BENEFIT SOCIETY THROUGH THE ACCREDITATION OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

PAGE-8 (OPINION)

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.

If efforts can be made for production of steelwares to be used in construction projects in States and Regions, import of steelwares can be cut: Senior General

AS the country needs a lot of steelwares for construction projects, businesspersons are allowed under the disciplines for producing steelwares, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in inspecting No 1 Steel Mill (Myingyan) under the Ministry of Industry in Myingyan Township of Mandalay Region yesterday morning.

Union Ministers reported on the implementation of steel mill projects, import of iron and steelwares and production of such products at home, use of iron and steelwares yearly, implementation of No 1 Steel Mill (Myingyan) and No 2 Steel Mill (Pinpet) projects, demanding of budget for the 2022-2023 financial year and future plans, the substitution of concrete sleepers along the Myingyan-Thazi railway section, Thazi-Shwenyaung section, Shwenyaung-Taunggyi section and Taunggyi-Seikkhaung section, improvement of the railways, production of iron ore, coal, limestone and dolomite in Myanmar, the matter related to

SEE PAGE-3

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects No 1 Steel Mill (Myingyan) of the Ministry of Industry in Myingyan Township, Mandalay Region on 24 January 2022.

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL
Drivers with CPC eligible for YBS vehicles
PAGE-2

NATIONAL
SAC member, Union ministers inspect GTI (Kyaukpyu), SEZ project area
PAGE-6

NATIONAL
Working Committee to Address the impact of COVID-19 on National Economy meets
PAGE-7

NATIONAL
Over 200 displaced people return home in Loikaw, Kayah state
PAGE-10

LOCAL BUSINESS
Value-added purple sweet potato powder to penetrate internatinal market
PAGE-11

National Objectives of Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022

(1) All ethnic nationals to safeguard non-disintegration of the Union, national unity and sovereignty forever
(2) To perpetually ensure strengthening dynamic Union Spirit which is a genuine patriotic spirit
(3) To further strive for the perpetual existence of the country through strong and united strength of all ethnic national brethren
(4) To build the Union based on democracy and federalism in the realization of genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy
(5) To equalize development of all regions and states while making efforts for the enhancement of health, education and job opportunities of the ethnic nationals

Mottos of 75th Anniversary Union Day 2022

- **United strength across Myanmar focuses on Union affairs forever**
- **Joining hands in unison among ethnic nationals of the Union**
- **Unity is strength: Ethnic nationals join hands as strengths of the Union**

Judgements given to 5 special civil appeals; one special criminal appeal, 4 special civil appeals heard

THE special appeal court comprising Union Supreme Court Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo and Judges U Myo Tint, U Myo Maung, U Khin Maung Gyi and Daw Khin May Yi passed judgements on five special civil appeals cases yesterday.

Moreover, they heard one special criminal appeal case and four special civil appeals cases in line with COVID-19 health rules on the same day. —MNA

Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was re-constituted under the State Administration Council's Order No 366/2021 dated 10.12.2021, and action is being taken effectively against illegal trade under the law.

The following telephone numbers, fax and email address can be reached to safely report information in connection with illegal trade.

Auto telephone number - 067 409 883
Mobile phone - 09 404339969
Fax - 067 409 886
Email address - antiillegaltradeinfo@gmail.com

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was re-constituted under the State Administration Council's Order No 366/2021 dated 10.12.2021, and action is being taken effectively against illegal trade under the law.

Regarding the "request for money from departmental organizations in conducting trade", the following numbers can be reached to safely report such information.

Auto telephone number - 067 409 881
Mobile phone - 09 699611116
Fax - 067 409 887
Email address - antiillegaltradeoffice@gmail.com

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

Drivers with CPC eligible for YBS vehicles

THOSE drivers who earn a YBS Driver Certificate of Professional Competence awarded by Yangon Region Transport Committee (YRTC) and the Directorate of Road Transport Administration under the Ministry of Transport and Communications are qualified to work for Yangon Bus Service.

At present, YBS is a shortage of drivers and the first batch of YBS specialized training (1/2022) is scheduled to start in the first week of February. YRTC has called for trainees. Those who hold a B driving licence for at least three years and an E driving licence are eligible to join the training programme. Additionally, the age of the trainees is limited to between 25 and 55 years. All the trainees must have the driving experience of large vehicles.

Those who have worked for YBS have to seek recommendations from their respective companies. Secondary education is a compulsory requirement as well. It is the four-week training and they will be awarded a YBS Driver Certificate of Professional Competence, YRTC notified.

It will hold up to 150 trainees. Those enthusiastics can take out an application form and submit it at YRTC head office. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

The YBS buses are seen against the background of Sule Pagoda in the city centre of Yangon. **PHOTO: KO NAING**

92 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 24 January, total figure rises to 534,163

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 534,163 after 92 new cases were reported on 24 January 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 512,331 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at 19,310.—MNA

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Efforts are being made to develop the education sector

AS the development of a country depends on a larger number of educated persons, officials of the education sector must strive for an increasing number of educated persons. Some three million people among 55 million are graduates. Hence, it can be seen that less than 10 per cent of people can learn higher education. More than 18 million of the population could join the primary and middle school education. As education is crucial for the development of the nation, efforts are being made to develop the education sector during the period when the Tatmadaw took the State responsibilities.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the coordination meeting on the higher-education sector on 18 January 2022.)

If efforts can be made for the production of steelwares to be used in construction projects in States and Regions, ...

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects the foundry and melt shop of No 1 Steel Mill (Myingyan) on 24 January 2022.

FROM PAGE-1

230-kVA Myingyan Sub-Power Station, and Chairman of Myanmar Economic Corporation Lt-Gen Nyo Saw on functionings of steel mills of MEC.

In his response, the Senior General stressed that the country primarily requires deformed iron bars. As the country demands a large volume of steel, the steel production projects must be implemented for completion as scheduled. During the construction project, 99.34 per cent and 95.02 per cent of machinery for Steel Mill (Myingyan) had arrived. But, the Hluttaw decided to stop the project under voting in 2017. So, the country lost a lot of funds. Now, the loan is being paid back. As the machinery and mill equipment which had already arrived were kept outside, many parts were damaged. Hence, the Ministry needs to maintain and reoperate No 1 Steel Mill as soon as possible. Supervision must be made for the timely completion of the project in respective parts. As the country needs a lot of steelwares for construction projects, businesspersons are allowed under the disciplines for producing steelwares.

> Myanmar possesses iron oar, coal and limestones to be used in the production of steel. If efforts can be made for the production of steelwares to be used in construction projects in States and Regions, the import of steelwares can be cut. Consequently, the regional industries will be booming. As steel and steelwares worth US$995 million was imported in the 2020-21 financial year, it is necessary to increase the production of steel as well as reduce importation.

The Senior General noted that substitution of concrete sleepers along the railways and upgrading tasks must systematically be undertaken under the rules. Priority must be given to the improvement of railways on which passenger trains are running. Repairing and construction of railways must systematically be calculated under supervision for minimizing the costs.

Myanmar possesses iron oar, coal and limestones to be used in the production of steel. If efforts can be made for the production of steelwares to be used in construction projects in States and Regions, the import of steelwares can be cut. Consequently, the regional industries will be booming. As steel and steelwares worth US$995 million was imported in the 2020-2021 financial year, it is necessary to increase the production of steel as well as reduce importation.

