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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.

Departments and organizations are to strive for increasing the incomes to have surplus income against the target:

Vice-Senior General



State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win addresses the coordination meeting on submission of Union budget for the 2022-23 financial year in Nay Pyi Taw on 4 March 2022.

EXPENDITURES were allotted for operating Steel Mills in Myingyan and Pinpet for reducing the imported steelware and spending of foreign exchange and creating job opportunities for the local people, said Vice-Chairman of the Financial Commission Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win at the coordination meeting on submission of Union budget for the 2022-23 financial year at the office of SAC in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Currently, the Vice-Senior General, in his address, said the global countries are facing the economic downtrend, declining prices of general commodities, world gold prices, oil price and fluctuation of currencies in power struggles of powerful countries and outbreak of COVID-19. These impacts affect Myanmar. Hence, the government allotted monetary assistance for respective sectors and eased revenue restrictions. The government spends the budget on surging the State economy.

In the 2022-23 financial year, the State allotted the budget depending on the income. Union level departments and organizations need to prioritize earmarking the expenditures for social-economic development and regional development, prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.

The State arranges to reduce the expenditure for lesser spending of foreign exchange as fuel is imported abroad. Directives for use of fuel were issued and the use of fuel was allowed

in accord with the scrutiny as of April 2022.

Gallons of fuel were earmarked for departmental officials, administrative and working measures were reduced in accord with the ordinary expenditure for the 2022-23FY, which was lesser than that of the 2020-21FY. Moreover, fuel for vehicles of Union level persons and region and state-level persons were also cut as of April 2022.

According to the directives of the Ministry of Planning and Finance in the 2022-23FY, the

budget must be cut in line with the principles but it was allowed to spend the budget on regional situations and security measures.

Ten ministries are allowed to allot the special budgets and three more ministries are earmarked to implement the State projects. As a special issue, expenditure must be inserted into the budget without fail for holding the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day which falls on 4 January 2023.

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Objectives of 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

1. THE Tatmadaw to participate in the leading role of national politics for the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism while safeguarding the Constitution (2008) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
2. The Tatmadaw to take responsibility for substantial contribution to measures of peace and prosperity of the country and food sufficiency as a national task the government primarily emphasizes
3. The Tatmadaw to join hands with all ethnic national people in the national reconciliation and peace processes
4. The Tatmadaw to provide necessary assistance for convening a free and fair multiparty democracy general election for ensuring the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism upon completion of endeavours in accord with the provisions of the State of Emergency
5. To build a powerful, capable and modern patriotic Tatmadaw to protect the national interest of the State

Religious titles conferring ceremony to be held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE State Administration Council is prepared to confer religious titles on 284 monks at home local and abroad, 41 nuns and 28 laypersons with Notification No (1/2022) on 4 January (Independence Day).

Of them, the Abhidhaja

Maha Rattha Guru title will be conferred on nine Sayadaws on 16 March, while the Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title on eight Sayadaws, Agga Maha Pandita title on 18 Sayadaws, Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita title on 23 Sayadaws, Agga Maha Gan-

thavacaka Pandita on three nuns, Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja on 41 Sayadaws, Agga Maha Kammathanacariya on six monks, Agga Maha Sirisudhamma Manijotadhara on one person and Agga Maha Sirisuddhamma Singi on two person. The SAC will

organize day meal (alms) donation ceremony to 107 monks and three nuns on 14 March at Sasana Beikman of Uppatasanti Pagoda.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has sent invitation cards to 111 monks, nuns and persons and two invited

Sayadaws to arrive Nay Pyi Taw no earlier than 12 March and no later than 13 March.

If the religious title recipients do not receive the invitation cards in time, they can visit Nay Pyi Taw according to the fixed dates. — MNA

Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda bustling with pilgrims across Myanmar



More than 90 makeshift guest lodges have been built for the people to spend their afternoon bathing in Mann Creek, and the price of a lodge is K10,000.

FOLLOWING its brief opening on the 5th Waxing of Tabodwe, the Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda in Minbu (Sagu) Township, Magway Region, is receiving visitors from all over the country, according to the pagoda Board of Trustees.

Pilgrims, especially on weekends and public holidays, are seen offering gold foil, fasting, praying and doing good deeds, including fish-releasing and monkey-feeding. In addition, the Mann Creek is also crowded with people bathing, relaxing and

taking souvenir photos.

