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic is threatened by Omicron and a property sector slowdown. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

CHINA'S economy expanded at its fastest pace for 10 years in 2021, according to an AFP poll of analysts, but its strong recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic is threatened by Omicron and a property sector slowdown.

The eight percent growth would be well above the government's target of more than six percent, and comes on the back of a strong start to the year as a "zero-Covid" policy allowed the country to lead the global economic recovery.

China's exports surged nearly 30 percent last year on solid global demand as countries reopened from pandemic lockdowns, boosting its stuttering economy. But the country's recovery in the second half of 2021 was hobbled by a series of outbreaks — with officials reimposing strict containment measures -- as well as power outages caused by an emissions-reduction drive, supply chain problems and surging energy costs.

While the forecast marks a healthy annual tick — up from 2.3 percent in 2020 — those issues put a dampener on factory activity and led to businesses shuttering. — AFP ■

Brazil begins vaccinating young children despite Bolsonaro objection

A child receives a Covid-19 vaccine in Brazil's Sao Paulo with local governor Joao Doria (L) looking on. **PHOTO: AFP**

BRAZIL began vaccinating children aged five to 11 against Covid-19 on Friday after the move was approved, despite objections from President Jair Bolsonaro.

Davi Seremramiwe Xavante, an Indigenous eight-year-old boy, was the first child to be vaccinated during an official ceremony at a Sao Paulo hospital, with the state governor Joao Doria in attendance.

The first Covid vaccine dose administered in Brazil was also in Sao Paulo, in January 2021.

The new age group was approved for vaccination by Anvisa health authorities a month ago.

More than 20 million children are eligible for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, as long as they have parental consent.

Indigenous people and children with health problems are priority groups for vaccination.

Bolsonaro has repeatedly criticized the move and has insisted he would never vaccinate his 11-year-old daughter, Laura.

Himself unvaccinated, Bolsonaro caused a storm when he asked to have the names of those responsible for approving the move made public.

An association representing Anvisa officials blasted Bolsonaro's "fascist methods," and the authority's president demanded police protection for staff following threats. — AFP ■

Nepal to administer booster shots to frontline workers starting Sunday amid COVID-19 surge

AMID rising COVID-19 cases, Nepal's Ministry of Health and Population has decided to administer booster shots to all frontline workers starting from Sunday in the Himalayan nation, local media reported.

According to The Kathmandu Post, frontline workers include doctors, nurses, paramedics, lab technicians, hospital staff and ambulance drivers.

Booster shots, according to the government, will also be given to journalists, bureaucrats, lawmakers, those serving in diplomatic missions, financial institutions, prisoners, elderly people at old age homes and refugees who were vaccinated in the first phase of the immunization campaign starting 27 January.

"All those who were inoculated in the first phase of the vaccination drive come under frontline workers," The Kathmandu Post quoted Dr Samir Kumar Adhkari, joint spokesperson for the Health Ministry, as saying.

"They can receive booster shots from any convenient vaccination center starting tomorrow," Adhkari added.

The ministry has also decided to administer booster doses to all people above 60 years, who were inoculated six months ago, and to those having compromised immunity from 28 January, said the newspaper.

The ministry also said that the original vaccine will be provided as booster shots. Amid the rise in coronavirus cases, calls from several quarters had been growing for launching booster shots. However, the government had said it would start boosters once 40 percent of the total population was jabbed. — ANI ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Portugal logs highest daily COVID-19 deaths in 10 months

PORTUGAL reported 34 new deaths related to COVID-19 on Friday, the highest daily toll since 3 March 2021. The country has had 19,237 fatalities since the start of the pandemic, Portugal's Directorate-General for Health (DGS) said.

The country's health authorities reported 40,090 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, making Friday the third consecutive day with more than 40,000 daily cases. The country's cumulative total is 1,814,567 infections.

The number of hospitalized patients, however, remained unchanged at 1,699, with 162 in intensive care units.

