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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.

Ministries need to save spending on foreign exchange except for compulsory measures: Senior General



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the meeting 1/2022 of the Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw on 2 February 2022.

MINISTRIES need to strive to efficiently utilize water sources in agriculture and livestock tasks, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 1/2022 of the Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the office of SAC Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

In his address, the Senior General said after taking State responsibilities, the country achieved certain progress in

economic and security measures due to the political situation. Terrorists committed terror acts, robbery and murdering cases, blowing up of mines and setting fire as destructive acts via political protests. So, security forces controlled these activities. The Tatmadaw also effectively controlled the armed organizations. The Senior General expressed his sadness for casualties of State service personnel and security forces.

Union ministers strived for securing US\$677 million of trade surplus based on the temporary

account in the 2020-2021 financial year amid criticism and unrests thanks to the cooperation of the people. It is necessary to encourage the export of agriculture and livestock products instead of natural resources.

Agricultural and livestock products can be exported to China, India, Thailand and Bangladesh. Quality export products can earn income for the nation. Rice, bean, maize and livestock products are the main businesses of some 70 per cent of the people.

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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

Arrangements made for visitors to take souvenir photos in Kanbawzathadi palace



The Kanbawzathadi Golden Palace is pictured at the background.

ARRANGEMENTS are made for visitors to take souvenir photos at every occasion such as Christmas, in the background of Mingala Pond in Kanbawzathadi Golden Palace in Bago.

Bago is one of the most popular pilgrimages and leisure destinations in Myanmar. It is also one of the most visited townships for study tours. It is also one of the tourist destinations in Myanmar, with its magnificent Shwemawdaw pagoda, an ancient pagoda with a height of 373-foot and nine inches, which can be seen from afar, and many other pagodas with historical and cultural heritage.

In addition, the Kanbawzathadi Golden Palace, home to

King Bayintnaung who united the second Myanmar kingdom, is also one of the most visited places in Bago. In the Golden Palace which was rebuilt, the throne is displayed together with excavated teak pillars. In addition, Archaeological Museum where excavated ancient coins are displayed, preservation of excavated hill, Queen Khin Khin Gyi's Palace, and the hall of Supankalaya can also be observed.

It is learnt that arrangements are made for visitors to take souvenir photos on every occasion such as Christmas in the background of Mingala Pond in the palace compound. — Maung Yin Oo/GNLM

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

Petrified wood charms, motifs transactions run normal online



Massaging sticks made out of petrified wood.

THE transactions of the charms, decoration materials and utensils made of petrified wood (Ingyin Kyauk) operate normally online in Sagaing Region.

"The sales of lucky charm products such as tortoise that brings money, scimitar for safety, facial massage plates for

girls, massaging balls for stroke patients and massaging stick are in good condition as normal," said U San Moe Aung, an owner of the KSM Monywa Jewellery Shop.

It costs between K15,000 and K20,000 for nine tortoise motifs, K5,000 per scimitar and between K4,000 and K8,000 per massaging ball.

The transactions of tiger motif, elephant motif, cup and ash tray are lower than the normal sale and the shop owners also face a slack period.

"I have raw materials that I can use for next ten years. We suspend the procurement in the first wave of COVID-19. We can buy raw materials even now," said U San Moe Aung. —Myo Win Tun (Monywa)/GNLM

Motto of 75th Anniversary Union Day 2022

*** Let's forge Union Spirit to bring about peace and tranquillity!**

To build strength within the country!

1. In the first, our economy will be developed by our internal strength. We have abundant natural resources and human resources. We have weakness in the socio-economic development of the people as we have been relying on external products or import rather than our domestic production.
2. Secondly, we will build our political strength internally. Building a Union and multiparty democratic system based on democracy and federalism will certainly enhance our political strength.
3. Thirdly, the defence capability of the country should be strengthened with the participation of all ethnic national people. With united strength both in weals and woes, we all will build the defence capability of our country with modern military prowess (Army, Navy and Air).

*(Excerpt from the speech made by the State Administration Council Chairman
Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on one-year State responsibilities dis-
charged by the State Administration Council)*

Ministries need to save spending on foreign exchange except ...

FROM PAGE-1

According to the calculation of relevant ministries, the cultivation of cotton plants is expected to exceed the production more than the demand. But the country imported textile and related materials worth US\$1,280.152 million in 2021. If the country produces quality threads made of Myanmar's cotton, import volume will decline and the domestic cotton production will meet the local demand and contribute much to local garment industries. To have quality strains of cotton and operate long-staple cotton industries, it is necessary to contact the experts from cotton producer countries Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan and India for much benefiting the cotton cultivation and production of Myanmar.

Myanmar uses water for agriculture, livestock and public consumption. Damming water should be efficiently utilized for generating electricity and for agricultural tasks. Public awareness should be raised to the farmers so as to efficiently use the water at their farmlands. As there are many water sources in Myanmar, ministries need to strive to efficiently utilize water sources in agriculture and livestock tasks.

The Ministry of Electricity and Energy needs to implement river water pumping projects.

These projects must be implemented through solar energy to have achievement in agricultural tasks. Relevant ministries need to emphasize the successful implementation of the agricultural and livestock projects as improvement of people's economy will reflect the State development.

Efforts must be made for generating more electricity while it is necessary to efficiently consume the electricity. Arrangements must be made for generating sufficient electricity for improvement of socio-economic life of the people, operation of businesses, manufacturing and public transport services. The Ministry of Information and other relevant ministries need to constantly raise public awareness of the consuming electricity and water.

The Senior General explained the economic development of the State and enhancement of defence capability. He said: **"The year 2022 becomes a challenging year for us. If we can revive the economy, we will win the trust of the people. We have three ambitions. For the first point, we have pledged to revive the State economy. Based on last year's experiences, we don't have any reason to do so. We have to strive for the improvement of the economy**

Arrangements must be made for generating sufficient electricity for improvement of socio-economic life of the people, operation of businesses, manufacturing and public transport services. The Ministry of Information and other relevant ministries need to constantly raise public awareness of the consumption of electricity and water.

in 2022. And then, we will do all tasks related to multiparty democratization mentioned in the political future tasks. If the country is in good political and economic trends, we have to turn to the defence system. For example, our country does not practise the military conscription law yet. Every citizen is responsible for military service. We don't practise that law because of happening the internal armed conflicts. If we have comprehensively completed the first and second points, we have to enhance the defence capability for the third point. At that time, citizens need to serve the military service

under the law. They have to serve it for two or three years in line with the prescription. The service term may be one year or one and a half years. It will depend on the situation of the country. It is a must for all. If the country does not have defence capability, we will face a loss. If so, other countries do not pay respect to us. If we are weak in the economy, we will feel inferior. If we are weak in political power, other countries would make trouble for us. If we have weak defence capability, we will face the assaults of others. Our fence will not be safe. These are three musts for us. So, we will do to carry out

these tasks this year as must as possible."

The Union ministers sought approvals for respective sectors.

In his concluding remarks, the Senior General said that in spending the foreign exchange, trade deficit came out in the times of previous governments. In the long term, the debt problems may be mounted. So, it is necessary to calculate such prospects, ministries need to save spending on foreign exchange except for compulsory measures.

International loans must be essential for the departments. The ministries must levy the taxes which should be collected. Only when the private sector improves will the export volume be larger. Income from the exportation will generate tax for the State.

Currently, hiking prices are based on high production costs, larger transport charges and high prices of raw materials. Ministerial officials need to consider how to control the high prices of goods. As it depends on the high transport charge, it is necessary to improve the public transport system. If so, consumption of fuel bought in foreign currency can be cut effectively. Ministries should make efforts for the development of the nation in various ways and means during the rest period of the financial year. — MNA

Release of information on recurrence of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant

2 February 2022

1. The Ministry of Health is continuously monitoring the COVID-19 virus and providing timely information on the detection of the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant.
2. Among those returnees to Myanmar by relief flights, Laboratory samples of the returnees were tested for suspected COVID-19 mutation at the National Health Laboratory on 2 February 2022 and the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant was confirmed in 10 laboratory samples.
3. Ten people who have tested for the Omicron variant are COVID-19 confirmed patients from a factory in Mingaladon Township. Of these patients, three had symptoms at the designated hospital, while the other seven are under treatment separately and are in good health. Strict quarantine and laboratory tests are underway to isolate and treat those who have been diagnosed with the Omicron variant.
4. To date, a total of 320 people has been diagnosed with the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant.
5. Therefore, the Ministry of Health is monitoring the COVID-19 mutagenic surveillance programme and control and treatment activities are accelerated.