More cement plants must be established in regions and states. In so doing, it is necessary to consider the work process under the strategy for the State. The Senior General underscored that Myingyan Steel Mill will be a major drive for the development of iron and steelwares in Myanmar and the improvement of Myanmar industries.

Later, the Senior General inspected the foundry and melt shop 2 of the mill and gave instructions on reports of assistant mill manager U Soe Min Tun and officials. — MNA

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing pays homage to Maha Muni Buddha Image in Mandalay

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing pays homage to Maha Muni Buddha Image in Mandalay on 24 January 2022.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing paid homage to Maha Muni Buddha Image in Chanmyathazi Township of Mandalay Region yesterday morning.

The Senior General offered flowers, water and gold foils to the Buddha Image and presented cash for the all-round renovation of the image to the chairman and party of the Image Board of Trustees.

The Senior General viewed maintenance tasks and renovation of Maha Muni Pitaka Chamber and left necessary instructions.

After viewing round the Myanmar handicraft booth and the historic art gallery in the precinct of the image, the Senior General instructed officials to maintain the objects displayed in the booths and valuable paintings for existence, systematically compile the data for the history through ancient object donors for observation of new generations, and take care of original marks and evidence of objects in renovation tasks.—MNA

The Senior General offers gold foils to Maha Muni Buddha Image.

The Senior General views the renovation of Maha Muni Pitaka Chamber.

The Senior General observes the artefacts displayed in the booths.

The Senior General presents cash donations.

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Priority must be given for generating renewable energy such as hydropower and solar power: Senior General

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views the Yeywa Hydropower Project in Kyaukse District of Mandalay Region on 24 January 2022.

IMPLEMENTATION of hydropower is based on larger investment and expenditure should be calculated, its benefit can be valuable, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in inspecting Yeywa Hydropower Project in Kyaukse District of Mandalay Region yesterday morning.

At the briefing hall, the Senior General heard reports on year-wise generating of electricity, storage of water at Yeywa Dam, the inflow of water to the dam, generating capacity of each turbine, the strength of staff and repairing of staff housings, cost of generating electricity, major repairing of No 4 turbine in the 2019-2020 financial year, electricity projects on Myitnge River, facts about Namtu (Hsipaw), Upper and Middle Yeywa, and Deedok hydropower projects, generating of electricity from the recycling power plant, requirement of electricity, plans to reduce workload, destruction of power lines and repair works, and production of natural gas.

In his speech, the Prime Minister said Upper and Middle Yeywa and Deedok hydropower projects must be continued. Generating electricity with the use of LNG is very expensive.

The Senior General inspects the generating of electricity at Yeywa Hydropower Project on 24 January 2022.

The Senior General gives cash awards to the staff.

Priority must be given for generating renewable energy such as hydropower and solar power. It is necessary to invite local and foreign companies to generate solar power.

In terms of democratic governments, they strived for generating hydropower but they caused problems in the implementation of the hydropower projects as the reason for the environment which was politically utilized. Electricity is essential for development tasks.

Implementation of hydropower is based on larger investment and expenditure should be calculated, its benefit can be valuable. The cost of the Yeywa hydropower plant has been covered and the project is invaluable for the country adding that it contributed much to the socio-economy of the people and the development of the State. Missing the chance of generating hydropower at full capacity caused loss to the State. Efforts must be made for the hydropower projects as quickly as possible. Generating electricity is essential for the State and it is necessary to reduce electricity consumption.

The Senior General viewed generating electricity and presented cash awards for staff through plant manager U Khin Maung Tint.

Later, the Senior General inspected the inflow of water to Yeywa Dam.—MNA

Information release on detection of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant

THE Ministry of Health is continuously conducting "COVID-19 Molecular Disease Surveillance" and releasing information on detection of SARS CoV-2 Omicron variant from those who return by the relief flights in a timely manner.

The laboratory samples of the COVID-19 virus of the returnees were sent to the National Health Laboratory and No 1 Defence Services General Hospital (1000-bed) on 24-1-2022 and the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant was found in 37 laboratory samples.

Thirty-six Myanmar nationals and one foreigner, who returned by relief flights, have tested positive, and 15 returned from the UAE, while seven from Malaysia, six from India, four from Korea, three from Singapore, one each from Thailand and Russia.

The patients are admitted to the designated hospitals for medical treatment and the passengers, who returned together with them, now undergo strict quarantine and lab tests.

Therefore, it is announced that the ministry is stepping up the COVID-19 disease monitoring and protecting measures plus disease prevention, control and treatment activities.

Ministry of Health

As it is a dry area with the least rainy days, efforts should be made for generating electricity through solar power, Senior General stresses

AS the project area is located in the tropical region, trees must be grown in the edge of the project area and vacant areas for creating the greening environment, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing was quoted as saying in inspecting the progress of Mandalay Myotha Industrial Park City Project in Mandalay Region yesterday afternoon.

At the project site, the project chairman explained the implementation of the project with the use of a scale model.

The chairman of the project and General Manager Dr Tun Tun Aung reported to the Senior General on plans to invite investments to the industrial zone and to generate job opportunities, and potentials to manufacture value-added products with the use of agricultural and livestock products.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing hears the report made by the project chairperson at Mandalay Myotha Industrial Park City Project.

The Senior General looks into the scale model of the Mandalay Myotha Industrial Park City Project in Mandalay Region on 24 January 2022.

In his speech, the Senior General said that as the project area is located in the tropical region, trees must be grown on the edge of the project area and vacant areas for creating a greening environment.

Businesspersons are urged to seek the approvals of the Myanmar Investment Commission and relevant ministries under the procedures so as to promptly carry out the tasks.

As it is a dry area with the least rainy days, efforts should be made for generating electricity through solar power.

At Mandalay Region Livestock Zone in Myingyan and Ngazun townships, officials of Mandalay Region Farmland Management and Statistics Department and Region Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department reported on plans for allotment of more than 3,000 acres of land as the livestock zone between Myingyan and Ngazun townships and supply of water in the zone.

The Senior General stressed the need to consider a systematic livestock system for livestock zones suitable for the region to have success, setting an area for building solar plants to generate electricity for pumping water from the river and electrifying the livestock zone.

If so, the zone will take profit, and the setting of the livestock zone must be under the law. — MNA

SAC member, Union minister inspect GTI (Kyaukpyu), SEZ project area

STATE Administration Council Member Daw Aye Nu Sein, accompanied by Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint, Deputy Minister U Zaw Aye Maung and SAC Advisor Dr Yin Yin Nwe, met the principal and teachers of the Government Technical Institute (Kyaukpyu) yesterday.

During the meeting, SAC Member Daw Aye Nu Sein delivered an opening speech and Dr Aung Mon, Principal of the institute presented matters related to the institute, five AGTI diploma courses and short-term courses which were conducted starting 2019 to date. Then, the officials explained necessary things and inspected the school compound.