In the past 24 hours, 27,424 people recovered from COVID-19, bringing the total number of recoveries to 1,495,733. — ANI ■

Many health passes to be deactivated this Saturday

TENS of thousands of health passes are likely to be deactivated due to the lack of a Covid vaccine recall on Saturday, a deadline set by the government, amid new protests by opponents of the scheme and a vote on the controversial pass bill in parliament.

In theory, some 560,000 people are likely to lose their pass on Saturday, the health ministry told AFP on Friday evening. But the real figure is difficult to determine.

If we exclude those who have been infected in the meantime (which extends the pass), some 15.9 million adults are supposed to have received their booster on Saturday, seven months after their previous injection. This is now a condition for keeping the pass.

According to the ministry, about 15.3 million of these people had received their booster by Thursday. But that doesn't mean the remaining 560,000 will lose their pass on Saturday. — AFP ■

Switzerland and Bavaria have good start to ski season

THE ski season got off to a good start in Switzerland and Bavaria despite Corona.

The Jungfrau Railways in the Swiss ski area around Grindelwald and Wengen even spoke of the best winter season start in ten years. The reason is, among other things, the commissioning of a new cable car that can bring more guests to the summits faster.

In Bavaria, there were traffic jams in car parks and queues at the ticket offices of ski resorts over the holidays.

Austria had a bad start due to a new lockdown at the beginning of December and is relying mainly on February business. — AFP ■

S Korea, China Taipei expected to top Japan in GDP per capita in 2027, 2028

JAPAN'S gross domestic product per capita will fall behind that of South Korea in 2027 and China Taipei in 2028, according to a recent projection by a Tokyo-based research institute, citing long-term low productivity on the back of slow progress in digitalization of the world's third-largest economy.

The inflation-unadjusted nominal GDP, the total value of goods and services produced in the nation, per person is projected at $46,519 in South Korea in 2027 and $47,305 in China Taipei in 2028, compared to the $45,607 and $46,443 forecast for Japan in the respective years, according to estimates released last month by the Japan Center for Economic Research or JCER.

File photo shows commuters walking in front of JR Tokyo Station on 4 January 2022. **PHOTO: KYODO**

"The biggest obstacle for Japan's economic growth is its low birthrate and aging population, but South Korea and China Taipei are in much the same case on that point, so the difference comes from their productivity and efforts for digitalization," said Atsushi Tomiyama, a principal economist at the research institute.

Japan's growth rate from 2021 through 2035 is forecast at 2.0 percent on average each year, lower than the 4.1 percent for South Korea and 4.2 percent for China Taipei, according to the projection that covered 15 Asian nations along with the United States, Canada and Australia.

GDP per capita, an indicator of individual wealth, in 2020 came to $39,890 in Japan, $31,954 in South Korea and $28,054 in China Taipei, the research body said. — Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

IMF official urges 'deep reforms' to Tunisian economy

TUNISIA'S crisis-stricken economy needs "deep reforms" such as slashing its vast public wage bill, the International Monetary Fund's outgoing country chief has said as the government seeks a new bailout.

JEROME Vacher, speaking in an interview at the end of his three-year term as the global lender's envoy to the North African country, said the coronavirus pandemic had helped create Tunisia's "worst recession since independence" in 1956.

"THE country had pre-existing problems, in particular budget deficits and public debt, which have worsened," he said.

TUNISIA'S debts have soared to nearly 100 percent of Gross Domestic Product.

ITS GDP plunged by almost nine percent in 2020, the worst rate in North Africa, only modestly offset by a three percent bounceback last year.

THAT is "quite weak and far from enough" to create jobs to counteract an unemployment rate of 18 percent, Vacher said.

HE said young graduates face particular challenges in finding work, despite the country being able to offer "a qualified workforce and a favourable geographic location".

SINCE dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was toppled by mass protests in 2011, Tunisia's troubled democratic transition has failed to revive the economy.