Ministry of Health

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets departmental officials, town elders in Bawlakhe Township

VICE-CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win met departmental personnel and town elders in Bawlakhe Township together with SAC members Saw Daniel and Lt-Gen Soe Htut and military officers of the Commander-in-Chief Office yesterday.

During the meeting, the Vice-Senior General said the SAC overcame many challenges during the one-year term of the State of Emergency. Some government employees joined CDM without thinking of the country and the government tried hard with good employees who do not want terrorist attacks. Despite various internal and external pressures, it has passed successfully with public participation. The great challenge is COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment measures. Some countries and INGOs once said that Myanmar would have to give up on the pandemic. The



State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets departmental officials and town elders of Bawlakhe Township in Kayah State on 2 February 2022.

country successfully overcame the third wave of COVID-19 in a short period of time with the participation of departments concerned, public and faithful health workers.

The SAC Chairman presided over the meeting of the Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment for COVID-19 every Monday, while the SAC Vice-Chairman led COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee al-

most daily to negotiate and find solutions with the state/region committees. Although there was weakness in the data of vaccination during the first and second waves, the VMIS Programme on Web portal has been developed.

During the third wave, the oxygen demand was high and some subversive businesspersons tried for their own sakes. The government has undertaken effective measures to achieve COVID-19 protective gears, in-

cluding oxygen in time. The international countries, even the INGOs were amazed at such best control. Moreover, although some cooperated with foreign countries to affect the banking system and economy so that the government cannot stand, it successfully overcame with great perseverance.

According to the policy of the Prime Minister, some imports are restricted and locally-produced products are encouraged.

So, it showed a trade surplus in the first six-month mini-budget period of the 2021-2022FY. The government also makes efforts to improve trade routes with the neighbouring countries and to export the products successively. Departments concerned also should work together for the development of respective regions.

He then stressed the necessary things based on the motions of the town elders and relevant departments.—MNA

Union Auditor-General makes clarifications and instructions on the Office Procedures at the Closing Ceremony of the Upgrading Training No 1/2021 for Staff Officers and In-house Skill Development Training No 36 for Senior Auditors

THE ceremony of making clarifications and instructions on the office procedures of the Office of the Auditor-General of the Union by the Union Auditor-General was held at 10 am yesterday morning at the Assembly Hall of the Office of the Auditor-General of the Union, Nay Pyi Taw in line with the COVID-19 rules and regulations at the closing ceremony of the Upgrading Training No 1/2021 for Staff Officers and In-house skill Development Training No 36 for Senior Auditors, which had been held at the Nay Pyi Taw Training School, the Office of the Auditor-General of the Union.

At the ceremony, Dr Kan Zaw, the Union Auditor-General, delivered an address that he had to make clarifications and instructions on the office procedures of the Office of the Auditor-General of the Union in order to achieve skill development and effectiveness to become better and rapid in carrying out the duties of the Office of the Auditor General of the Union.

He emphasized that the Government of the State assumed and was implementing the responsibilities of the State in accordance with the Five – Point Road Map, Nine Political, Eco-

nomie and Social Objectives; the Office of the Auditor-General of the Union was striving for more effectiveness in auditing; it was essential to well understand the prescriptions regarding the duties from the Section 11 (a) to 11 (aa) and responsibilities in the Auditor-General of the Union Law, and perform in compliance with the theme, “Control in order to improve the Public Finance Management”.

He also stated that the Office was systematically providing series of training classifying as Human Resources Development Training and Capacity Building

Training; therefore staff members are required to actively take part in the programme of learning themselves, training and nurturing, and knowledge sharing.

Then he mentioned that staff members should try to become good civil servants who can keep abreast internationally for the development of the State and the interest of the people, and perform their work dutifully in line with the Auditor-General of the Union Law by performing their duties in accordance with law, rules and regulations, and ethics honestly and with integri-

ty, and the ceremony concluded.

The Upgrading Training No 1/2021 for Staff Officers and In-house Skill Development Training No 36 for Senior Auditors had been held for two months, and 106 Staff Officers and 58 Senior Auditors totalling 164 trainees from the Head Office and Audit Offices within the Union territory attended the training.

The Permanent Secretary, the Director-General (Audit Department), Deputy Permanent Secretary, Deputy Directors-General, Directors, and accomplished trainees attended the ceremony.—MNA

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The righteous war in comparison with the unjust war must secure the victory, says Vice-Senior General



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win addresses the meeting with Tatmadaw members and families of Pruhsa Station yesterday.

AS the Tatmadaw formed with all ethnic nationals is a strong organization, it needs to carry on its tasks through unity, said Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win in meeting with Tatmadaw members and families of Pasawng, Bawlakhe and Pruhsa

stations separately yesterday morning. In his speeches, the Vice-Senior General said that up to now, some organizations and peoples from local and foreign countries misunderstand that the taking State responsibilities by the Tatmadaw as a coup d'état. Today's State Administration Council taking the State responsibilities did not revoke

the Constitution (2008) as all Tatmadaw accept the multiparty democracy the people aspire. Upon completion of measures in accord with the provisions of the State of Emergency via inspection of voting frauds under Sections 417, 418 and 419 of the Constitution (2008), the last point of the road map of the State Administration Council is to hold the free and fair multiparty democracy general

election to hand over the State responsibilities to the winning party. It is necessary to ensure the regions are peaceful and stable for holding a free and fair election. And all eligible voters need to cast votes. The Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister set the year 2022 as the peace year for implementation of restoring peace.

Economic sanctions of some big countries taking advantage of the political crisis of Myanmar cause much loss to the people. The conspiracy to emerge the puppet government via multiple pressures is unacceptable. The country faced difficult crises in all sectors within one year. But, the country could overcome these crises through public cooperation. All need to review the propaganda of NUG, CRPH and PDF terrorist groups through social media networks and disseminate true news to the environment. The righteous war in comparison with the unjust war must secure victory. As the Tatmadaw formed with all ethnic nationals is a strong organization, it is necessary to carry on its tasks through unity. The Vice-Senior General presented foodstuffs for officers, other ranks and families of relevant stations through officials and cordially greeted them. — MNA

World Wetlands Day 2022 celebrated in Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary

THE World Wetlands Day 2022 was marked at Kyoekya Hall in the Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary on 2 February with a view to conserving wetlands and biodiversity. At the ceremony, Bago Region Chief Minister U Myo Swe Win gave a remark that thanks to strategic geography, Bago mountain ranges, rich water sources such as rivers, ponds, creeks and reservoirs, wetlands and freshwater availability, Bago Region has food security and it is home to migratory birds in winter. To ensure the abundant food supply for migratory birds and contribute to the sustainable fishery resource, 650,000 resident fish were added into the ponds in the last rainy season. Furthermore, the relevant authorities have handled the squatting problem of fishermen with the temporary huts.