Afterwards, SAC Member Daw Aye Nu Sein and party inspected the 250 acres of land, on which the SEZ will be developed, in Thaingchaung village and Kyaukpyu SEZ Management Committee Chairman U Myint Thein clarified the work processes of the committee. — MNA

Working Committee to Address the impact of COVID-19 on National Economy meets

THE meeting of the Working Committee to address the impact of COVID-19 on the National Economy (1/2022) was virtually held yesterday afternoon at Office No. (1), Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

The meeting was chaired by Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. Members of the working committee, the deputy minister, deputy governor from the Central Bank of Myanmar and permanent secretaries and representatives from the ministries concerned attended the meeting.

During the meeting, it was discussed regarding the situation on providing loans under COVID-19 Fund, including the support for the fishery and livestock sector, the selection process for the provision of loans for the Film, Music, Theatrical, Press and Media, facilitation procedure and the works done by the working committee.

The meeting also discussed relief measures carried out by concerned ministries and the future plan of the committee. — MNA

Continuous development course for bamboo innovation products in Mekong Region opened

THE Department of Research and Innovation, Ministry of Science and Technology, organized the opening ceremony of the "Continuous Development Course for Bamboo Innovation Products in the Mekong Region" which will be implemented under the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund 2020, yesterday in Yangon.

The ceremony was addressed by Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Kyaw, Minister Counsellor from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China Madam Li Xiao Yan, Director-General of the Department of Strategic Studies and Training of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Aung Myint, and Director-General of the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization-INBAR Mr Ali Mchumo.

The ceremony was attended by officials from the embassies of Cambodia, Laos, China, Thailand and Viet Nam, department officials, expert professors from China, officials from the Myanmar Bamboo Cultivation Association, Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Association, and Myanmar Bamboo Industry Development Association, and the trainees of the course.

Afterwards, the Union minister observed the trainees' work and the Bamboo Architecture Demonstration Unit at the "Training of Trainers on Bamboo Weaving Art" opened at the Department of Research and Innovation. The training is being conducted by Chinese experts online (virtual mode) from 24 to 28 January and practical skills such as dying, bamboo splitting and handicrafts will be included.

The "Continuous Development Course for Bamboo Innovation Products in the Mekong Region" covers bamboo industry policy and sustainable development, and the techniques of producing innovative value-added bamboo products.

This project will provide sustainable development of the bamboo industry in the Mekong Region, including Myanmar, and the cooperation between countries will be strengthened by providing small and medium enterprises with research and innovative value-added technologies, and by competing in the international market for high value-added bamboo products. — MNA

New project of Gyaing Bridge (Zarthabyin) to benefit people

THE new Gyaing (Zarthabyin) Bridge is located on the Indu-Zarthabyin-Mawlamyine highway. It is 2,614 feet long, 68 feet wide of four lanes.

It is a type of three-span steel cable-stayed concrete bridge with a 1.0 km access road.

The bridge is connecting cities such as Mawlamyine, Indu, Hpa-an, Kawkareik, and Myawady, and the completion of the new bridge will make it easier and faster for traffic and goods to flow.

Education, health, social business and trade affairs will be better due to the bridge, which will also greatly contribute to the development of the social life of the ethnic people.

Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo of the Kayin state government, accompanied by cabinet ministers and departmental officials inspected the construction of the new Gyaing (Zarthabyin) Bridge on the morning of 24 January.

Afterwards, U Myo Win, Project Engineer and U Wai Phyo, Assistant Director of Bridge Task Force (14) gave a detailed presentation on the construction work of the Gyaing (Zarthabyin) Bridge via PowerPoint for the bridge works to be carried out in Kayin State during the six-month budget period from October 2021 to March 2022.

The chief minister asked questions and coordinated the necessary matters.

Afterwards, the state chief minister and party inspected the 9-inch-thick concrete paving work at 7/4 Shwe Taw Junction of Kaw Kyaik-Kaw Paran-Zarthabyin Strait Road, which is operated by AK Co. Ltd under the BOT system.

Next, the state chief minister and officials inspected the 14-foot-wide concrete road paved by Perfect Mother Co. Ltd on the one-mile and four furlongs long road from Hpa-an Township Rural Road Development Department and instructed officials to complete it within six months.

Afterwards, the state chief minister and party inspected the site of the junction upgrade work to be carried out by the State Development Affairs Committee and the construction of the entrance to the town and gave necessary instructions. — Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)/ GNLM

25 JANUARY 2022
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Benefit society through the accreditation of university education

THE university education is not a rote system but based on initiative, research and critical thinking on how to approach studying the subjects. Truly, the bilateral discussions between students and faculty members can uplift the capacity of critical thinking of the students.

Faculty members need to improve their academic skills through continuous research and studies so as to share newer knowledge with their students. High qualification of faculty members and university students is one of the important factors to the development of the universities.

Currently, the universities in Myanmar are lower than neighbouring countries and ASEAN countries. Hence, both faculty members and students need to polish images of the universities through their higher qualifications. That is why it is necessary to work hard to keep abreast of these countries in the education sector.

> The university is reliable for students in learning opportunities. Not only students but university authorities are responsible for helping the university and themselves benefit society generation by generation.

University authorities and students need to constantly focus on studies and research with might and main for improvement of the education sector. By conducting research, they can bring honour to the university through findings and results in the research. Indeed, research and university are inseparable.

Nowadays, not only academicians but students have great chances to learn and study various topics of knowledge through the internet as well as media platforms as today is the information technology era. But, they have to do in-depth studies or research to have proper results.

Faculty members need to train students to have good morals, good practices, good professions and critical thinking. Students need to set visions for their lives to become educated persons who graduate from the university and to have valuable knowledge for their lives. The authorities should create good environs for students at the universities to be able to widen their scopes.

Improvement of the university depends on the equal development of academic and management sectors. Academicians take responsibility for teaching the students while managers are responsible for arranging the systematic work process for running the university on a daily basis. Thanks to the staff of these sectors, university students will have to pursue education conveniently. Supporting management and academic sectors to each other will help students pursue higher education in a smooth process and last the university for a long time.

The university is reliable for students in learning opportunities. Not only students but university authorities are responsible for helping the university and themselves benefit society generation by generation.

■ ■ ■

Covax opens new front in pandemic arms race

COVAX aims to break the Covid-19 pandemic in 2022 by ensuring a steady supply of vaccines at last for the world's poorest countries — and swiftly getting them into arms.

The global scheme, aimed at procuring donor-funded jabs for the 91 weakest economies, delivered its one billionth dose last weekend — a major milestone that came far later than anticipated after a year of setbacks.

The battle for Covax in 2021 was getting hold of doses — besides rich countries cornering most of the vaccine supply, it faced export bans from producer countries, regulatory red tape and manufacturing delays.

Rather than bulk-bought jabs, the scheme ended up relying on doses donated by wealthy nations, which too often were about to expire and couldn't be used in time.

Covax sees the new front in 2022 as smoothing the supply chain — from a reliable stream off the production lines to efficient distribution set-ups in recipient countries.

The facility is co-led by the World Health Organization (WHO); the Gavi vaccine alliance, which handles procurement; and CEPI, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, which invests in prospective vaccines.

'Inequity 2.0' fear

Covax this week called for $5.2 billion over the next three months to steady the ship this year.

"We can break the cycle of transmission and the pain and suffering," Gavi chief Seth Berkley told the funding drive launch.

However, "what we do not have today are the resources to help countries adapt to the new challenges that we know Covid-19 will create in 2022".