Along with the opening of the pagoda, the Mann Creek Elephant Resort was also opened. Pilgrims are allowed to pay homage to the pagoda following COVID-19 preventive rules, said in-charge of the Lower Settawya and member of

the pagoda Board of Trustees U Thein Hlaing.

Although visitors can take accommodation to relax in the daytime, overnight stays are not allowed, he added. However, they can stay at the nearest religious buildings and monasteries with

the certificate of COVID-19 vaccination, ID and household list card. More than 90 makeshift guest lodges have been built for the people to spend their afternoon bathing in Mann Creek, and the price of a lodge is K10,000. — Maung Maung (Minbu)/GNLM



Most of the factories resume operation

PRIORITIZING agriculture and livestock much supports the State economy. Except for some factories, most of the factories resume operation. The declining disease infection rate helps the tourism sector to resume.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 4/2021 of Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 30-12-2021)

Budgets must be spent under the financial rules and regulations and accounts for the expenditure must be auditable: Vice-Senior General

REGIONS and states need to cut the expenditures as much as possible, said Vice Chairman of the Financial Commission Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win at the coordination meeting on submission of the region and state budgets for the 2022-23 financial year at the Office of the SAC in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

In his address, the Vice-Senior General said today's meeting was to scrutinize the earmarks of budgets of regions and states for the 2022-2023 financial year in accord with the Constitution before submitting them to the Financial Commission. The Ministry of Planning and Finance has coordinated with the region and state economic ministers on 22 and 23 February through video conferencing. This meeting was held to further coordinate among the region and state chief ministers to further submit the budgets to the financial commission.

It can be seen that the income of the State in all aspects may lessen due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in the world's political landscape. Hence, the Union provided 88 per cent of monetary assistance to regions and states, lessening 12 per cent of monetary assistance than the 2020-2021 financial year. A lesser quota for the income from the revenue was allotted. However, region and state chief ministers were urged to spend the budget on the tasks directly benefiting the people depending on the allotted funds from the Union and regions and states.

The Vice-Senior General stated that the FY2022-23 is to encourage the resurgence of



State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win presides over the coordination meeting on submission of the region and state budgets for the 2022-23 financial year in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

the State economy. And, the ordinary expenditure related to the administrative measures such as salaries for service personnel, fuel costs, and maintenance charges must be scrutinized thriftily while prioritizing the cost for manufacturing to increase the GDP and expenditures for regional development. In its scrutiny, the Ministry of Planning and Finance estimated and scrutinized two points of ordinary expenditure, two points of capital expenditure and actually available amounts of foreign loans.

Union ministers and region and state chief ministers were invited to submit more discussions related to the scrutinized budget coordinated with the region and state governments with the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

Secretary of the commission Union Minister U Win Shein explained the brief re-

ports on scrutiny of the ministry over the budgets earmarked by regions and states in 2022-23 FY and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win, the estimated budgets for regions and states in the financial year. Union Auditor-General Dr Kan Zaw explained the auditing for the budget.

In his concluding address, the Vice-Senior General said that the budgets of regions and states must be in line with the five-point road map and nine objectives and spent on regional development tasks such as electrification, rural development and improvement of transportation in accord with the State policies. In so doing, they all have to abide by the findings and recommendations of the Union Auditor-General in spending the budget and the spending of the budget must be restricted exactly.

Budgets must be spent

under the financial rules and regulations and accounts for the expenditure must be auditable. The total income for the 2019-20 financial year was more than K1,177 billion. The preliminary amount of income for the 2020-21 financial year was more than K786.6 billion, and the six-month mini-budget of the 2021-22FY was estimated as more than K516.8 billion and the scrutinized income for 2022-23 financial year was more than K1,058.9 billion. The correct expenditure was more than K1,341 billion for 2019-20 FY, the preliminary amount of expenditure more than K3,053.5 billion in the mini-budget period over K1,579.8 billion and scrutinized amount of expenditure for 2022-23 FY, more than K3,131.5 billion. The ratio of income to expenditure was 1:3. The expenditure is three times more than the income.

In comparing the budget

ratio between mini-budget and 2022-23 financial year, the expenditure ratio declines in Kachin and Kayah states but increases in Ayeyawady region, Kayin, Chin and Rakhine states. Sagaing, Taninthayi, Bago, Mandalay and Magway regions and Mon and Shan states maintained past and present expenditure ratios. Regions and states need to cut the expenditures as much as possible.