Additionally, to protect migratory birds from hunting, awareness of migratory birds will be implemented as well. Those who tip-off regarding bird hunts will be awarded, he added. Afterwards, Deputy Minister U Min Min Oo of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation stated that it is an annual event and the theme of this year's World Wetlands Day is "Wetlands Action for People and Nature". It contributes to protecting the habitat of migratory birds, conserving the ecosystem, maintaining the sustainability of Wetland areas and restoring and conserving the forest to minimize climate change, understanding the interdependence of living organisms and enhancing the livelihoods of the residents. The most critically endan-



Additionally, to protect migratory birds from hunting, awareness of migratory birds will be implemented as well. Those who tip-off regarding bird hunts will be awarded.

gered species such as sarus crane, the greater spotted eagle, Myanmar Eyed Turtle are found in Moeyungyi Wetlands, along with over 20,000 water birds. This wetland constitutes a part of the northern paintail habitat. Migratory birds enter Myanmar through two flyways: Central Asian Flyway and East Asia-Australasian Flyway every year. Moeyungyi Lake is one of their des-

tinations in winter. Every year, approximately 32,000 migratory birds from the North Pole flock to the country between October and April. In a bid to mitigate the challenge of climate change and natural disasters in the present, wetland conservation is a must. Besides, it can bring about the socio-economic development of the residents through effective

management of the sanctuary. All the stakeholders need to participate in wetland conservation, he addressed. Next, an essay contest commemorating World Wetlands Day 2022 was held. The attendees observed the display of posters, documentaries and awarded essays at the event and officials inspected Moeyungyi Wetlands. — MNA

Daily imports of anti-COVID equipment run as planned

THE Ministry of Commerce is overseeing the importation 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. A total of 15 tonnes of masks were imported through the Lweijel border trade zone on 2 February. Officials from 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 inquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA

MoI Union Minister meets private TV, FM broadcasters



The meeting between the MoI Union minister and private broadcasting entrepreneurs in progress.

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn met private television and FM broadcasters yesterday afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw. The meeting was also attended by

Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung, departmental officials and officials from private television and FM broadcasting channels.

At the meeting, the Union minister said true news is being broadcast to the people through state-owned media. Destructive media outlets, which do not want the stability, peace and unity of the State, are inciting hatred towards the government with false information, while terrorists are also threatening the people with fear.

He said that the Prime Minister recognizes the importance of the media sector, adding the people's strength is critical for the development of the country, and only when the country is stable and peaceful can the people be able to work without delay.

He urged the media sector to help spread the truth. Now is the time to prioritize the development of the country instead of blaming each other, he said.

Afterwards, the deputy minister explained the situation to be taken forward by the media sector, and officials from the broadcast channels presented the current activities, further situations and challenges in current broadcasting, and the Union minister gave a concluding remark. — MNA

Myanmar nationals return through Myawady, Kayin state

MYANMAR nationals from abroad are welcomed back at various border crossings, and yesterday, a total of 200 returnees — 134 men and 66 women — came back home through Myawady, Kayin State.

Healthcare officials from relevant public hospitals and members of the Tatmadaw Medical Corps conducted COVID-19 tests and provided quarantine entry documents for returnees.

After explaining the instructions of the Ministry of Health systematically and officials from respective military commands provided necessary assistance.

The township administration bodies then escorted them to their respective places in passenger vehicles, and the infected people were confined to separate places to facilitate necessary medical and administrative matters, officials said. — MNA



List of goods released for import licence application

THE Ministry of Commerce is aiming to streamline imports and regulate the use of foreign currency for imports.

Goods are imported through the import licence system as well, officials stated.

In doing so as per the licencing system, it is planned to publish the list of goods required to apply for import licences based on requirements of raw materials, domestic needs and requirements in three stages.

According to the 2017 Customs Tariff of Myanmar, a notification was issued with the Import/Export Newsletter (18/2021) that electronics, food items, cosmetics, consumer goods, paper products and construction materials according to the HS Code 10 digit, and 3,070 product lines will need to apply for import licences as of 1 January 2022.

Similarly, a notification was issued with the Import/Export Newsletter (1/2022) in line with the 2017 Customs Tariff of Myanmar on 25 January 2022 that wheat, some food items, some plastic items, pulp, silk, cotton, carpets, textiles, home appliances made of glass, bicycle and vehicle spare parts, according to the HS Code 10 digit, and 826 product lines will need to apply for import licences as of 1 March 2022.

If exporters and importers want to apply for import licences before the deadline, they will be allowed to apply for import licences starting from 1 February 2022.

Statements by these product lines can be found on the Ministry's websites: commerce.gov.mm, myanmartradeportal.gov.mm and commercejournal.com.mm.

Officials said traders could contact the Department of Trade (Head Office) in Nay Pyi Taw, import and export offices in Yangon and Mandalay, and border trade zones if they had any queries about the statement. —MNA

Public Notice

1. THE Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to effectively curb corruption.
2. The ACC used SMS on the mobile phone to ask the public who seek services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via Short Code No "1111" for feedbacks, including the Public Feedback Programme-PFP.
3. According to the PFP, the right replies of the citizens via Short Code No "1111" will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.
4. Therefore, the public should make a reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at Short Code No "1111" and such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

Anti-Corruption Commission

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

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions

DOCTORS and nurses from public hospitals, Tatmadaw medical teams, healthcare workers and volunteers are working hard to administer COVID-19 vaccines in different states and regions as the vaccination programme is one of the most important activities in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 disease.

COVID-19 vaccine is being given daily to target groups regardless of race or religion, including Buddhist monks and nuns, local people over the age of 40, students, religious leaders, prisoners, people with disabili-

ties, ethnic armed groups, people with chronic diseases, people in IDP camps and over 12-year-old students, respectively.

On 1 February and yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 2,014 people from six townships in Northern Shan State, 382 people from Mongpyin and Kengtung townships in Eastern Shan State, 2,079 people from seven districts in Mon and Kayin states, 232 people from Tamway

Township, Yangon Region, 15,680 from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region and 5,244 people from four townships in Rakhine State, respectively.

Similarly, healthcare officials administered the vaccines to 744 students from Namkham and Muse townships in northern Shan State, and 165 students from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region, on 1 February and yesterday.

It is reported that officials from the respective Military Commands visited the site and coordinated the necessary work. —MNA



One of locals gets vaccinated against Covid-19 in Mon State.

CRIME NEWS

K6.3 million worth of illegal timbers, vehicles and engine oil seized

UNDER the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Committee, action is being taken against illegal trades under the law. On 1 and 2 February, authorities seized K6,314,520 worth of illegal timbers, vehicles and engine oil.

On 1 February, a combined inspection team under the management of the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force seized K1,440,000 worth of engine oil containers under the Customs Law.

A combined inspection team led by the Department of Forest inspected the forest reserve in Toungoo District according to the report and confiscated 11.4134 tonnes of illegal teak worth K2,324,520 under the Forest Law yesterday.

Similarly, an inspection team led by the Myanmar Police Force under the management of the Sagaing Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections and confiscated one unregistered motorcycle (New Asia 125) (estimated value of K50,000) in Mingin Township and one unregistered Honda CRV car (estimated value of K2,500,000), and action is taken under the Export and Import Law. — MNA



Confiscated teak and goods in Bago Region.

Narcotic drugs seized in Kayin, Rakhine states

A combined team comprising members of Anti-Drugs Squad searched a motorcycle driven by Kyaw Min Tun (aka) Cham Myae together with his colleague namely Khine Htoo on the Zarthapyin-Kyakalay road near Zarthapyin (East) village, Hpa-an Township, Kayin State on 31 January and the team seized 2,600 stimulant tablets from them. Similarly, a team consisting of members of the

Rakhine State Police Force confiscated 40,000 stimulant tablets on a three-wheeled vehicle driven by Tin Maung Aye along with his colleagues San Thein Maung and Than Tun at the Kyauktan Bridge inspection gate in Kyauktangyi village, Sittway Township on 1 February. The police have filed the charge against them under the Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA



Three arrestees seen with seized stimulant pills and tri-wheel car.

143 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 2 February, total figure rises to 536,536

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **536,536** after **143** new cases were reported on 2 February 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **513,557** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at **19,310** without casualties for ten consecutive days.

COVID-19 vaccine is being injected to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 1-2-2022, a total of **22,219,536** people have been vaccinated. Of them, **18,976,897** people have been vaccinated two times and **3,242,639** people once.—MNA

Take care of waste in agricultural water in summer

MYANMAR primarily grows paddy on the largest sown acreage, followed by edible oil crops. In so doing, farmlands are placed under paddy relying on rainwater, irrigated water and pumped river water.