PRESIDENT Kais Saied sacked the government and suspended parliament on 25 July last year, and the government has since asked the IMF for a bailout package – the fourth since the revolution. – AFP ■

China approves two new railway projects

CHINA'S top economic planner has approved two railway projects, with a combined investment of 238.26 billion yuan (about 37.4 billion US dollars).

THE projects include one high-speed rail track connecting north China's Tianjin and Weifang in east China, and one linking Xi'an in the northwest and Chongqing in the southwest, according to the National Development and Reform Commission.

EARLIER data showed a total of 4,208 kilometers of new rail lines were put into service in 2021, including 2,168 kilometers of high-speed tracks.

BY the end of last year, the operating length of China's high-speed railway network exceeded 40,000 kilometers, as major projects began operations as scheduled. – Xinhua ■

World risks more years of high energy prices, emissions: IEA

THE world faces more years of high energy prices and emissions unless the electricity sector changes faster after demand hit a record last year, the International Energy Agency said Friday.

The economic recovery from the Covid pandemic, combined with unusual weather conditions, caused electricity demand to jump by more than six percent in 2021, the largest increase since 2010, the IEA said.

In absolute terms, the increase of more than 1,500 terawatt-hours was the largest ever, the Paris-based agency said in its semi-annual Electricity Market Report.

This pushed prices to unprecedented levels while emissions from the electricity sector rose by seven percent in 2021 — an all-time high after having decreased the previous two years, the IEA said.

Electricity generation from coal and natural gas hit record levels last year, the IEA says. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

While renewable power experienced "impressive growth", electricity generation from coal and natural gas hit record levels, the report found. — AFP ■

Libya oil, gas exports hit 5-year high of $21.5 bn

LIBYA'S lifeline oil and gas exports raised revenues of more than $21.5 billion in 2021, the highest level in five years, the National Oil Corporation announced Saturday.

Total net revenues for oil and gas exports last year amounted to $21.5 billion as well as 30 million euros in non-dollar sales, the state-run NOC said in a statement.

It said record levels were achieved in November and December, raising a combined $4.3 billion in the two last months of 2021.

"The end of the year 2021 recorded a recovery, and oil prices achieved their largest annual gains since 2016, driven by the recovery of the global economy from the state of stagnation" due to the coronavirus epidemic, NOC chief Mustafa Sanalla said.

Since the 1970s, Libya which sits on the largest known oil reserves in Africa has been heavily dependent on revenues from its hydrocarbon exports.

But in a decade of violence since the 2011 revolt that overthrew and killed dictator Moamer Kadhafi, armed groups have frequently blockaded or damaged oil installations.

The shutdowns have forced the NOC to declare force majeure, a legal move allowing it to free itself from contractual obligations in light of factors beyond its control.

Oil production has recovered to 1.2 million barrels per day, as opposed to between 1.5 million and 1.6 million bpd before the NATO-backed uprising of 2011. — AFP ■

Men's fashion week in Milan eyes dressing for post-Covid excursions

FITTED frock coats, bow ties and exuberant colours graced the runaway as Dolce & Gabbana and Fendi both imagined more glamourous, post-pandemic wardrobes for their fall/winter collections at the Milan men's fashion week.

Designer Silvia Venturini Fendi took inspiration from the 1920s dandy at her fashion house's show on Saturday, punctuating refinement with touches of eccentricity.

Blazers were transformed into capes, knitwear featured sizeable chest cutouts and the accessories veered towards the flashy.

The collection also aimed for a more fluid interpretation of typically gendered clothes, with wide-leg pants ballooning into half-skirts.

"We women wear men's jackets, I do not see why they could not take inspiration from our wardrobe," said the designer, the granddaughter of the Italian fashion house's founders. — AFP ■

Yahoo Japan OKs workers to commute from anywhere, even by air

YAHOO Japan Corp. said it will allow its 8,000 workers to live and commute from anywhere in Japan, even by air, starting from April.

The portal site operator will remove a requirement for coming to the office by 11 a.m. and an upper limit on one-way commuting costs of 6,500 yen ($57), the company said Wednesday. Still, its monthly commuting fee cap will remain at 150,000 yen.