Covax therefore wants to build a pool of 600 million doses to ensure a reliable supply, and to cover eventual variables such as boosters or new variant-specific vaccines.

It also needs to support readiness and delivery in poorer nations, and cover the costs of syringes and transportation.

"I think we'll still have rocky supply for the next six months or so and I'm a little worried, frankly, if there are new variant vaccines, that we might have an inequity 2.0," said Berkley.

Covax reckons it has enough confirmed vaccine supplies to jab 45 per cent of the population in the poorest 91 economies.

But the WHO wants 70 per cent fully jabbed in every country by July to end the acute phase of the pandemic — a much bigger stretch, given how far behind many countries are, especially in Africa, where more than 85 per cent of people are yet to receive a single dose.

At the current pace of vaccine roll-out, 109 countries will miss the mid-2022 target, the WHO has said.

'Back on track'

Covax was launched in June 2020, when few would have imagined that several highly effective vaccines would emerge within nine months. Historically, the vast majority of potential vaccines fail.

The first Covax doses were administered in March 2021, "but then we hit barrier after barrier", said Berkley.

"We were able to get this back on track — and now you're seeing an accelerated drive towards getting vaccines out."

Nearly four million coronavirus jabs arrived in Nigeria on 2 March 2021, making Africa's most populous nation the latest country to receive vaccines from Covax, a global scheme to provide free inoculations. **PHOTO: SIA KAMBOU/AFP**

The next billion doses is expected to take four to five months to deliver.

Of the billion doses delivered so far, around 285 million were AstraZeneca, 260 million Pfizer, 150 million Moderna, 125 million Janssen, 95 million Sinopharm and 85 million Sinovac.

Only WHO-approved vaccines can be used, of which there are eight so far. The latest is a major CEPI-funded vaccine, Novavax, which could do much of the heavy lifting in 2022.

Jabs for all 'achievable'

CEPI chief executive Richard Hatchett said the target was now building capacity in poorer countries to roll out mass vaccination at speed.

"The last mile is going to be the major challenge for 2022," he told a World Economic Forum session.

Up to 25 countries need particular help getting their vaccination programme in shape.

Overall, some 9.8 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses have been administered around the world. Covax jabs account for 82 per cent of injections in the 91 poorest economies.

SOURCE: AFP

Breakthrough COVID-19 infections spur strong antibody responses: Study

IN view of the spike in COVID-19 infections globally, a recent study shed light on the strength, durability and breadth of neutralizing antibody responses generated by breakthrough infections in individuals vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2. The findings were published in 'Cell', one of the scientific journals of Cell Press.

Alexandra Walls and David Veesler in the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Washington in Seattle led the project.

Characteristics of the Delta and Omicron coronavirus variants of concern included enhanced transmissibility and immune evasion even in non-immunologically naive individuals, compared to the ancestral pandemic coronavirus.

These characteristics, and the waning of immunity from vaccines, have led to breakthrough infections in vaccinated individuals. For the most part, otherwise healthy people who were vaccinated against the SARS-CoV-2 usually did not have severe symptoms if they did end up contracting the virus.

The researchers wanted to understand what effect catching the virus after being vaccinated had on neutralizing antibodies, and to see how durable and broad these responses were. Their hope was that advancing such knowledge would help guide vaccination policies and pandemic mitigation strategies.

Through their project the researchers learned that the degree of antibody response depended on whether a person has had one, two, three, or four exposures to the spike protein through infection, vaccination, or a mixture of the two. The scientists also checked antibody responses in groups of individuals who had been vaccinated after having COVID-19, those who were previously vaccinated and experienced a breakthrough infection, those who were vaccinated only, and those who were boosted and therefore vaccinated three times.

An outdoor, walk-up Covid-19 vaccination site within Franklin Park in Washington, D.C., on 29 November 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

Among their study subjects, those who had completed a three-vaccination protocol, and those who had been vaccinated after recovering from COVID-19, and those with a breakthrough infection after vaccination launched almost comparable neutralizing antibody responses, in terms of magnitude and breadth. Their serum binding and antibody neutralizing responses to the spike protein in the current pandemic coronavirus variants were much more potent and lasting than those generated by people who had received only two doses of COVID-19 vaccine or who had a previous infection not followed by vaccination.

Observations

This observation suggested that the increased number of exposures to SARS-CoV-2 antigens, either through infection and vaccination or triple vaccination, enhanced the quality of antibody responses.

The researchers also looked at how broad the elicited antibodies could be. They investigated neutralization of the divergent Omicron SARS-CoV-2 variant of concern, currently responsible for the majority of cases in the United States. Their findings showed that boosted individuals (or those that have a mixture of infection and double vaccination) have neutralizing antibodies at similar levels to subjects vaccinated twice against the original ancestral strain. This suggested a large amount of immune evasion, but that vaccine boosters could help close the neutralizing antibody gap caused by Omicron.

Looking outside of the SARS-CoV-2 family showed a similar pattern, where repeated and multiple exposures improved the otherwise weak neutralizing antibody response to SARS-CoV. Finally, the authors did not identify improvements in antibody binding to common cold causing coronavirus spike proteins like OC43 or HKU1

SOURCE: ANI

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 24 January 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 25 January 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Kachin State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State and isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Northern Shan, Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon, Taninthayi Regions and (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Mon States and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated to scattered rain or thunder showersin Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 January 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 January 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 January 2022: Partly Cloudy.

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

(Issued at 05.00 hour MST)

A slight earthquake of magnitude (3.9) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (15) miles northwest of Kalay), latitude 23.22 °N, longitude 93.82 °E, depth (10) kilometers, about (42) miles northeast of Haka seismological observatory was recorded at (04) hr (41) min (58) sec MST on 24 January 2022.

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Thiri Mingala Market.

Shoppers at Thiri Mingala Market.

Over 200 displaced people return home in Loikaw, Kayah state

Local people are seen shopping at the central market in Loikaw.

SECURITY forces are working with relevant organizations to rehabilitate the areas in Kayah State which were affected by the clashes between PDF terrorists, KNPP, and security forces. Yesterday, a total of 222 people fleeing from the fighting in and around Loikaw returned to their homes.

The people were welcomed back systematically by the authorities and provided with necessary assistance. Following the arrest of NUG and PDF terrorists in Kayah State, clashes broke out between security forces and terrorist groups in January, and the security forces have gained control over the area since 22 January. Due to the restoration of peace and stability in the area, markets have reopened as usual, and pagodas and other religious buildings are reportedly alive with regular worshippers. —MNA

CRIME NEWS

Illegal foodstuffs, goods, timbers seized

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee takes strict action against illegal trade under the law.

The combined team led by the Customs Department seized an estimated K13,363,000 worth of Thai-made undocumented foodstuffs and commodities at the Mayanchaung checkpoint on 22 and 23 January and took actions under the Customs Law.

Seized timbers.

Confiscated goods.

Similarly, officials confiscated China-made foodstuffs (estimated at K10,141,000) at the 16th-Mile Kyaukchaw checkpoint of Mandalay Region on 23 January. They took action under the Customs Law.

Moreover, the Bago Region Forest Department seized 27.1911 tonnes of illegal woods (estimated at K5,146,726) in the forest reserves of Bago, Toungoo and Pyay districts, and took actions under the Forest Law.