The government is emphasizing food sufficiency for relevant areas of regions and states while arranging to export surplus foods. To have surplus food, especially paddy, pulses and beans, the government is sharing agricultural techniques with local farmers in order to cultivate crops all year round with the provision of necessary agricultural inputs.

As such, local farmers should avoid the malpractices causing waste of water such as fishing in blocking the drains while water is supplied, undisciplined acts of taking water from the drains, herding of cattle on the bunds of canals and driving of carts on the bunds. The undisciplined acts cause hindrances to the proper flow of water in the drains and canals, damage to the drains and waste of water.

960,036 acres of summer paddy and 263,993 acres of other crops, sluice gates to 261,937 acres of summer paddy and river water pumping stations to 66,929 acres of summer paddy and other crops.

As such, local farmers should avoid the malpractices causing waste of water such as fishing in blocking the drains while water is supplied, undisciplined acts of taking water from the drains, herding of cattle on the bunds of canals and driving of carts on the bunds. The undisciplined acts cause hindrances to the proper flow of water in the drains and canals, damage to the drains and waste of water.

Hence, local farmers with a conscience need to prevent the undisciplined acts of others at irrigation facilities to get agricultural water for their farmlands at any time so as to avoid shortages of water in the summer.

■ ■ ■

Now is time to almost complete harvesting of monsoon paddy in the nation. Farmers in the Ayeyawady Region start land preparations for the cultivation of summer paddy while people from other regions and states are also making preparations for the cultivation of other crops suitable for the season.

The end of January and the start of February are the initial stages of the summer. So, all the regions and states should take care of water shortages not only for consumption but for cultivation. That is why people need to efficiently use the water without waste.

Farmlands and crop-lands require an adequate volume of agricultural water. Hence, the relevant ministries are carrying out maintenance of feeder canals from irrigation facilities to irrigate the croplands, spending a lot of money on maintenance works.

Up to now, a total of 245 dams, 144 diversion weirs, 72 lakes, 199 sluice gates and 200 river water pumping stations are ready to supply agricultural water to farmlands for successful cultivation. This year, dams and diversion weirs will irrigate

Healthcare waste from COVID threatens environment: WHO

Tens of thousands of tonnes of extra medical waste from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has put tremendous strain on healthcare waste management systems around the globe, the World Health Organization (WHO said on Tuesday.)

ACCORDING to the agency's Global analysis of healthcare waste in the context of COVID-19: status, impacts and recommendations, the mainly plastic trash threatens human and environmental health, and exposes a dire need to improve waste management practices.

The sight of discarded masks, littering pavements, beaches and roadsides, has become a universal symbol of the on-going pandemic worldwide.

Speaking to journalists in Geneva, the agency's chief, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said the report "is a reminder that although the pandemic is the most severe health crisis in a century, it is connected with many other challenges that countries face."

The estimates are based on the approximately 87,000 tonnes of personal protective equipment (PPE) that was procured between March 2020 and November 2021 and shipped through a joint UN emergency initiative. Most of this equipment is expected to have ended up as waste.

For the agency, this is just an initial indication of the scale of the problem. It does not consider any of the COVID-19 commodities procured outside of the initiative, nor waste generated by the public, like disposable masks.

COVID fallout

The analysis points out that over 140 million test kits, with a



On 4 March 2020, workers handle medical waste at Wuhan Beihu Yunfeng Environmental Protection Technology Co. Ltd., which was converted from handling industrial hazardous waste to medical waste after the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan in Hubei Province. PHOTO: XINHUA

potential to generate 2,600 tonnes of non-infectious waste (mainly plastic) — and 731,000 litres of chemical waste (equivalent to one-third of an Olympic-size swimming pool — have been shipped.

At the same time, over 8 billion doses of vaccine have been administered globally producing 144,000 tonnes of additional waste in the form of syringes, needles, and safety boxes.

As the UN and countries grappled with the immediate task of securing and quality-assuring supplies of PPE, less attention and resources were devoted to the safe and sustainable management of this waste.

For the Executive Director of WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, Dr Michael Ryan, this type of protection is vital, "but it is also vital to ensure that it can be used safely without impacting

on the surrounding environment."

This means having effective management systems in place, including guidance for health workers on what to do.

Lack of resources

Today, 30 per cent of health-care facilities (60 per cent in the least developed countries) are not equipped to handle existing waste loads, let alone the additional waste.

This can expose health workers to needle injuries, burns and pathogenic microorganisms, said WHO. Communities living near poorly managed landfills and waste disposal sites can be impacted by contaminated air from burning waste, poor water quality, or disease carrying pests.

The Director for Environment, Climate Change and Health at WHO, Maria Neira, believes the pandemic has forced the world to reckon with this problem.

"Significant change at all levels, from the global to the hospital floor; in how we manage the healthcare waste stream, is a basic requirement of climate-smart health care systems", she said.

Recommendations

The report lays out a set of recommendations, including eco-friendly packaging and shipping; purchasing safe and reusable PPE, made of recyclable or biodegradable materials; investment in non-burn waste treatment technologies; and investments in the recycling sector to ensure materials, like plastics, can have a second life.

For WHO, the health crisis also offers an opportunity to develop strong national policies and regulations, change behaviours, and increase budgets.

The Chair of the Health Care Waste Working Group, Dr Anne Woolridge, noted that there is a growing appreciation that health investments must con-

sider environmental and climate implications.

"For example, safe and rational use of PPE will not only reduce environmental harm from waste, it will also save money, reduce potential supply shortages and further support infection prevention by changing behaviours", she explained.

Pandemic update

Last Sunday, 30 January, marked two years since WHO declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern, the highest level of alarm under international law.

At the time, there were fewer than 100 cases and no deaths reported outside China.

Two years later, more than 370 million cases have been reported, and more than 5.6 million deaths, and WHO says the numbers are an underestimate.

Since the Omicron variant was first identified just 10 weeks ago, almost 90 million cases have been reported, more than in the whole of 2020.

The WHO Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said that a narrative has taken hold in some countries that because of vaccines, and because of Omicron's high transmissibility and lower severity, preventing transmission is no longer possible, and no longer necessary.

SOURCE: UN ■ ■ ■

WHO recommends countries ease COVID-19 measures "in steady, slow way"

THE World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday called on countries that are starting to lift COVID-19 measures to do so in a steady and slow way, as recent data have shown a sharp increase in coronavirus-related deaths around the world.

"Since the Omicron variant was first identified just 10 weeks ago, almost 90 million cases have been reported to the WHO, more than were reported in the whole of 2020. We are now starting to see a very worrying increase in deaths in most regions of the world," WHO Director General

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press briefing.

High transmissibility

He reiterated his concern over the narrative taking hold in some countries that "because of vaccines, and because of Omicron's high transmissibility and lower severity, preventing transmission is no longer possible and no longer necessary."

"More transmission means more deaths. We are not calling for any country to return to so-called lockdown. But we are calling on all countries to protect

their people using every tool in the toolkit, not vaccines alone," he said. "It's premature for any country either to surrender or to declare victory."

According to Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead of the WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, more than 22 million cases have been reported to the WHO in the past seven days, largely driven by the Omicron variant. More concerning right now is that the past four weeks have seen a sharp increase in the number of coronavirus-related deaths around the world, which

"shouldn't be happening at the present time when we have tools that can actually prevent this."

Commenting on reports that certain countries have started to relax their COVID-19 restrictions, Van Kerkhove urged caution "because many countries have not gone through the peak of Omicron yet" and "now is not the time to lift everything all at once." She said that those countries should do so "in a steady and in a slow way, piece by piece," because this virus is quite dynamic.