Airplanes and express buses will be added to local trains and buses and bullet trains as a transportation option for commuting.

Yahoo Japan introduced the "Office Anywhere" system in 2014 to allow for working outside the office and scrapped a rule on working in the office at least five days a month in 2020 to address the increased need for teleworking amid the coronavirus pandemic.

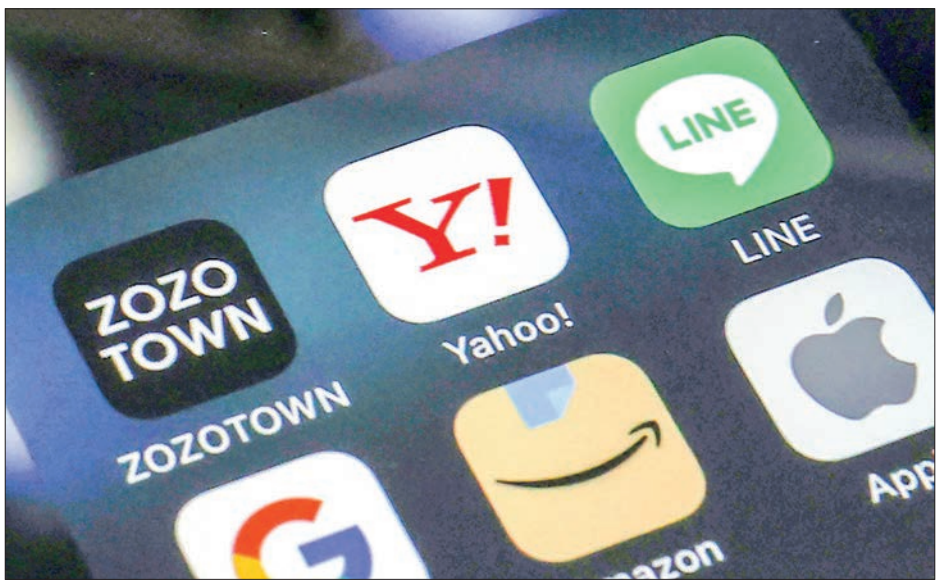


Photo taken in May 2021 shows a screen with an icon of Yahoo Japan Corp's app (top C). **PHOTO: KYODO**

Around 90 percent of employees at Yahoo Japan are working remotely as of January, saying that it does not hinder work quality, which in some cases improves, the company said.

Yahoo Japan follows flea market app operator Mercari Inc., which launched a similar scheme in September last year permitting its employees to live and work anywhere within the country.

Japanese companies are striving to offer flexible work environments to meet demand for diversified working styles and to retain a talented workforce in the face of labor shortages. — Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

China's e-commerce logistics activities expand in 2021

CHINA'S e-commerce logistics sector reported moderate growth last year, according to an industry survey jointly undertaken by the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing and e-commerce giant JD.com.

The survey showed that the index tracking e-commerce logistics activities averaged 110.3 points in 2021, up 2.4 percentage points from the previous year and was close to the 2019 average.

The total demand for e-commerce logistics rose relatively fast last year, with the sub-index tracking the total business volume coming in at 126.6 points, up 3.4 percentage points from 2020.

The business volume in rural areas maintained its growth momentum, with the sub-index standing at 125.9 points on average in 2021, up 7.6 points from the previous year.

In December last year, the index tracking e-commerce logistics activities stood at 108.8 points, down 0.7 percentage points from that in November. – Xinhua ■

Air Malta to halve workforce in bid to stay afloat

AIR Malta, the country's flag carrier, will reduce the number of employees by half as the government plans to make the airline financially viable, Finance Minister Clyde Caruana said here on Friday.

The airline currently has 890 employees, and the plan is to offer around 470 of them jobs in other government sectors with the same conditions and salary.

The move, to be completed by this summer, is expected to save the airline around 15 million euros (17.1 million US dollars) per year, Caruana told a press conference.