The budget for the 2022-23 financial year will be submitted to the financial commission and then to the Union government meeting. It will be submitted to the State Administration Council to enact the Union Budget Law. Region and state governments need to make preparations to submit their budgets to the State Administration Council so as to enact the laws.—MNA

Departments and organizations are to strive for increasing the incomes to have surplus income against the target: Vice-Senior General

FROM PAGE-1

Secretary of the commission Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Win Shein reviewed the budgets drafted by Union level departments and organizations for the 2022-23FY and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win reported on the budgets of

the Union for the 2022-23FY. Union Auditor-General Dr Kan Zaw explained the measures related to the budgets. In his concluding remarks, the Vice-Senior General stressed that the ministries wishing to add the budget amounts must hold coordination for submitting the

budgets in time. The approvals for the budgets will be sought from the State Administration Council. The ordination expenditure will cover transport, electricity and energy, manufacturing, human resources, education, health and social protection sectors including agriculture

and livestock as well as rural development. The expenditures were allotted for operating Steel Mills in Myingyan and Pinpet for reducing the imported steel ware and spending of foreign exchange and creating job opportunities for the local people. The organizations taking

foreign loans need to efficiently spend the loans. Departments and organizations are to strive for increasing their incomes to have an income surplus against the target. Union-level departments and organizations were urged to make efforts for surging the State economy in the 2022-23FY.—MNA

Termination of Citizenship

1. As the following individuals who violated the existing laws of the State and left the country illegally were found to be committing acts that could harm the interests of Myanmar, citizenship is terminated under Section 16 of the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law, according to the authority of the Central Body under Section 67 of the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law.
(a) Zaw Wai Soe (son of U Maung Lay)
(b) Yi Mon (a) Tin Thit (son of U Kyaw Swe)
(c) Lwin Ko Latt (son of U Hla Win)
(d) Zin Mar Aung (daughter of U Aung Kyi)
- (e) Htin Lin Aung (son of U Thein Aung)
(f) Aung Myo Min (son of U Min Aung)
(g) Ei Thinzar Maung (daughter of U Toe Toe Maung)
(h) Sasa (son of U Ane Pi (a) Ae Bi)
(i) Min Ko Naing (a) Paw Oo Tun (son of U Thet Nyunt)
(j) Myo Yan Naung Thein (son of U Mya Thein)
(k) Ei Pencilo (a) Eaint Poe Oo (daughter of U Kyaw Naing)
2. It is reported that similar perpetrators will be identified and prosecuted.
—MNA

MoD holds public, ethnic affairs management & services committee meeting 3/2022

THE Ministry of Defence held the third coordination meeting (3/2022) of the Public and Ethnic Affairs Management and Services Committee yesterday morning. The meeting was attended by members of the State Administration Council General Mya Tun Oo, Dr Banya Aung Moe, Union Ministers U Chit Naing, U Ko Ko, Dr Thet Thet Khine, U Saw Tun Aung Myint, the deputy ministers, permanent secretaries, directors-general and officials. At the meeting, Committee Chairman Union Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo delivered an opening remark, and Secretary of the Committee Deputy Minister U Zaw Aye Maung

explained the decisions made at the 2/2022 meeting and the status of implementation. Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, Deputy Minister U Myo Hlaing, the permanent secretaries, directors-general and officials explained the matters submitted by the Union Ministries to the Committee according to the relevant sectors. The committee chairman approved the matters to be submitted to the management committee meeting of the State Administration Council, and the matters to be decided by the committee. Afterwards, Permanent Secretary of the Cooperatives and Rural Development Ministry U Khant Zaw clarified the status of implementation of the decisions



made by the meeting 2/2022, and Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint and Deputy Minister U Myo Hlaing presented ethnic issues, public affairs management and services by the relevant sectors. Afterwards, the Chairman of the Committee delivered a concluding remark.—MNA

MoI Union Minister meets Myanmar Press Council members

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn received Myanmar Press Council Chairman U Ohn Maung (Myinmu-Maung Naing Moe) and council members to discuss collaborative news media operations yesterday.

The Union minister highlighted the development programmes of media, accurate information to public and changing patterns of news consumption for technical growth such as New Media style.

He also talked about the spread of false information as propaganda to persuade the youths to participate in conducting destructive elements.

He then appreciated the

efforts of the Myanmar Press Council for holding talks at schools and stressed the need to continue their doings for the youths and students to understand the information and media related matters.