SOURCE: Xinhua



Patients wait to be tested for the novel coronavirus Covid-19 in Paris on 23 December 2021. PHOTO: STEPHANE DE SAKUTIN /AFP

Motto of 75th Anniversary Union Day 2022

*** Let's strive for forging unity of the State through Union Spirit!**



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 2 February 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 3 February 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Kachin State and isolated in upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in lower Sagaing Region and Northern Shan, Chin, Rakhine, 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 (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of continuation of isolated rain in upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 February 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 February 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 February 2022: Generally fair weather.

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

(Issued at 14:55 hour M.S.T.)

A slight earthquake of magnitude (3.9) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (10) miles north-northwest of Pekhon), latitude 20.01°N, longitude 96.98°E, depth (10) kilometers, about (57) miles east-northeast of Nay Pyi Taw seismological observatory was recorded at (14) hr (43) min (08) sec M.S.T on 2 February, 2022.

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

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Companies registered on MyCO exceeds 1,000 in Jan 2022: DICA

THE number of companies registered on the online registry system, MyCO, topped 1,000 in January 2022, the statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) indicated.

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

The figures of registered companies stood at 8,011 in 2021, 15,080 in 2020, 17,380 in 2019 and 8,506 in 2018. The number of registered companies has reached 46,377 as of 31 January 2022 since its establishment on 1 August 2018 as per statistics of the DICA.

In addition, all registered companies need to file annual returns (AR) on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation, and at least once every year (not later than one



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

month after the anniversary of the incorporation) under Section 97 of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

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

All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within 28 days of the financial year ending under Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

As per DICA's report, about 16,000 companies were suspended so far for failure to submit AR

forms within the due date.

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

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

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

—NN/GNLM

Lower import drives trade surplus as of 21 January



Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

MYANMAR'S lower import as of 21 January in the current six-month mini-budget period (Oct 2021-Mar 2022) resulted in a positive trade balance of US\$299 million, according to data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar's exports surpassed imports in international trade although overall trade value declined compared to the same corresponding period of 2020-2021 financial year.

Between 1 Oct and 21 January, the country's exports were estimated at \$4.68 billion, imports were valued at \$4.38 billion this FY. The external trade drastically sank to \$9.06 billion from \$9.95 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

Myanmar witnessed a slump in exports and imports

triggered by the coronavirus impacts. Myanmar's maritime trade climbed up yet the country witnessed a drop in border trade amid the coronavirus impacts and political changes. The neighbouring countries tightened the border security and restrict trading in certain border areas.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

Moreover, import fall led to the largest trade surplus of \$677 million in the last FY2020-2021, with \$15.36 billion worth of exports outperforming \$14.69 billion worth of imports.

The country's export

sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Ministry of Commerce is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. The country mainly imports essential goods, construction materials, capital goods, hygienic material and supporting products for export promotion and import substitution.

The ministry has already notified the importers of the compulsory licencing for some imported items. Import licence can be sought from 1 February 2022 with an aim to respond to the post-COVID-19 economic recovery, ensure systematic import and export process and manage foreign capital inflows.

— KK/GNLM

Chickpea growers from ChaungU catch better prices in harvest season

THE chickpea growers from ChaungU township in the Sagaing region are earning better prices in the chickpea harvest season, it is learnt.

There are over 30,000 acres of winter chickpea plantation in ChaungU Township. Now, the early cultivated chickpea are started harvesting and sold at K45,000 per basket to the market.

"Each acre of chickpea can yield about 22 baskets. The price per basket of chickpea is K45,000. Now, the chickpea farmers are joyful due to a good price this year, said a farmer from Nga Lone Tin village-tract.

Chickpea is grown in 27 vil-

lage-tracts such as Nga Lone Tin, Wa Yar, Ma Gyi Gwa and Thone Pan Hla village-tracts. The chickpea is yielding abundantly this year," said Daw Khin Myat Myat Oo, the head of ChaungU township Agriculture Department.

"The department is providing the high-quality seeds to farmers for accessing high-quality chickpea. The growers are also allowed to use only Boron and Borax to help germ-free and yield good quality crops. Likewise, the department staff are sharing the method that how to make natural antibiotics," she clarified. — Lu Lay/GNLM



There are over 30,000 acres of winter chickpea plantation in ChaungU Township.

S.Korea’s daily COVID-19 cases hit record high of over 18,000



Medical members guide a driver with suspected symptoms of the COVID-19 coronavirus, at a “drive-through” virus test facility in Goyang, north of Seoul, on 29 February 2020. PHOTO BY JUNG YEON-JE / AFP

SOUTH Korea’s daily number of COVID-19 cases hit a new record high, surpassing 18,000 amid spread of the Omicron variant of the virus, the health authorities said Tuesday.

According to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA), the country recorded 18,343 more cases of COVID-19 for the past 24 hours, raising the total number of infections to 864,042.

The daily caseload was up from 17,079 in the previous day, hovering above 10,000 for seven days in a row.

The recent resurgence was driven by cluster infections in the Seoul metropolitan area amid the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, which became a dominant strain here.

Of the new cases, 4,103 were Seoul residents. The number of the newly infected people living

in Gyeonggi province and the western port city of Incheon was 5,509 and 1,366, respectively.

The virus also raged in the non-metropolitan region. The number of new infections in the non-capital areas was 7,145, or 39.4 per cent of the total local transmissions.

Among the new cases, 220 were imported from overseas, lifting the total tally for this category to 25,516.

The number of infected people who were in a serious condition stood at 272, down by 5 from the previous day.

Seventeen more deaths were confirmed from the pandemic, bringing the death toll to 6,772. The total fatality rate was 0.78 per cent.

The Asian country has administered COVID-19 vaccines to 44,641,142 people, or 87.0 per cent of the total population, and the number of the fully vaccinated people was 43,996,241, or 85.7 per cent of the population.

The number of those who received booster jabs was 27,254,256, or 53.1 per cent of the population.—Xinhua ■

Swim world championships in Fukuoka moved to 2023 due to Covid: organizers

THE swimming world championships scheduled to take place in the Japanese city of Fukuoka in May this year have been postponed until July 2023 because of Covid-19 risks, organizers said on Tuesday.

Swimming’s governing body FINA said the world championships after that, in the Qatari capital Doha, will as a result be delayed until January 2024.

“Given the current pandemic situation and the measures currently in place in Japan, FINA and key stakeholders of the Fukuoka 2022 Organizing Committee have agreed to re-schedule the 19th FINA World Championships to 14-30 July 2023,” FINA President Husain Al-Musallam said in a statement.

“These decisions have been taken in the best interests of everyone involved,” he added.

Fukuoka was originally due to host the world championships in 2021, but they had to be moved to avoid a clash with last year’s postponed 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.



Silver medalist Australia’s Mack Horton refuses to stand on the podium with gold medalist China’s Sun Yang and bronze medalist Italy’s Gabriele Detti after the final of the men’s 400m freestyle event on 21 July 2019. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

The last worlds took place in 2019 in Gwangju, South Korea.

FINA said it would announce “soon” an updated 2022 international calendar offering “athletes additional opportunities to compete at the highest level”.

Swimming’s world championships, combining competition in the pool, open water, diving and artistic swimming, are normally held every odd year, a schedule upended by the coronavirus pandemic.

There are two major dates remaining in the international swimming calendar for this year - the European Aquatics Championships in Rome in August and the 25m world championships in Kazan, Russia in December.

The rescheduled 2023 world championships in Doha to early 2024 will be the first to be held in the same year as the Summer Olympics with Paris 2024 set for 26 July to 11 August.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Paris Olympics organizer Estanguet to miss Beijing with Covid

THE chief organizer of the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics, Tony Estanguet, will not travel to the Beijing Winter Olympics because he has tested positive for Covid-19, the Paris organizers said Monday.

Estanguet had been due to come to the Chinese capital for the second half of the Beijing Olympics, in his capacity as the organizer of the next Games in the Olympic cycle.

His team said the former canoeing gold medallist had “light symptoms” of the virus.—AFP ■

Africa’s COVID-19 cases near 10.8 mln: Africa CDC

THE number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Africa reached 10,785,043 as of Monday evening, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) said.