There were 13 arrests (estimated at K28,650,726) on 22, 23 and 24 January, according to the committee. — MNA

Stimulants worth over K580 mln seized in Mogok Township, Mandalay Region

OVER K580million worth of stimulant tablets were seized in Mogok Township, according to the Myanmar Police Force.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined team comprised members of Anti-Drugs Squad stopped and searched a car (Toyota Avanza) driven by Sai Kyaw Htay together with his colleagues Ma Nang Kham Swe and Thein Win Aung at the Legyi inspection camp on the Mogok-Mong Lon Road on 22 January. Then, the police force confiscated 0.39 million stimulant tablets worth over K580 million in the car. After the investigation of the suspects, the stimulant pills were trafficked from Shan State (North) to Mandalay Region.

The three suspects are being charged under the Law and investigations are underway to capture the rest of the suspects, it is learnt. — MNA

Value-added purple sweet potato powder to penetrate international market

MYANMAR Trade Promotion Organization is making a concerted effort to ship the value-added purple sweet potato powder to the external market and seek a market share.

Two companies, in coordination with the growers, commenced growing Japanese sweet potato (Beni Imo) in Banyin and Hopong of southern Shan State in 2020 under the contract farming. They make value-added sweet potato powder to enhance the income of the growers and contribute to the socio-economic development of the hilly regions.

Two companies, in coordination with the growers, commenced growing Japanese sweet potato (Beni Imo) in Banyin and Hopong of southern Shan State in 2020 under the contract farming. **PHOTO : KANU**

"We propagate and grow the sweet potato for better quality and taste. The purple sweet potato experimental plantation was successful and they can be seen in the Taunggyi market. A company is striving for that sweet potato variety to be patented through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. About 1,500-3,000 viss of sweet potato can be produced per acre. The value-added sweet potato powder can be defined as import substitution as well as export items. It can also generate revenue. This being so, we are fulfilling the need to introduce it at international trade fairs," said Saw Win Kyaw, assistant director of Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization under the Ministry of Commerce.

Sweet potato flesh varies from white, yellow to light pink. At present, the experimental plantation of purple sweet potato reaped successful results. The purple sweet potato is much starchier than the traditional potato species. The sweet potato can be stored for up to six months and a year with cold storage facilities. The sweet potato powder is used for plating and flavour in making pasta, hot chocolate and ice cream. It is also locally demanded in the snack food production industry.

It is hard to make the quality sweet potato last long. Therefore, about 10 tonnes of value-added sweet potato powder is distributed in the market every month. Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization is trying to launch this value-added product at Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Expo which is scheduled to be held in March in Vientiane, Laos in order to create a strong market for sweet potato powder. — Nyein Thu(MNA)/GNLM

Developed bitter gourd production brings happiness to Kyaukse

The retail price of bitter gourd is K1,000 per viss while the wholesale price fetched K800 per viss.
PHOTO : THET MAUNG (KYAUKSE)

THE farmers from Kyaukse township, Mandalay region are mainly engaging with the paddy. They are also growing other crops such as pumpkin, cucumbers, onion, bitter gourd, coriander and mustard on the riverside and sandy loam soil.

Now, farmers from Shwedah village are growing bitter gourd on a manageable scale and earning family income.

"If we grow a pack of bitter gourd seeds, we can yield about 15 visses at the early harvested season. Later, we can harvest about 70 or 80 visses in the abundantly yielded season. The bitter gourds continue to give yield for five or six months depending on the plant.

After sowing for one month, the bitter gourd started to sprout and blossom. After 45 days, it started to yield to be sold. It can be yielded every 4 or 5 days. The retail price of bitter gourd is K1,000 per viss while the wholesale price fetched K800 per viss," said U Myat Thein, a bitter gourd grower from Shwedah village.

When we grow bitter gourd, we have to prepare the soil first. Then, we have to use natural fertilizer cow dung. The farmers are happy with getting a handsome price over the bitter gourd. It is a crop that farmers are urged to cultivate because it is less cultivation cost and high profit. — Thet Maung (Kyaukse)/ GNLM

Gold demand down in domestic market

AS the gold price is too fast to spike yet slow to fall in the domestic market, there are more sellers than buyers, said U Myo Myint, Chair of the Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

The daily transaction of 50 visses (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) of gold are seen in the market. However, sellers outnumber buyers in recent days.

"Gold shops are buying approximately 50 visses of the gold transaction rather than selling these days, unlike the past trading," U Myo Myint was quoted as saying.

Additionally, Kyat devaluation against the US dollar is another reason for the price hike in the domestic gold market, he added.

The global gold price stands at US$1,836 per ounce. The US dollar exchange rate is approximately K1,990 in the local forex market at present. Meanwhile, the pure gold fetches up to K1,880,000 per tical (0.578 ounce, or 0.016 kilogramme).

The gold price rally is likely to continue in the coming months. Only if the global gold price slides and Kyat appreciates on the US dollar can the domestic gold price fall, U Myo Myint shared his opinion.

The domestic gold price is highly correlated with the international market.

Last 28 September 2021, a dollar value hit an all-time high of over K3,000 in the black market and consequently, the pure gold reached a record high of K2.22 million per tical in history. — NN/GNLM

Eurozone growth slows as Omicron measures hit spending

ECONOMIC growth in the eurozone slowed sharply in January, a key survey showed Monday, as new coronavirus restrictions hit consumer spending, raising a new obstacle for the region's recovery.

In its closely watched monthly survey, IHS Markit said the deceleration, which brought growth to an 11-month low, was completely attributable to the services sector, with manufacturers enjoying a reprieve from supply challenges and seeing a boost in activity.

IHS Markit said that the sky-high caseloads for the highly contagious Omicron variant had disrupted consumer-facing services through staff absences and continued social distancing.

The purchasing managers' index (PMI) from IHS Markit dropped to 52.4 in January, after posting 53.3 points in December and hitting a high 59 points in August. A figure above 50 indicates growth.

Tourism, travel and recreation were "especially hard hit", said Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit.

However, he added that the impact on other parts of the economy was "relatively muted" and that the overall fallout from Omicron "so far looks less severe than prior waves".

The overall trend masked different situations in different countries.

Germany, the leading European economy, recorded a rebound in activity in January, thanks to a robust increase in industrial production and a return to growth in the services sector, said IHS Markit. On the other hand, growth in France reached its lowest level since April, with a near-stagnant industrial sector and a much weaker performance in its Omicron-hit services sector.

Rory Fennessy, economist at Oxford Economics, said the pickup in manufacturing "offers further reassurance that the region has passed the peak of supply-chain disruptions". Despite the hit to services in January, "ultimately, Omicron should not significantly alter the overall growth outlook for 2022," he said. — AFP ■

Cathay Pacific says 'cash burn' will worsen over Hong Kong curbs

A Cathay Pacific cargo airplane prepares to land at Hong Kong International Airport on 21 November 2021. **PHOTO : BERTHA WANG / AFP**

CATHAY Pacific is poised to lose nearly $200 million a month from February, the embattled Hong Kong carrier reported Monday, as the city's Covid-19 restrictions have seen cargo flights slashed.