Afterwards, the council chairman and members reported on their respective sectors. They donated K2.5 million worth of 417 “media of record” books to the Union minister and received certificates of honour in return.

The Union minister also handed over the video CD and publication related to the Diamond Jubilee Union Day ceremony to the Myanmar Press Council Chairman and members. — MNA



The meeting between the MoI Union Minister and Myanmar Press Council in progress.

MMQR of merchant acquiring service launched on 4 March



THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) virtually launched MMQR payment of merchant acquiring service at the Learning and Training Centre of the CBM at 2 pm on 4 March.

At the event, Deputy Governor Daw Than Than Swe of the CBM delivered that the government is strenuously striving

for digital payment reform. The financial institution implemented Real-time gross settlement (RTGS System), the automated clearinghouse for retail payment and the National Payment Switch MPU for card services. Soon, MMQR (payment via QR code) will provide a real-time retail payment service for merchants

through an association with issuing banks with the use of digital platforms. The CBM is carrying out payment instruments to improve and enhance payment systems. Mobile banking services, i-banking services and e-wallet systems have been permitted so far. Furthermore, it gave the green light to the transportation

and shopping card payment systems as well.

The CBM’s National Payment System Strategy (2020-2025) was laid down and it issued a directive on merchant acquiring services (notification 7/2020). The CBM gave the green light to the four Non-Bank Financial Institutions to grow the digital payment network in the other regions, in coordination with the banks. They are Nature Link Travel and Tours Co., Ltd (Brand Name-Trusty), Internet Wallet Myanmar Co., Ltd (Brand Name-OK\$), Zego Pay Co., Ltd (Brand Name-Zego) and Unipay Co., Ltd (Unipay).

The acquirers provide service for payment execution with the QR code payment in line

with the National Standard Code MMQR. This event introduced QR code payment for the convenience of the customers.

Merchant acquiring institutions explained the work prospects and the performance of their applications through video conferencing. Managing Director U Nyein Chan Soe Win of AYA Bank explained acquiring banking networks. Executive Director U Zaw Lin Htut of a directive on merchant acquiring services (notification 7/2020) also elaborated matters regarding the increase in MPU card payment users and third-party processors.

The deputy governor discussed the suggestions with the relevant experts and gave the closing remark. — MNA

UEC informs political parties of inspections

THE Union Election Commission systematically permitted political parties under the Political Parties Registration Law to develop a genuine and disciplined democratic nation and it looked into the political parties whether they conducted systematically for the memberships of the parties, party funds and property, savings, maintaining, usage, audition and liquidation and parties’ procedures according to the law.

The inspection team including members of the Union Auditor-General Office, the

Internal Revenue Department and Bureau of Special Investigation inspected a total of 81 political parties — five Kachin State-based parties, two Kayin State-based parties, two Sagaing Region-based parties, one Taninthayi Region-based party, three Bago Region-based parties, two Mandalay Region-based parties, three Mon State based parties, seven Rakhine State-based parties, 36 Yangon Region-based parties, 15 Shan State-based parties, one Ayeyawady Region-based party and four Union Territory-based

parties.

Moreover, UEC informed Yangon-based Myanmar New Society Democratic Party, Democratic Party for a New Society and Karen National Party to inspect from 7 to 11 March while the Rakhine State-based Arakan League for Democracy and Chin State-based Khumi (Khami) National Party to examine in Rakhine State, Chin State-based Ethnic National Development Party and Yangon-based Zomi Congress for Democracy to accept Inspection in Chin State from 10 to 12 March. — MNA

1,863 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 4 March, total figure rises to 595,821

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **595,821** after **1,863** new cases were reported on 4 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **544,056** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **19,383** after **4** died.—MNA

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

MoC facilitates daily imports of essential anti-COVID-19 equipment

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, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, through trading posts, international airports and seaports.

A total of seven tonnes of masks were imported via international seaports yesterday.

Officials from relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures 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

Notification of COVID Vaccination Fund Management Subcommittee

FROM 7-2-2022 to 4-3-2022, local/foreign donors contributed K0.224 million to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund Myanmar currency account OA 013733 and foreign currency account EDC 600012 opened at the Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw). The status of the fund account as of 4-3-2022 is as follows:

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund OA-013733 List

	Kyat
Account opening balance on 28-1-2022	162,556,210,142.53
Received amount of money from (+) 7-2-2022 to 4-3-2022	223,550.00
Closed balance on 4-3-2022	162,556,433,692.53

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund EDC 600012 List

	USD
Account opening balance on 28-1-2022	22,267,349.53
Received amount of money from (+) 7-2-2022 to 4-3-2022	-
Closed balance on 4-3-2022	22,267,349.53

CRIME NEWS

Police seize illegal timbers across Regions/States



Seized illegal timbers.

monitoring and reporting system (CMRS) to curb the illegal timbers and forest products.