The restructuring plan was unveiled as the government awaits the European Commission's final decision on how much in state aid it can inject into the airline.

The plan also foresees the negotiation of new collective agreements to allow the airline more flexibility and to introduce new and sustainable operational practices.

Caruana said the cost-cutting plan will see the airline close its ground and baggage handling operations, which alone employ 300 people. Another 110 administrative staff will also be transferred to other government sectors. – AFP ■

Cambodia's banking industry sees strong growth last year despite pandemic

Phnom Penh Commercial Bank (PPCBank) staff is servicing a customer at main branch in capital. **PHOTO: KHMERTIMESKH.COM/ XINHUA**

CAMBODIA'S banking industry had seen robust growth in loans and deposits in 2021 despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a report of the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) on Saturday.

Outstanding loans rose by 21.2 percent year-on-year to 45.7 billion US dollars last year, while customers' deposits surged by 15.4 percent to 38.5 billion U.S. dollars, the report said.

The growth was driven by rising loan demands in trade, housing, construction and manufacturing, among others, the central bank said, adding that the non-performing loan (NPL) was at a controllable rate of 2.4 percent.

Speaking at the NBC's annual meeting on Friday, the bank governor Chea Chanto said the country's economy rebounded to an estimated 3 percent in 2021 after a sharp contraction of 3.1 percent in 2020. — Xinhua ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V HANSA MAGDEBURG VOY.NO. (201S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V HANSA MAGDEBURG VOY.NO. (201S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/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 SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (182W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (182W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tehran, Riyadh getting ready to reopen embassies

AN Iranian lawmaker said on Saturday that Tehran and Riyadh are reviving their relations and preparing the ground for the reopening of their embassies, reported Xinhua.

Jalil Rahimi Jahan-Abadi, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, made the remarks in a Twitter post in Persian, adding the move will have important impacts on reducing regional tensions and fostering solidarity among Muslim states. Earlier, in an interview with Al Jazeera English-language news channel, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said Iran has so far held four rounds of positive and constructive talks with the relevant Saudi officials in Iraq. — Xinhua ■

2 killed in bullfighting events in India

TWO people were killed in two consecutive days in bullfighting in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, local media reported on Saturday.

On Saturday morning, a 27-year-old bull owner was gored to death at Periya Suriyur in the state's Tiruchi district.

"The man, identified as Meenakshisundaram from Srirangam, was guiding his bull to the entrance of the closure to be released, when the animal went out of control and gored him to death. The man was rushed to the Tiruchi Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital, but was declared brought dead," the local media quoted local health officials as saying.

On Friday, a 19-year-old spectator was gored to death by a bull and at least 80 participants were injured at the event in the state's Madurai district.

"The spectator, 19-year-old D Balamurugan of Avaniapuram, was gored to death near the bull collection point. He was brought dead to Madurai Government Rajaji Hospital," another media report said. — Xinhua ■

Preliminary findings of India's chopper crash blame pilot error in cloudy weather

A view of site where an Indian Air Force helicopter crashed at Coonoor area of Nilgiris district, about 538 km southwest of Chennai, the capital city of India's Tamil Nadu state, 8 December 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA/ STRINGER**

PRELIMINARY findings of an inquiry team investigating a chopper crash that killed India's Chief of Defense Staff General Bipin Rawat, his wife and 12 others has found a pilot error in the cloudy weather a reason for the accident, defense officials said Saturday.

The inquiry has ruled out mechanical failure or sabotage for the crash.

"The tri-services court of inquiry into the Mi-17 V5 accident on 8 December 2021 has submitted its preliminary findings. The inquiry team analyzed the Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder besides questioning all available witnesses to determine the most probable cause of the accident," a statement issued by defense ministry said.

"The court of inquiry has ruled out mechanical failure, sabotage or negligence as a cause of the accident. The accident was a result of entry into clouds due to unexpected change in weather conditions in the valley," the statement added.

"This led to spatial disorientation of the pilot resulting in Controlled Flight into Terrain. Based on its findings, the Court of Inquiry has made certain recommendations which are being reviewed," said the statement.