Hong Kong has maintained some of the world's harshest travel restrictions, isolating a city that was once one of the world's largest logistics and transportation hubs.

Air crew quarantine measures were further tightened following the discovery that two Covid-positive Cathay staff had breached home quarantine — which resulted in the city's first outbreak of the hyper-contagious Omicron variant.

By January, Cathay's cargo flights — one of the few sectors where the airline was making cash — had reduced to 20 per cent of its pre-pandemic capacity, while passenger flights dropped to two per cent, its CEO Augustus Tang said Monday.

"According to our preliminary assessment, we expect these capacity levels to result in an operating cash burn of HK$1.0-1.5 billion ($128 - $193 million) per month from February." Tang's forecast means the losses for 2022 could outstrip last year's total consolidated loss of approximately HK$5.6 - 6.1 billion, according to Cathay's report.

Like most international carriers, Cathay has been hammered as the pandemic wipes out most international travel. But the airline is especially vulnerable because it has no domestic market to fall back on, and is based in a finance hub that has embraced mainland China's "zero-Covid" plan. — AFP ■

TikTok pays influencers without informing viewers to spread videos

THE Japan operator of the popular Chinese video-sharing app TikTok said Monday it has paid social media influencers to spread certain videos on Twitter without informing viewers about the payments.

The Japan office of ByteDance Ltd is believed to have spread TikTok videos handpicked by the company through the influencers to raise recognition levels of the app in a strategy that could be considered as stealth marketing. It is believed viewers could have mistaken those videos as ordinary posts by general social media users.

The company said the practice, which had been in place until last December, of paying influencers to upload specific videos was not aimed at increasing the number of the app's downloads and therefore it thought it was not obliged to clarify that the videos were intended for public relations activities.

The Japan office declined to disclose the amount and the period of payments, citing contracts with the social media influencers.

The operator said in a statement the measure it took could mislead app users and other people concerned and that it will take necessary measures to prevent a similar incident from happening again.

According to US research firm Sensor Tower Inc., worldwide downloads of the TikTok app, which lets users upload short videos set to music and is especially popular among young people, reached 3 billion by July 2021. — Kyodo ■

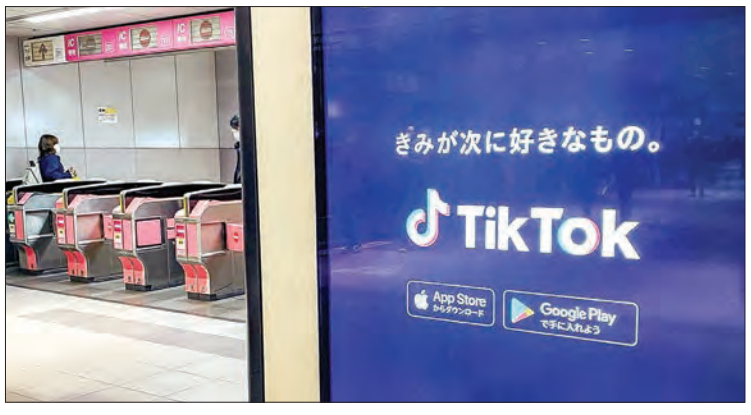

Photo taken in December 2021 shows an advertisement in Tokyo for video-sharing app TikTok. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Philips sales hit by Covid, respirator recall

DUTCH health technology firm Philips posted big drops in fourth quarter sales and profit Monday, as a faulty respirator recall and supply chain issues weighed on the company.

The Amsterdam-based firm, which last year sold off its domestic appliance arm to focus on medical equipment, said sales came in at 4.9 billion euros ($5.5 billion) in October through December, a 10 per cent drop compared to a year earlier.

Fourth quarter profits fell from 607 million euros to 151 million euros.

"Sales were impacted by several headwinds," Philips chief executive Frans van Houten said in a statement.

These were "supply chain challenges, postponement of equipment installations in hospitals related to Covid-19, and the consequences of the Respironics field action," Van Houten said.

Philips has set aside a further 725 million euros for a recall of faulty respiratory equipment that puts users at risk of inhaling toxic foam.

"Patient well-being is at the heart of everything we do at Philips," Van Houten said.

"We remain extremely focused on repairing and replacing the devices related to the Philips Respironics recall notification."

The devices are mainly for use in the home for patients with problems such as sleep apnoea, a disorder in which breathing stops and starts.

Philips recalled them in June after announcing that users were at risk of inhaling or swallowing pieces of degraded sound-dampening foam. The company said full-year sales fell from 19.5 billion euros in 2020 to 17.2 billion in 2021. — AFP ■

Markets follow Wall St down as traders eye Fed meeting

Pedestrians cross a street next to an electronic quotation board displaying the Nikkei 225 index of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo on 21 January 2022.
PHOTO: BEHROUZ MEHRI / AFP

MOST markets sank in Asia and Europe on Monday following another painful sell-off on Wall Street, with investors' focus on the Federal Reserve's next policy meeting this week, where officials are expected to unveil their plans to battle soaring inflation.

Tech firms — which soared on the back of the pandemic — led the retreat in New York after weak subscriber figures from Netflix fuelled concerns that the end of lockdowns and reopening of economies is seeing consumers changing their spending habits.

That comes as traders contemplate the end of the ultra-loose monetary policies put in place by central banks in early 2020 to cushion the impact of Covid-19 containment measures, with the Fed expected to start lifting interest rates from March.

Minutes from the Fed's December gathering indicated officials were turning more hawkish as they grow increasingly concerned about inflation, which is sitting at a four-decade high.

Commentators have tipped the first increase in borrowing costs in March followed by another three hikes before the end of the year, while the central bank is also forecast to start running down its vast bond-holdings that have helped keep rates down.

Economists at Goldman Sachs said at the weekend they saw increases in March, June, September and December, with July as the start of the Fed's balance sheet reduction but warned inflation pressures meant "risks are tilted somewhat to the upside of our baseline".

They were also concerned the virus would continue to cause supply-demand imbalances while strong wage growth was also a worry, suggesting inflation would remain an ongoing problem.

"We see a risk that the (policy board) will want to take some tightening action at every meeting until that picture changes," the economists said. "This raises the possibility of a hike or an earlier balance sheet announcement in May, and of more than four hikes this year."— AFP ■

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
TUG; CASSANDRA-231 BG; CASSANDRA-2502 V.01/22

Consignees of cargo carried on **TUG; CASSANDRA-231 BG; CASSANDRA-2502 (V.01/22)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMIT-2** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S UNI SPRING LOGISTICS HOLDINGS PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V HARMONY SW

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V HARMONY SW VOY.NO. (162)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **25-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MKH** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V RUN FU 3

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V RUN FU 3 VOY. NO. (V.V2910)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **25-1-2022** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S CHUN AN INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS CO LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MCL 17

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 17 VOY. NO. (01/22)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **26-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AIPT-3** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (226N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (226N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-1-2022** 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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (183W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (183W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **25-1-2022** 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

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MCL 19

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 19 VOY. NO. (001/2022)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AIPT-2** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Japan MSDF vessel departs carrying aid to disaster-stricken Tonga

Drinking water and other relief supplies bound for Tonga are loaded onto the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force's transport vessel Osumi at its base in Kure in Hiroshima Prefecture on 24 January 2022. The South Pacific islands nation suffered severe damage after an undersea volcanic eruption and related tsunami struck around 10 days earlier. **PHOTO: KYODO**

A transport vessel of Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force departed Monday for Tonga as part of the country's continuing relief efforts to the Pacific islands nation, which was hit by an undersea volcanic eruption and a tsunami earlier in the month.