According to the data collected between 21 to 27 February, the department seized a total of 147.0366 tonnes of illegal timbers — 13. 6660 tonnes of teak, 22. 2452 tonnes of hardwood and 111. 1254 tonnes of other kinds of wood in regions and states and Nay Pyi Taw with 19 suspects being arrested with 12 vehicles, the department stated. — Nyi Nyi Than (Nay Pyi Taw)/GNLM

THE Forest Department under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation implements the community

Illegal timbers, food items, vehicles confiscated

AS action is being taken effectively against illegal trades across the country under the supervision of the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, a total of seven arrests (estimated at K49,552,944) were made on 2, 3, and 4 March in Rakhine State, Yangon Region, Sagaing Region, and Bago Region.

On 2 March, combined inspection teams led by the Rakhine State Department of Forest, under the management of the Regional Anti-Illegal Trade Special Task Force, conducted inspections and seized 10.8512 tonnes of illegal timbers (estimated value of K759,584) in Taungup Township.

Similarly, on 2 and 3 March, two vehicles (estimated value of K30,000,000) carrying 2.4848 tonnes of teak furniture (estimated value of K745,440) were arrested under the Forest Law in the northern district of Yangon Region.

On 3 March, 21.576 tonnes of illegal teak (estimated at K3,549,230) and woodworking

equipment (estimated value of K500,000) were also arrested in Bamauk Township, Sagaing Region.

On the same day, Bago Township Customs Team conducted unexpected inspections between Waw Township and Shwe Thanlwin tollgate and arrested a vehicle (estimated value of K10,000,000) carrying

85 cardboard boxes filled with illegal edible oil and 85 cardboard boxes filled with illegal juice (estimated at K2,975,000) under the Customs Law.

On 4 March, 5.9398 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated value of K1,023,690) were seized in the Bago district and Thayawady district forest reserves under the Forest Law. — MNA



Seized consumer goods in Bago Region.

Police seize K20 billion worth of Ice (methamphetamines) in Mogok

POLICE seized K20 billion worth of Ice (methamphetamines) in Mogok Township.

The combined team consisting of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force stopped the six-wheeler Nissan vehicle heading from Monglon to Mogok to examine at the Lalgyi combined checkpoint in Mogok Township of Mandalay Region on 1 March. Meanwhile, driver

Wai Thu ran away and the police arrested bus conductor Aye Naing (aka) Soe Myint Naing together with one tonne of Ice (methamphetamines) worth K20 billion. According to the inspection, they transported the drugs from Shan State (North) to Mandalay. The suspect was charged under the law and the police conducted further investigation. — MNA



An arrestee is seen along with seized ICE and Nissan truck.

Woman convicted of trafficking girl to China jailed

A woman who trafficked a girl to China has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for human trafficking.

Daw Aye Aye Nwe (alias) Ma Nwe from Bogyoke Ywarthit, Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region, Aye Than and Hla Myint Thein from Meekwat Market, Hlinethaya Township, Yangon Region and Shan Tayotema (alias) Arrli who lives in China persuaded 23-year-old Ma ... from Thongwa Township, Yangon Region to go to China and work for the elderly

and receive a monthly stipend of K600,000. But, Ma ... was sold for 30,000 yuan to Wan Xingyong, a resident of Sheikbawli village, Hanna in China.

The case was filed at the South District Court under Section 28 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Law (Pa) 3686/2019 of the Thanlyin Myoma Police Station on 3 March.

Daw Aye Aye Nwe (alias) Ma Nwe was sentenced to 20 years in prison and the remaining suspects are announced as fugitives. — MNA

NyaungU farmers earn good income by growing corn all year round

THE local farmers from the villages around the Latpachaypaw village-tract in NyaungU township, Mandalay region are growing the corn crop the whole year and earning a good income, said U Min Nyo, a corn grower from Thitdauntkyung village.