The probe was called last month by the Indian Air Force immediately after the deadly crash. — Xinhua ■

Has diplomacy on Ukraine reached a dead end?

THE failure of the United States and Russia this week to find a diplomatic solution to fizzing tensions over Eastern European security has increased the chance of a new Russian attack on Ukraine even if full-scale war is far from inevitable, analysts say.

Russia stands accused of having massed some 100,000 troops close to the Ukrainian border, as it seeks a commitment from the West that the pro-EU former Soviet state will never join NATO. Senior Russian and US officials this week held talks in Geneva but there was no hint of any breakthrough, with Washington warning by the end of the week Moscow could stage a false flag operation within weeks to precipitate an invasion.

"We have information that indicates Russia has already prepositioned a group of operatives to conduct a false-flag operation in eastern Ukraine," said Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary.

"The operatives are trained in urban warfare and in using explosives to carry out acts of sabotage against Russia's own proxy forces."

Ukraine was meanwhile hit by a blistering cyberattack in the early hours of Friday blamed by the West on Russia and which some analysts feared could be the prelude to an attack.

Fears have been mounting in Ukraine that Russia, which Kyiv says has massed around 100,000 troops on its side of the border, is plotting to launch a large-scale attack. **PHOTO: AFP**

Moscow responded to the ousting of Ukraine's former pro-Russia president in 2014 by seizing in a lightning military operation the Ukrainian Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, an annexation never recognised by the international community. — AFP ■

US Texas governor blames White House for border crisis

A US Border Patrol agent walks to his vehicle while patrolling near a newly-built section of the border wall between Mexico and the United States near Eagle Pass, Texas, the United States, 7 January 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

GOVERNOR of the US State of Texas Greg Abbott has criticized the White House for causing illegal crossings on the border with Mexico, Russian broadcaster RT reported on Friday.

The current administration has endangered the lives and property of Texans by failing to do its job of securing the border, the governor said.

According to the report, Texas state troopers have arrested thousands of migrants under Operation Lone Star, which was launched by Abbott last March, in an attempt to combat the smuggling of illegal aliens and drugs.

Launched on 6 March, Operation Lone Star sent Department of Public Safety troopers and the Texas National Guard to "high-threat" areas along the border.

In June, Abbott said he would work with local officials to arrest anyone who enters the state illegally and trespasses. — Xinhua ■

Iran nuke talks progressing amid 'better atmosphere'

This 3 December 2021 photo shows a meeting of the Joint Commission on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in Vienna, Austria. **PHOTO: EU DELEGATION IN VIENNA/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

CHIEF negotiators of Iran and three European countries on Friday temporarily returned to their capitals for consultations as expert talks continue, providing the latest evidence that international talks to salvage the Iranian nuclear deal in Vienna have been moving forward.

The return of chief negotiators to their countries does not mean the eighth round of talks has stopped, according to the website of Iran's Foreign Ministry. The eighth round of negotiations between Iran and other remaining signatories to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) began on Dec. 27 with the United States indirectly involved after its pullout in 2018 from the landmark pact.

"There's a better atmosphere since Christmas," European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told reporters on Friday following an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in the French city of Brest.

"Before Christmas, I was very pessimistic," he said, adding that "today I believe reaching an accord is possible," even within the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, there is "real progress" on the restoration of the JCPOA, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Friday.

"There is real progress there, there is a real desire, first of all between Iran and the United States, to understand specific concerns, to understand how these concerns can be taken into account in a common package," Lavrov told a press conference.