The specialized healthcare agency of the African Union said the death toll across the continent stands at 239,288 and some 9,743,996 patients have recovered from the disease so far.

South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia and Ethiopia are among the countries with the most cases on the continent, said the Africa CDC. South Africa has recorded the most COVID-19 cases in Africa with 3,603,856 cases, followed by the two northern African countries Morocco and Tunisia with 1,129,140 and 907,239 cases respectively, it said.—Xinhua ■

Namibia’s agricultural sector improving amid COVID-19

NAMIBIA’S Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform Calle Schlettwein on Monday said the country’s agricultural sector is improving and doing well despite the challenges brought about by the outbreak of COVID-19. “We are doing well, the agricultural sector is growing. We have market access to the best-buying markets in the world and we can pick and choose which commodities to export. We have the best breeds while we are the only country in Africa to export beef to the European Union, United States of America, China and the rest of Africa,” Schlettwein said at a staff meeting in Windhoek.—Xinhua ■

India’s daily COVID-19 cases fall below 200,000, but deaths surpass 1,000

India’s COVID-19 tally rose to 41,469,499 on Tuesday, as 167,059 new cases were registered during the past 24 hours across the country, showed the federal health ministry’s latest data.

Besides, as many as 1,192 deaths due to the pandemic since Monday morning took the total death toll to 496,242.

There are still 1,743,059 active COVID-19 cases in the country, despite a fall of 88,209 active cases during the past 24 hours. This was the eighth consecutive day when the number of active cases declined in the country.—Xinhua ■



India’s COVID-19 tally rose to 41,469,499 on Tuesday, as 167,059 new cases were registered during the past 24 hours across the country, showed the federal health ministry’s latest data. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Mexico's energy reforms test relations with US



President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador wants to strengthen the state-owned electricity provider and roll back the effects of liberalization under previous governments that he says favoured private companies.

PHOTO: AFP

RELATIONS between the United States and Mexico are under strain as the Mexican government pushes ahead with planned energy sector reforms that have alarmed Washington and foreign investors. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador wants to

strengthen the state-owned electricity provider and roll back the effects of liberalization under previous governments that he says favoured private companies.

That has prompted warnings that Mexico is in danger of violating its commitments under a North American trade deal with the United States and Canada by prioritizing state-run entities heavily dependent on fossil fuels.

In November, Lopez Obrador's ruling party pushed back its deadline for the approval of a constitutional reform bill until April, following a backlash from the United States, Canada and foreign investors.

The next few months "will be critical," a US diplomatic source in Mexico told reporters on condition of anonymity.

A row between the neighboring countries would have potential consequences for wider cooperation in key areas such as trade, migration and fighting drug cartels.

The reforms would ensure that the state-owned Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) has at least 54 per cent of the electricity market — compared with 38 per cent now — and the private sector no more than 46 per cent.

The government says the move is to prevent soaring power prices — a hot-button political issue given inflation has hit a 20-year high above seven percent.

The reforms also aim to move towards a state monopoly in the exploration and mining of lithium, a vital material in the production of electric car batteries.—AFP ■

Canadian province scraps tax on Covid unvaccinated

CANADA'S Quebec province announced Tuesday it was scrapping plans for a health tax on those who are not vaccinated against Covid-19, following a public backlash over the proposal.

Francois Legault, the premier of the French-speaking province, told a news conference the controversial measure has deeply divided Quebecers.

"To move Quebec forward in a calm social climate, I am announcing that the government will not introduce this bill on the health contribution," he said.

The idea for the tax had been unveiled on 11 January and was intended to incentivize 10 per cent of the local population who have not received a Covid jab to get vaccinated.



Supporters of the Canadian truckers' protest against Covid-19 vaccine mandates pulled in front of the Parliament building in Ottawa on 28 January 2022. PHOTO: DAVE CHAN/AFP/FILE

Legault had lamented that half of all Covid patients in hospital intensive care wards in the province were unvaccinated and that it was straining health care resources.

The announcement Monday marked the second time the Quebec government has walked back public health measures meant to slow the spread of the coronavirus. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rampant graft under S.Africa's Zuma detailed in new report

SOUTH African investigators Tuesday released a 646-page report detailing how rampant corruption under former president Jacob Zuma undermined both the public logistics company Transnet and the state arms firm Denel.

The report is the second of an expected three volumes drafted by a special commission headed by interim Constitutional Court Chief Justice Raymond Zondo. The first volume was delivered in early January and dealt with corruption at national carrier South African Airways, the country's tax collector and public procurement.—AFP ■

President highlights Chile's 12-pct economic growth in 2021

CHILEAN President Sebastian Pinera on Tuesday highlighted the country's economic growth of 12 per cent in 2021, which he noted was one of the highest in the world and surpassed "by far" the level before the COVID-19 pandemic. "The year 2021 ended with two pieces of good news, our economy grew substantially at 12 per cent, the highest figure in many decades and among one of the highest in the world," Pinera said in a video released by the Presidency, "and this growth has allowed us to far exceed the levels of activity we had before the pandemic."—Xinhua ■

China's auto exports top 2 mln in 2021

CHINA'S automobile exports doubled year on year to nearly 2.02 million units in 2021, latest data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers showed.

Last year the country's total exports for the year exceeded 2 million units for the first time, according to the association.

New energy vehicle exports reported a threefold increase

year on year by reaching 310,000 units, the data showed.

Of the total, exports of passenger cars stood at 1.61 million units, up 1.1 times from the previous year, and exports of commercial vehicles surged 70.7 per cent to 402,000 units. In December alone, the country's auto manufacturers exported 223,000 cars, up 11.4 per cent from the previ-

ous month and up 54 per cent year on year, the data showed.—Xinhua ■

At Haitong International Automotive Terminal in Shanghai's Waigaoqiao Port Area, thousands of cars are parked up in lines after inspection, waiting to be shipped around the world. PHOTO: XINHUA



‘Spider-Man’ success helps Sony lift annual profit outlook

SONY upgraded its full-year net profit forecast on Wednesday, buoyed by the success of its latest “Spider-Man” movie and strong results in the gaming sector despite the global chip shortage.

It comes as the Japanese tech giant battles for gaming supremacy with US rival Microsoft after its blockbuster acquisition of Activision. Sony already



People wait for the launch of Sony’s PlayStation 4 console in front of a Sony store in Shanghai on 20 March 2015. PHOTO: KYODO/FILE

logged a record net profit in 2020-21, with a pandemic boom in gaming swelling its profits. Although the huge demand for gaming is tapering now, Sony said it is continuing to see strong performances by divisions including film, games and electronics. The conglomerate now projects a net profit of 860 billion yen (\$7.4 billion) for the fiscal year to March 2022, having al-

ready hiked its full-year estimate to 730 billion yen in the previous quarter. A favourable foreign exchange rate and expected decrease in operating losses in sectors including its corporate division will also boost its bottom line, it said. The group cheered strong results in its film division including for “Spider-Man: No Way Home”, which was released in December and could soon overtake “Avatar” as North America’s third-highest grossing film.

“This is the biggest hit that Sony Pictures Entertainment has ever seen,” Chief Financial Officer Hiroki Totoki told reporters.

The firm’s music segment also scored a winner with Adele’s latest album “30” and stronger-than-expected licence revenue in its popular anime business.—AFP ■

Cambodia’s tourism to recover after 2 years of slump: official

CAMBODIA’S tourism industry is projected to rebound in 2022 after a two-year significant fall due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a tourism official said on Tuesday. The kingdom received 1.3 million international tourists in 2020, down 80 per cent from 2019, and the number had further declined by another 85 per cent to 196,495 in 2021, a Ministry of Tourism report showed.

“We expect that the number of foreign tourists to Cambodia will begin to recover from this year thanks to our country’s re-opening to fully-vaccinated travellers,” Kong Sopheareak, director of statistics and planning department of the Ministry of Tourism, told Xinhua.