The Osumi departed from the Kure base in western Japan with 60,000 litres of drinking water prepared by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, a government-linked aid agency, as well as 60 high pressure washers to remove volcanic ash, according to the Defence Ministry.

Around 300 people are also aboard as part of the aid effort. The vessel is also carrying two hovercraft and two CH-47 Ground Self-Defence Force transport helicopters.

The helicopters will be used to rapidly disburse relief material, the Self-Defence Fleet's commander-in-chief responsible for the relief effort said.

Hideki Yuasa said in a statement the fleet will do its "utmost" to help the nation in its recovery efforts.

The eruption of the undersea volcano on 15 January sent tsunami waves across the Pacific, killing at least three people in Tonga and causing extensive damage to infrastructure and disrupting water supplies and communication networks.

The Tonga government said Friday that 84 per cent of the population of around 107,000 have been affected by falling ash and tsunami.

As part of its aid effort, Japan has already dispatched two C-130 and two C2 transport planes carrying drinking water and other supplies with the first batch havinga arrived in Tonga on Saturday. — Kyodo ■

NATO sending planes, ships to eastern Europe

NATO allies have put forces on standby and sent ships and fighter jets to bolster Europe's eastern defences as tensions soar over Russia's military buildup around Ukraine, the alliance said Monday.

"NATO will continue to take all necessary measures to protect and defend all Allies, including by reinforcing the eastern part of the Alliance. We will always respond to any deterioration of our security environment," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in a statement.

The Western alliance pointed to decisions in recent days by Denmark to send a frigate and warplanes to the Baltic states, Spain bolstering naval deployments and the Netherlands putting a "ship and land-based units on standby" for its rapid response force.

The statement also highlighted a recent offer from France to send troops to Romania and said "the United States has also made clear that it is considering increasing its military presence".

Tensions are mounting as the West accuses Moscow of threatening to invade Ukraine by massing over 100,000 troops on its border. Russia denies it is planning an incursion.

NATO's eastern members have been calling for reinforcements.

Latvia's foreign minister Edgar Rinkevics tweeted: "We are reaching the point where continuous Russian and Belarusian military buildup in Europe needs to be addressed by appropriate NATO countermeasures.

"It is time to increase allied forces presence in the alliance's Eastern flank both as measures of defence and deterrence."

The alliance is preparing a proposal for further talks with Russia after the Kremlin issued a raft of demands that would see NATO stop Ukraine joining and roll back its forces in eastern Europe.

NATO insists it will not negotiate over its "core principles" including defending all allies and allowing partners to chose their own path.

The alliance bolstered its forces in the Baltic states after Russia's 2014 seizure of Crimea from Kyiv and is currently weighing plans to deploy more troops to Romania and Bulgaria. — AFP ■

An Ukrainian Military Forces serviceman, watches through spyglass in a dugout on the frontline with Russia-backed separatists near Gorlivka, Donetsk region on 23 January 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

Yemen rebels threaten to 'expand operation' after UAE attack

A picture taken on 23 January 2022, shows Emirati State Minister Khalifa Shaheen al-Marar (L) attending an extraordinary session of the Council of the Arab League States at the league headquarters in the Egyptian capital Cairo, to discuss the recent attacks against the UAE by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels. **PHOTO: AFP**

YEMEN rebels threatened to ramp up their attacks on the United Arab Emirates on Monday after two ballistic missiles were shot down over Abu Dhabi, their second assault in a week.

Huthi forces also fired a missile into southern Saudi Arabia, wounding two people, where another projectile was also destroyed.

The Iran-backed Huthis said they targeted Abu Dhabi's Al Dhafra air base as well as "vital and important" locations in the Dubai area.

The attack, which comes a week after three people died in a drone and missile assault on Abu Dhabi, "achieved its objectives with high accuracy", rebel military spokesperson Yahya Saree said in a televised statement.

"We are ready to expand the operation during the next phase and confront escalation with escalation," he added.

UAE authorities said they intercepted two missiles over Abu Dhabi, scattering debris over the city. They did not report any attack on Dubai. Last week's attack prompted a volley of deadly air strikes on Yemen, where the UAE is part of the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Huthi rebels. — AFP ■

Tonga eruption equivalent to hundreds of Hiroshimas: NASA

THE Tonga volcanic eruption unleashed explosive forces that dwarfed the power of the Hiroshima atomic bomb, NASA scientists have said, as survivors on Monday described how the devastating Pacific blast "messed up our brains".

The NASA Earth Observatory said the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano spewed debris as high as 40 kilometres (25 miles) into the atmosphere during the 15 January eruption that triggered huge tsunami waves.

"We think the amount of energy released by the eruption was equivalent to somewhere between five to 30 megatons (five to 30 million tonnes) of TNT," NASA scientist Jim Garvin said in a press release.

NASA said the eruption was hundreds of times stronger than the US atomic bomb dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima in August 1945, which was estimated to be about 15 kilotons (15,000 tonnes) of TNT.

The agency said the eruption "obliterated" the volcanic island about 65 kilometres (41 miles) north of the Tongan capital Nuku'alofa.

It blanketed the island kingdom of about 100,000 in a layer of toxic ash, poisoning drinking water, destroying crops and completely wiping out at least two villages.— AFP ■

This handout photo taken on 16 January 2022 and released by NASA shows the atmospheric plume of ash after the 15 January underwater volcano eruption in the Pacific nation of Tonga, pictured from the International Space Station as it orbited 269 miles (432 km) above the Pacific Ocean northwest of New Zealand. **PHOTO: KAYLA BARRON / NASA / AFP**

Beijing warns of heavy air pollution during Winter Olympics

People take pictures as fireworks light up the sky over the Bird's Nest national stadium during a rehearsal for the opening ceremony of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics Games in Beijing on 22 January 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

BEIJING warned Monday that heavy air pollution is likely during the Winter Olympics, but said emergency plans were in place to ensure the Games are not disrupted by smog.

The Chinese capital declared "war on pollution" after winning the Olympics bid in 2015, shutting down dozens of coal plants and relocating heavy industries to shed its status as one of the world's most polluted cities.

But air quality is still far below World Health Organization standards despite dramatic improvements in recent years, according to state data released this month.

"The Beijing Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games coincide with the end of winter and the start of spring in northern China, when weather conditions are extremely unfavourable," China's environment ministry spokesman Liu Youbin said at a press conference Monday.

"When heavy pollution is predicted, all localities will launch emergency plans."

These include cutting production at polluting companies with a relatively small economic impact in the host cities of Beijing and Zhangjiakou, Liu said.

Improvements have been made in recent years. The concentration in Beijing's air of ultrafine PM2.5 particles, which are blamed for a rise in lung cancer, heart attacks and premature babies, dropped to 33 micrograms per cubic metre last year.

That figure was down a third from the level in 2013 when the capital had some of the world's worst air quality, according to Beijing's environment bureau.