The Vienna talks are "moving forward on right track," Iran's official IRNA News Agency reported on Saturday. – Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Questions persist over Kazakh version of deadly unrest

AS the dust settles on lethal clashes in Kazakhstan that prompted authorities to call in Russian-led troops, questions are mounting over the authoritarian government's handling of the unprecedented crisis.
While President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has pinned the blame on bandits and foreign militants, many ordinary people question the official storyline.
Following days of internet shutdown, prosecutors announced late Saturday the unrest that began with peaceful protests over energy price hikes had left 225 people dead, including 19 law enforcement and military personnel. – AFP ■

Former Haiti senator arrested in Jamaica over president's murder

A former Haitian lawmaker who is a suspect in the assassination of the country's president has been arrested in Jamaica, Jamaican authorities said Saturday.
Ex-senator Jean Joel Joseph, wanted in the 7 July 2021, killing of president Jovenel Moise, was arrested Friday evening, the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) said in a statement.
The JCF "can confirm that a Haitian national; Jean Joel Joseph and three other members (of) his family were arrested in Jamaica on immigration related charges," the statement said. – AFP ■

Trump rallies faithful in Arizona

Supporters of former US president Donald Trump started to gather ahead of a rally in Florence, Arizona days in advance from as far away as Florida or Texas. **PHOTO: AFP**

DONALD Trump delivered a crowd-pleasing speech to thousands of adoring supporters in Arizona Saturday, insisting yet again that he won the 2020 US presidential election.

Some of the faithful had arrived in the area days in advance from as far away as Florida or Texas, waiting to hear him trot out a familiar list of grievances.

They were soon rewarded.

"We are done having our lives controlled by politicians in Washington. We are done with the mandates," he said.

"The radical Democrats want to turn the United States into a communist country.

"We won those elections. We won them big. We can't let them get away with it."

Earlier speakers had kept to similar themes, slamming President Joe Biden as "weak" and "deranged," and taking aim at the "lamestream media," who were duly booed by the crowd.

It was a greatest hits of Trumpism, playing all the expected notes: a stolen election, the unfairness of the media, open borders and how the United States has become "a laughing stock all over the world."

There was a carnival feeling for much of the day.

Flags proclaiming "Trump 2020" and "Trump 2024" fluttered in the desert wind, as chants of "Let's Go Brandon" erupted from the good-natured crowd.

The slogan has become code in right-wing circles after a news reporter mistook coarse anti-Biden chants.

"It's just a party atmosphere," said Jonathan Riches, who was attending his 40th Trump rally. – AFP ■

Inside a migrant caravan leaving Honduras

The migrants are mostly from Central and South America, but some have come from as far as Africa – seeking a better life away from gang violence and drug cartels. **PHOTO: AFP**

HUNDREDS of men, women and children gathered early Saturday morning in the parking lot of San Pedro Sula's main transit hub, on the edge of the northern Honduran city.

Before the sun rose, many had already departed on foot, carrying the few belongings they had in backpacks or bags towards Corinto, a small Honduran border town on the other side of the mountains.

While their final destination is the United States, their main goal is "a better future for their family," said a Nicaraguan who provided only his first name, Ovaldo.

He was accompanied by about 500 other migrants, originally from a variety of countries including Honduras, Haiti, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

Some had even crossed the ocean from Africa.

They will join a nearly endless flow of other migrants attempting to cross into Guatemala, then Mexico and ultimately the United States -- which most will not manage to do.

At the Corinto border crossing, the group had arrived all together but broke into smaller groups to go through Guatemalan immigration. – AFP ■

Myanmar team leaves for India to compete in 2022 Asian Cup Women's Championship

THE Myanmar national women's team left for India yesterday morning to compete in the final round of the 2022 Asian Cup Women's Championship.

Team Manager Daw Myat Myat Oo, Head Coach U Tin Myint Aung, Assistant Coaches U Khin Maung Htwe, Daw Thuzar Htwe and U Bo Bo Aung, Goal Coach U Yin Min Aung, Team Physician Dr Yu Nanda Tun, Media Officer U Aung Thaw Phyo, Video Analyst U Myat Soe Thu, Security Officer Daw Su Pyae Sone Aung, goalkeepers May Zin Nwe, Zu Latt Nadi, and Khine Zar Win, Defenders Aye Aye Moe, Chit Chit, Khin Myo Win, Phyu Phyu Win, Zun Yu Ya Oo, Nant Zu Zu Htet, Ei Ei Kyaw, and Khin Than Wai, Midfielders Thin Thin Yu, Khin Mo Mo Tun, Khin Malar Tun, Win Win and Naw Htet Htet Wai, Strikers Win Theingi Tun, San Thaw Thaw, Khin Moe Wai, Myat Noe Khin, July Kyaw, Hnin Pwint Aye and Nu Nu are on the team list during the India trip.