Those corn cultivated villages are located beside of NyaungU-Pakokku-Myingyan road and those corns growers are engaged in agriculture activities.

Those villages are cultivating corn the whole year, it is learnt.

The corn is cultivated up to four times a year. The local farmers mainly grow sweet corn and sticky corn. The grow-



The corn is cultivated up to four times a year. The local farmers mainly grow sweet corn and sticky corn. The growers also grow other corn species, locally called Kyattamaw corn sometimes.

ers also grow other corn species, locally called Kyattamaw corn sometimes. Some of the growers are growing the corn using Latpachaypaw river water while most of the farmers

are growing them using underground water, it is learnt.

The traders from Yangon, Mandalay, Pakokku, NyaungU and Myingyan townships reached the corn farmland and bought to sell them back. The traders buy about 20,000 or 30,000 corns each time, said U Win Tin, a corn trader.

The corn is harvested after 90 days of cultivation in the monsoon and 75 days in the summer season.

Corns are grown up to four times a year. The corn is being sold for K130 per corn.

The corn growers are making good income by selling them at wholesale and retail prices, according to the corn growers.—Ko Htein(KPD/GNLM

Fuel oil price in Ygn market surge up to over K1,900 per litre



Bowser supplies the fuel oil at one of the filling stations in Yangon.

THE price of fuel oil surged up to over K1,900 per litre in the Yangon domestic market, according to the fuel oil filling stations.

The fuel oil price in other states and regions are ranging between over K2,000 per litre depending on the transport charges.

The retail prices of fuel in the Yangon market on 1 January stood at K1,375 per litre for diesel, K1,385 for premium diesel, K1,390 for Ron 92 petrol and K1,440 for Ron 95 petrol.

On 1 March, the fuel oil prices in the Yangon market hit K1,925 per litre for diesel, K1,935 for premium diesel, K1,910 for Ron 92 petrol and K1,965 for Ron 95 petrol.

Consequently, the cost per litre of fuel oil rose from over K520 to K550 per litre in over two months.

The weakening kyat and rising international crude oil prices have combined to push the cost of fuel oil, it is learnt.

Currently, the exchange rate for the US currency has reached around K2,000.

The dollar exchange rate against Myanmar Kyat stood at around K1,330 per dollar in early February 2021. At that time, the price of fuel in the Yangon market fetched K590 per litre for diesel, K605 for premium diesel, K590 for Ron 92 petrol and K610 for Ron 95 petrol.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) is conducting an

auction for foreign exchange to reduce the sudden fluctuation of foreign exchange rates. This year, the bank has already sold K65 million in January and K15 million in February.

MPTA, in cooperating with the Ministry of Commerce has sold fuel at a fair price since 22 September, which is equivalent to the amount that the oil importers directly purchased the foreign currency from the Central Bank of Myanmar.

From 15 September to 19 January, about \$140.90 million were sold to the fuel oil sector at the reference rate of the CBM.

Myanmar imports around six million tonnes of fuel oil per year, according to the Ministry of Commerce. — NN/GNLM

Monywa market sees abundant supply of sour jujube from Ayadaw, Budalin

THE sour jujube from Ayadaw and Budalin townships are plentiful at the Monywa market, said trader Ko Zaw Min.

“They’re mostly supplied by the Ayadaw area. The price ranges between K4,300 and K4,500 per basket. Approximately 3,000 baskets are daily flowing into Monywa market from Ayadaw, Budalin and the areas in the north of Chindwin River these days,” Ko Zaw Min elaborated. The warehouse owners keep the inventory of jujube full and separate them into jujube powder, jujube seeds and jujube fruit. The jujube seeds are yearly delivered to China via the Muse border. It is also shipped to Malaysia and the Republic of Korea.

The price of jujube nuts stands at K23,000 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes). Some

jujube fruits are made into jams and spread. Wild jujube pits after the sugar being extracted from fruits can be discarded as waste. They can be used as an alternative feed for goats, Ko Zaw Min explained.

Dried jujube was the top export item to China back in April 2010 through the Muse border. About 200-360 tonnes of dried jujube were exported to China within two or three days then, the market’s data indicated. At that time, the jujube fruit was valued US\$4,705 per tonne, generating revenue of K4 million.

The jujube is considered a medicinal herb that calms the mind, reduces hypertension and improves brain function. It’s also used in Chinese traditional medicine due to numerous health benefits. — Lu Lay/GNLM



The price of jujube nuts stands at K23,000 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes). Some jujube fruits are made into jams and spread.