“With our quarantine-free policy, we’re confident that tourists will



Tourism is one of the four pillars supporting the kingdom’s economy. PHOTO: PHEARUM/XINHUA

consider Cambodia as a key destination for their vacations, and we hope to attract half a million international visitors this year,” he said. Tourism is one of the four pillars supporting the kingdom’s economy. The country attracted up to 6.61 million international tourists in 2019, generating gross revenue of 4.92 billion US dollars, according to the Ministry of Tourism. The country is famous for its three world heritage sites, namely the Angkor Archaeological Park, the Preah Vihear Temple and the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site.—Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Starbucks reports higher profits, but Omicron adds costs

STARBUCKS reported higher quarterly profits Tuesday, but said an unexpectedly costly hit from the latest Covid-19 wave would lead to further price increases.

The coffee chain scored higher comparable store sales in the United States in the quarter ending 2 January but lower sales internationally, with a big drop in China in the wake of that country’s “zero Covid policy”. In its home market, Starbucks experienced “very strong” consumer demand over the holidays, Chief Executive Kevin Johnson told analysts. But Johnson said Omicron weighed on the US results, leading to staffing shortages in its distribution and transportation network and higher Covid isolation pay for employees who became sick.—AFP ■

Pharma giants to pay \$590 mn to US Native Americans over opioids

A group of pharmaceutical companies and distributors agreed to pay \$590 million to settle lawsuits connected to opioid addiction among Native American tribe members, according to a US court filing released Tuesday. The agreement is the latest amid a deluge of litigation spawned by the US opioid crisis, which has claimed more than 500,000 lives over the last 20 years and ensnared some of the largest firms in the world of American medicine.

Pharmaceutical companies McKesson, Amerisource-Bergen and Cardinal Health had already struck a separate deal with the Cherokee tribe last September for \$75 million.

According to documents filed in an Ohio federal court Tuesday by a committee of plaintiffs, the companies agreed to pay another \$440 million over seven years to other Native American tribes.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V DA PING VOY.NO. (073)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V DA PING VOY.NO. (073)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GREEN CLARITY VOY.NO. (0254-044N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GREEN CLARITY VOY.NO. (0254-044N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S’PORE) PTE., LTD.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NESNA VOY.NO. (205W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NESNA VOY.NO. (205W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-2-2022** 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 BBC RIO

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BBC RIO VOY. NO. (1276017)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT-5** 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

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Flooding kills at least 11 people in Ecuador capital

At least 11 people were killed and 32 injured on Monday after the heaviest flooding to hit Ecuador in nearly two decades triggered a massive landslide in capital Quito, authorities said.

Torrents of water carrying stones and mud swept down an avenue in the Ecuadorian city, washing away cars and flooding houses and streets, according to images released by the emergency services.

The torrential downpour caused a water collection structure to overflow, sending a deadly stream down a nearby hillside onto a sports ground where several people were practicing, authorities said at a virtual press conference.

Quito mayor Santiago Guarderas initially said "there are eleven dead, 15 injured and we have eight collapsed structures".

But municipality authorities later revised the figure to 32 injured and added affected families had been placed in local shelters.—AFP ■

Warring guerrillas bring misery to Colombian region

FEAR reigns in northeastern Colombia on the border with Venezuela where the local population has been caught in the crossfire of rival warring groups of left-wing guerrillas.

Since the start of the year, the National Liberation Army (EL), Colombia's last recognized guerrilla group, and dissidents of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels that laid down arms and signed a 2016 peace deal with the government, have waged a merciless battle in Arauca.

"What is in play is territorial control of the department and multiple trafficking with neighbouring Venezuela," on the other side of the Arauca river, a political scientist based in the region who spoke on condition of anonymity, told AFP.

Almost 50 people have been killed in the violence in less than four weeks.

Murders, kidnappings and threats have become a daily occurrence.—AFP ■

India finalizes nomination of Hoysala temples in Karnataka for World Heritage List



Hoysala Temples in Karnataka as India's nomination for World Heritage List for 2022-2023. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA/ANI

THE Hoysala Temples of Belur, Halebid and Somnathapura in Karnataka have been finalized as India's nomination for consideration as World Heritage for the year 2022-2023, said the

Ministry of Culture.

According to an official statement, the 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala' are on UNESCO's Tentative List since 15 April 2014 and repre-

sent one of the highest points of human creative genius and stand testimony to the rich historical and cultural heritage of our country.

Permanent Representa-

tive of India to UNESCO on Monday formally submitted the nomination bid to UNESCO, Director of World Heritage, Lazare Eloundou.

"The first step is submission of the dossier to the World Heritage Centre which will do the technical scrutiny of the same," reads the note.

"Once the submission is made, UNESCO will communicate back by early March. After that the site evaluation will happen in September/October 2022 and the dossier will be taken up for consideration in July/August 2023," it added.

"This is a great moment for India to see the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas temples being submitted for inscription in the World Heritage List," said G Kishan Reddy, Minister of Culture, Tourism and Development of Northeastern Region.—ANI ■

Russia says will not back down in face of US sanctions threats

RUSSIA'S embassy in Washington said Tuesday that Moscow will not back down in the face of US sanctions threats over Ukraine, ahead of a phone call between the top US and Russian diplomats. "We are not going to back away and stand at attention, listening to the threats of US sanctions," the embassy said on Facebook, adding that it is "Washington, not Moscow, that generates tensions."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will hold fresh telephone talks on Ukraine Tuesday. Tensions between the two countries have skyrocketed in recent weeks as the US accuses Moscow of planning an imminent invasion of Ukraine. The White House said Monday that it is ready to impose sanctions on President Vladimir Putin's "inner circle" if an attack on Ukraine



A military instructor teaches civilians holding wooden replicas of Kalashnikov rifles in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv. PHOTO: AFP

goes ahead.

US President Joe Biden has repeatedly warned Putin of

a massive coordinated Western sanctions response should he invade Ukraine.—AFP ■

Portugal: Tourist overnight stays increase 45 pct in 2021; still 47 pct less than 2019



A new port for cruise ships in Lisbon is bringing record numbers of tourists to Portugal's capital. Port of Lisbon is a popular cruise destination and turnaround port for a cruise ship in 2018. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

TOURIST accommodation recorded 14.5 million guests and 37.5 million overnight stays in 2021, corresponding to increases of 39.4% and 45.2%, according to preliminary data from Statistics Portugal (INE), released on Monday.

However, compared to the same period in 2019, guests decreased by 46.4% and overnight stays decreased by 46.6% (-10.9% in residents and -62.0% in non-residents).

In 2021, all regions recorded decreases in overnight stays,

compared to 2019, mainly due to reductions in non-residents, although there were increases in overnight stays by residents in Madeira (+19.2%) and the Algarve (+5.1%).

The United Kingdom remained the main issuing market in 2021, representing 16.6% of overnight stays by non-residents, and increased 54.6% compared to the previous year, followed by the Spanish (share of 14.3%), German (11.9%) and French (11.8%) markets.—AFP ■

Erdogan seeks payoff from Russia-US clash on Ukraine

TURKISH President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will try to leverage his strategic position in NATO and his rapport with Russia's Vladimir Putin when he visits Kyiv on Thursday in a bid to head off war in Ukraine.

The veteran Turkish leader hopes mediation between Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky can avert a Russian offensive that Washington warns could start by mid-February.

His high-profile efforts — met with caution in Moscow — carry huge stakes and potentially rich rewards.

Analysts believe a serious conflict in Ukraine could upend Turkey's economy and imperil Erdogan's chances of extending

his rule into a third decade in elections due by mid-2023.

It could also force Ankara to pick sides between Putin — a leader who holds several economic and military trump cards over Turkey — and traditional Western allies that have grown impatient with Erdogan's rule.

Kyiv's acquisition of battle-tested Turkish drones is a particular worry for Russian-backed separatist fighters in eastern Ukraine and for the Kremlin.