The final round of the 2022 AFC Women's Cup will be held in India from 20 January to 6 February, with a total of 12 contestant teams.

Host India is included in the Group A with China, China Taipei, and Iran while three ASEAN teams: Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia are placed in the Group B with world class team Australia.

Myanmar is included in the tough Group C together with Asian powerhouses Japan, South Korea and ASEAN star Viet Nam.

The Myanmar team will play against Japan on 21 January, South Korea on 24 January, and Vietnam on 27 January.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

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.

Lewandowski looking for 'The Best' consolation in Zurich

AFTER missing out on the Ballon d'Or, Robert Lewandowski may be in line for a consolation victory at FIFA's "The Best" awards ceremony on Monday. The Polish striker is the favourite to take the men's player of the year award while Alexia Putellas is well placed to make it a double in the women's award.

Bayern Munich's Polish striker Robert Lewandowski plays the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match Bayern Munich v Hoffenheim in Munich, southern Germany, on 23 October 2021. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Lewandowski, who fired in 41 goals for Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga last season and took his tally for this campaign to 23 with a hat-trick against Cologne on Saturday, is up against Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and Paris Saint-Germain's Lionel Messi who pipped Lewandowski for the Ballon d'Or. "You broke records and you too would have deserved to win this Ballon d'Or. You had an incredible season," Messi told Lewandowski when he picked up his seventh Ballon d'Or in Paris in November. Lewandowski's 41 goals marked a new record in a Bundesliga season, one more than the late Gerd Muller netted half a century ago.The 33-year-old was less successful in Europe as Bayern were eliminated from the Champions League in the quarter-finals while he was injured and nor was the Euro a high point as Poland failed to make it out of the group stage.— AFP ■

Henley leads Matsuyama by two at Sony Open

RUSSELL Henley fired five birdies in a three-under par 67 on Saturday to stay atop the leaderboard at the Sony Open, where Masters champion Hideki Matsuyama was two shots back.

Henley, who won the first of his three US PGA titles in his tour debut at the Sony Open in 2013, couldn't match the fireworks of Friday at Waialae Country Club. But his 18-under par total of 192 was enough to stay in front of Matsuyama, who charged up the leaderboard with a seven-under par 63 that featured seven birdies.

Henley shook off an early bogey with birdies at the seventh and ninth to make the turn one-under for the day.— AFP ■

Support of Federer, Djokovic stuns Kokkinakis after first title

AUSTRALIA'S Thanasi Kokkinakis said he was shocked Sunday to receive messages of support from tennis legends Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer after breaking through for his first professional title. Home favourite Kokkinakis claimed the first ATP title Saturday after downing Frenchman Arthur Rinderknech in three sets in the Adelaide International final.

No sooner had Kokkinakis left the court than he received a text message from Federer and later from Djokovic, surprising the popular Australian, whose career has been blighted by injury.

"Roger just messaged me out of nowhere. It was pretty unreal to see that," Kokkinakis told reporters at the Australian Open on Sunday.

"Actually, Djokovic messaged me today, as well. It's good having support from two legends of the game," he said, speaking before the news of Djokovic's failed court bid to stave off deportation from Australia had reached Melbourne Park.

"It's awesome having that support, two guys that have done so much, to reach out to me. Obviously they know it means a lot to me. "They've won about a million of them, so it was probably pretty minor to them, but to me it's massive. It was pretty sweet to have them reach out. — AFP ■

In-form Kokkinakis had already beaten former US Open champion Marin Cilic on his way to the title. **PHOTO: BRENTON EDWARDS /AFP**