But it is still six times higher than the five micrograms per cubic metre recommended by the WHO.

On Monday, Beijing's air quality reading reached 218 on an index by Swiss technology company IQAir, placing it in "very unhealthy" territory.— AFP ■

WeChat denies Australia PM's account was hacked

AUSTRALIAN Prime Minister Scott Morrison's WeChat account has disappeared, prompting accusations of Chinese "interference" from senior members of his government Monday.

But Tencent, the Chinese tech giant that owns WeChat, has denied that the prime minister's account was hacked or removed from its platform.

"Based on our information, this appears to be a dispute over account ownership — the account in question was originally registered by a PRC individual and was subsequently transferred to its current operator, a technology services company," a Tencent spokesman said.

Morrison's account on the Chinese social media app, which was launched in February 2019, appears to have been replaced with one titled "Australian Chinese new life".

The name was registered by Fuzhou 985 Technology Co, Ltd on 28 October 2021. However the account has posts dating back to 1 February 2019, including Morrison's first, which reads: "I'm very happy to open my official WeChat account".

It's understood the Australian prime minister had a Weixin account, which needs to be registered by someone in mainland China, rather than a WeChat account, which can be accessed by overseas users.

Fuzhuo 985's legal representative Huang Aipeng told SBS on Monday that the purchase of the account was legal. There was no immediate comment from Morrison but a senator from his ruling centre-right Liberal Party accused Beijing of being behind the change.

"What the Chinese government has done by shutting down the prime minister's account is effectively foreign interference in our democracy," James Paterson told 2GB radio on Monday.

Paterson called on Australian politicians to boycott WeChat in response. Immigration Minister Alex Hawke and Coalition MP Gladys Liu have joined the boycott. Morrison first launched his WeChat account to communicate with Australia's sizable Chinese-Australian community ahead of the country's last federal election in 2019. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK withdrawing some staff, relatives from Ukraine

BRITAIN'S foreign ministry said Monday it was withdrawing some staff and their relatives from its embassy in Ukraine in response to the "growing threat from Russia".

The embassy itself will remain open for "essential work", it said, after the United States ordered the families of all American personnel at its own mission in Kyiv to leave.

Russia has been massing tens of thousands of troops on its border with Ukraine. But Ukraine's government called the US step "premature". — AFP ■

1st COVID-19 case detected among delegations for Beijing Olympics

THE first positive case of COVID-19 has been detected among delegations for the Beijing Winter Olympics, the organizing committee said Monday, about 10 days before the opening of the games.

The organizing committee did not identify the individual but said the infection of the person, whose nationality has also not been disclosed, was confirmed with a positive PCR test conducted Sunday at a Beijing airport. — Kyodo ■

Record 300 day-care centres in Japan shut due to pandemic

A record 327 day-care centres have been temporarily shut down in Japan as the coronavirus resurgence grips the country, the health ministry said Monday.

The number of such facilities suspending services as of last Thursday, excluding privately operated or locally licensed ones, increased fourfold in a week along with the spike in COVID-19 cases and well exceeded the previous high of 185 in September, according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Japan's confirmed daily coronavirus cases topped 50,000 on Saturday in the wake of the spread of the highly transmissible Omicron variant, renewing the record for a fifth straight day. — Kyodo ■

Myanmar loses to South Korea by second-half goals

MYANMAR team defeated South Korea team 2-0 in the second match of Women's Asia Cup Group C at the Shivchhatrapati Sports Complex, Maharashtra, India at 2:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time on 24 January.

The Myanmar women's team made a few changes to the squad for the match against Korea and Khin Than Wai, Chit Chit, Nant Zu Zu Htet, Phyu Phyu Win, Khin Mo Mo Tun, Khin Malar Tun, Naw Htet Htet Wai, Nu Nu, San Thaw Thaw and July Kyaw showed their best skills.

South Korea, ranked 18th in the world, put pressure on the Myanmar team, but the Myanmar team played well.

In the 34th minute, South Korea added veteran midfielder Ji Soyon to Chelsea, but the first half ended goallessly.

In the 50th minute of the second half, South Korean midfielder Lee Geummin scored the opening goal through a mistake made by the Myanmar team. In the 84th minute, the South Korean team scored the second goal due to the confusion between the Myanmar defenders, and the South Korean team and the Myanmar team lost 2-0 at the end of the match.

At the post-match press conference, Myanmar Women's National Team Assistant Coach U Bo Bo Aung said, "Thank you to all the team members who played their best in this match.

"Despite conceding some goals, I am satisfied with the way the team is playing. After the first match against Japan, after reviewing the team's mistakes, head coach U Tin Myint Aung constantly instructed the team online. There is no pressure for the final group match. We will do our best," the assistant coach added. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Myanmar team's Captain Khin Malar Tun poises to shoot the ball during the match against South Korea in the Women's Asia Cup Group C at Shivchhatrapati Sports Complex, Maharashtra, India on 24 January 2022. **PHOTO: MFF**

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.

Messi returns, Ramos scores and PSG cruise

LIONEL Messi returned, another marquee signing Sergio Ramos scored as Paris Saint-Germain cruised to a 4-0 victory over Reims on Sunday to restore their Ligue 1 lead to 11 points. Earlier, Nice briefly cut the gap with a 2-0 win at Metz. But three of the teams just behind them lost.

Messi, returning from Covid, started on the bench while Kylian Mbappe returned to the starting lineup after a groin strain while Ramos made only his second league start of the season.

Marco Verratti put PSG ahead in the final minute of a sluggish first half, drilling home his first Ligue 1 goal since May 2017. PSG upped the tempo after the break.

Ramos, who arrived from Real in the summer, scored his first goal for the club. The central defender reacted quickest to a loose ball from a PSG corner. After his first shot was parried by Predrag Rajkovic, the Spaniard reacted fastest again to slam home the rebound.

"I am happy to have played 90 minutes and I am personally happy because it is my first goal with PSG, I hope there will be many more," said Ramos.

"It's been three weeks since I started playing normally with the group," he said. "We have the cup, we have the league, we have the Champions League, this is the best time to arrive in shape." — AFP ■

Paris Saint-Germain's Spanish defender Sergio Ramos scores a goal during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Reims at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris on 23 January 2022. **PHOTO : AFP**

(FILES) This file photo taken on 26 March 2021 shows China's Wenjing Sui and Cong Han performing during the pairs' free skating programme event at the ISU World Figure Skating Championships in Stockholm. **PHOTO : JONATHAN NACKSTRAND / AFP**

Chinese skating duo hope deep bond propels them to Olympic gold

SUI Wenjing and Han Cong have an intense bond that has overcome injury setbacks and sparked persistent rumours of romance -- and makes them among the favourites for figure skating gold at next month's Beijing Olympics.

The Chinese pair have been skating together since they were teenagers, building a strong working relationship that propelled them to two world championship titles and silver at the 2018 Olympics. Now they hope to go one better at their home Games. "On the ice we give each other enough trust and support," Sui, 26, told the Beijing Olympics YouTube channel. Her skating partner, the 29-year-old Han, added: "It is very important that we have common goals."

The pair -- winners of Skate Canada and the Italian Grand Prix at the end of 2021 -- have a deep understanding forged from 15 years of performing together. — AFP ■