But analysts think success in averting a Russian invasion could highlight Turkey's importance to the Western defence alliance and warm Erdogan's chilly relations with US President Joe Biden. "This is an opportunity for



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has pledged support for his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky in the face of simmering tensions with Moscow. **PHOTO: AFP**

Turkey to elevate its status and come out of the doghouse, metaphorically speaking, in NATO,"

Asli Aydintasbas of the European Council on Foreign Relations told AFP. — AFP ■

UK college requests removal of slavery-linked memorial

A university college in the United Kingdom is Wednesday to ask a judge to allow the removal from its chapel of a memorial to a historical donor implicated in the slave trade.

The hearing, to be held for several days at Cambridge University, comes as calls mount to take down statues and monuments to historical figures linked to slavery and racism.

Jesus College wants to take down an ornate marble plaque commemorating Tobias Rustat, a 17th-century slave-trade investor and major donor to the college, which is fixed to the wall of its chapel.

Rustat, a courtier to King Charles II, was also an investor



Jesus College in 2021 handed back a Benin Bronze sculpture of a cockerel to a Nigerian delegation. **PHOTO: AFP**

in the Royal African Company, which transported nearly 150,000 slaves, and took part in running the company.

The college said he "had financial and administrative involvement in the trading of enslaved human beings over a

substantial period of time".

It wants to move the plaque, featuring a portrait of Rustat, and display it in an archive room with information giving historical context. Its academics have voted in favour.

Because the memorial is in a religious building, a Church-appointed judge will rule on the fate of the plaque at an ecclesiastical court hearing held in the chapel itself.

The judge will oversee the so-called "consistory court" session, independent civil proceedings that are to include the questioning of expert witnesses.

Such hearings are rare, and usually concern church buildings.— AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Queen Elizabeth II to mark 70 years on the throne

QUEEN Elizabeth II on Sunday becomes the first British monarch to reign for 70 years.

Queen Elizabeth II on Sunday becomes the first British monarch to reign for 70 years, heralding the start of her Platinum Jubilee year despite her retreat from public view.

But the landmark date this weekend will see little fanfare, as the 95-year-old monarch traditionally spends the anniversary of the death of her father in private.

The sovereign's record-breaking reign as head of state began when she was aged 25 and watching wildlife in a remote part of Kenya with her husband, Prince Philip.

She has since become the one constant in an era of rapid social and political change, a figurehead of modern Britain and a living link to its post-war and imperial past.—AFP ■

G.Bissau president says survived deadly coup bid, situation 'under control'

GUINEA-BISSAU's president on Tuesday said he survived heavy fire for five hours during an attempted coup which he claimed killed or injured many people in the unstable west African country.

Umaro Sissoco Embalo told reporters he faced "sustained fire from heavy arms for five hours" with a military advisor, minister and two bodyguards in the capital Bissau during a plot to "kill the president of the republic and the entire cabinet".

"The attackers could have spoken to me before these bloody events that have seriously injured many and claimed lives," he said.

Coup-prone Guinea-Bissau struggles with a reputation for corruption and drug smuggling and the president alluded to this without naming the putschists.

Appearing unharmed and calm, he added that the failed bid was linked to decisions taken by him "notably to fight drug trafficking and corruption". —AFP ■

Afghan universities reopen with trickle of women attending



Taliban fighters stand guard at the main gate of Laghman University after classes resumed for the first time since the hardline Islamist group returned to power. **PHOTO: AFP**

SOME public universities opened in Afghanistan Wednesday for the first time since the Taliban seized power in August, with a trickle of women attending classes that officials said would be segregated by sex.

Most secondary schools for girls and all public universities were shuttered when the hardline Islamist group stormed back to power, sparking fears women would again be barred from education — as happened during the Taliban's first rule, from 1996-2001.

"It's a moment of joy for us that our classes have started,"

said Zarlashtha Haqmal, who studies law and political science at Nangarhar University.

"But we are still worried that the Taliban might stop them," she told AFP.

Officials said universities in Laghman, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Nimroz, Farah and Helmand provinces opened Wednesday.

More were scheduled to resume operations elsewhere in the country later this month.

An AFP correspondent saw just six women — wearing the all-covering burqa — enter Laghman University early Wednesday.—AFP ■

Olympic torch relay begins in Beijing



Chinese astronaut Jing Haipeng holds the Olympic torch. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE torch relay for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games started here on Wednesday, just two days before the Games officially opens.

Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, lit the torch from a cauldron at the launch ceremony held at the Olympic Forest

Park, then handed it to 80-year-old Luo Zhihuan, China's first winter sports world champion.

"In just a few days, the best winter sport athletes of the world will gather in Beijing. They will compete fiercely against each other for Olympic glory. At the same time, they will live peacefully together under one roof at the Olympic Village," International

Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach said in a video message.

The torch relay has been scaled down and is being held under strict precautionary measures due to concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some 1,200 participants will take part in the relay, which will last three days across three competition zones and culminate with the lighting of the cauldron at the opening ceremony on Friday night.

Chinese basketball legend Yao Ming and astronaut Jing Haipeng were among the first to carry the flame on Wednesday.

The first day takes the theme "Showcasing Beijing as a dual Olympic city" as the flame makes its way to the Beijing Winter Olympic Park.

The Winter Olympics will take place from 4 February to 20.—Xinhua ■

Pellistri inspires Uruguay, Sanchez reignites Chile's WC hopes

YOUNG winger Facundo Pellistri stole the show on only his second appearance for Uruguay as the twice former World Cup winners boosted their hopes of reaching Qatar 2022 with a 4-1 win over Venezuela on Tuesday.

Chile also gave themselves a lifeline as Alexis Sanchez scored a brace in a 3-2 win at Bolivia in South American World Cup qualifying.

But Colombia's hopes all but died after failing to score for a seventh consecutive match in a 1-0 defeat in Argentina.

Goals from Rodrigo Betancur, Giorgian de Arrascaeta, Edinson Cavani and a Luis Suarez penalty saw Uruguay romp to a second successive victory under new coach Diego Alonso that propelled them, temporarily at least, into the final automatic qualification berth in the single South American group.

But it was Manchester United youngster Pellistri, who has spent the last year on loan at Spaniards Alaves, who shone brightest.

His mazy run set up the

second goal and his trickery won the penalty converted by Suarez.

With two qualifiers left at home to Peru and away to Chile, Uruguay's World Cup destiny remains in their own hands.

They had a dream start in Montevideo as Cavani's first minute cross was half cleared to the edge of the box where Betancur hit a sweet half volley that clipped a heel and skidded past Wuliker Farinez in the Venezuela goal.



Uruguay's Facundo Pellistri (centre) played a starring role in only his second international match in the win over Venezuela.

PHOTO: POOL/AFP

Uruguay were dominant and doubled their lead on 23 minutes after Pellistri showed great trickery to beat three players on the right and cut the ball back for De Arrascaeta to slot home from close range.

Cavani, who had a second half goal ruled out for offside, all but sealed the victory in first half stoppage time with an opportunistic overhead kick from six yards out as Uruguay's players were lining up to finish off their weary opponents.—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

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

Arsenal free Aubameyang to join Barcelona



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has left Arsenal. **PHOTO: GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/FILE**

PIERRE-EMERICK Aubameyang has left Arsenal, the club announced on Tuesday, clearing the way for the striker to sign for Barcelona as a free agent. The 32-year-old former Gunners captain was visible in pictures from Barcelona training posted on social media on Tuesday.

The Gabonese striker arrived in Spain on Monday just ahead of the end of the January transfer window. But the clubs did not announce a deal before the deadline passed. His release by Arsenal makes him a

free agent, able to sign outside the window. "Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has left the club by mutual agreement," the Premier League club said in a statement. "We wish Aba all the best for the next chapter in his career and thank him for his contribution to the club." He has not played for Arsenal since being disciplined by the club in December. He was reportedly one of the top-paid players in the Premier League with a basic salary of around 250,000 pounds (300,000 euros or 330,000 dollars) a week.—AFP ■