Prioritize food safety for public consumption

FOOD is a staple for the daily life of humans and essential for the physical growth of humans as well as the sustainability of body organs. Using calories through the consumption of foods contribute to the longevity of humans. As such, foods for living beings, including humans, must be safe.

The word 'food safety' is identified as a public health priority and an essential step to achieving food security. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations also states that the word 'food safety' is about handling, storing and preparing

food to prevent infection and help to make sure that our food keeps enough nutrients for us to have a healthy diet.

In this regard, somebody, who unexpectedly eats expired or unsystematic preserved foods, water and drugs, may face feeling pain in the stomach, diarrhoea, dizziness, etc. If the symptoms are severe, they may be very harmful to human lives.

Some people may face various types of food poisons from the unexpected consumption of dirty foods and water and reactions of toxic foodstuffs. Moreover, the consumers may face food problems based on germs, bacteria, pesticides and inappropriate antibiotic drugs.

The occurrences of unsafe food and water are based on dirt and germs. It may even be rotten, which can cause infections or diseases such as diarrhoea, meningitis, etc. Sometimes, these unsafe foods and water cannot be identified easily. Moreover, greedy and undisciplined manufacturers distribute unsafe and expired products in the market without considering the interests of consumer people but their

selfishness only.

In order to prevent the dangers from unsafe foods and water, everybody needs to purchase the quality and fresh foodstuffs made in proper processing of cultivation, harvest, systematic storage and preserved ways with correct guarantees of producers.

Moreover, consumer people should analyze the climatic conditions and seasons for the food products. Even the products granted for quality in just production may be damaged in the bad weather and some changes of climate. Hence, not only consumers but producers need to take care of systematic cultivation of crops and breeding of animals to be used in foodstuffs and systematic storage and packaging processes not to cause the damaged ones in any ways.

That's why people should choose healthy and quality foodstuffs and water systematically manufactured with side effect guarantee for their consumption to be free from dangers.

■ ■ ■

Unexpected Impact of Russia-Ukraine Crisis – Japanese Companies Worried About Cyber Security Measures

By SUZUKA YOSHIDA



Image of cyber security

ON 24 February, the Financial Services Agency of Japan hurriedly issued a document entitled "Strengthening cyber security measures at financial institutions based on the recent situation (Warning)". The same document was issued by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry the day before. "The recent situation" is the Russia-Ukraine crisis that began on the morning of 23 February. It has long been possible to predict that the rise in gasoline and gas prices will affect people's daily lives, but the citizens who did not expect cyber security attacks to flourish were surprised.

The concern of the Financial Services Agency and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is that there are many groups in Ukraine that carry out cyber-attacks such as ransomware, and in the event of a war, cyber-attacks will become more active in an attempt to illegally raise funds from foreign countries including Japan. The government foresaw and cautioned that it would be a financial burden for Japanese companies with weak informa-

tion security measures, that is, the cost would be paid.

The document calling attention by the Financial Services Agency states, "At each financial institution, under the leadership of the management, we will deep-

en our awareness of the threat of cyber-attacks and take the following measures to strengthen the measures. The document of warning starts with "Please", and points out how to check passwords, check and improve

the system, and handle emails as "1. Measures to reduce risk".

"2. Early detection of incidents" describes the method for early detection, and "3. Appropriate measures and recovery when an incident occurs" describes the

recovery procedure for data loss. It not only calls attention but also teaches how to deal with it.

The reason why the government enthusiastically promotes server security measures is that from around December 2020, threatening cases of ransomware have been occurring one after another not only in Japan but all over the world. Ransomware breaks into a company's system, stealing data and locking the company from opening it. And it is a method of demanding a ransom from the company, "If you want to get the data back, give me money." According to Palo Alto Networks, an American company that implements cyber security measures, the average ransomware payment climbed 82 per cent since 2020 to a record \$570,000 in the first half of 2021, as cybercriminals employed increasingly aggressive tactics to coerce organizations into paying larger ransoms. The increase comes after the average payment last year surged 171 per cent to more than \$312,000. These figures show the ransomware crisis continues to intensify as criminal

enterprises boost investment in highly profitable ransomware operations. For instance, ransomware stopped the pipeline in the United States in May 2009.

In fact, there are many companies in Japan that are suffering from the damage, and some companies have already paid the ransom because they wanted to get the data back quickly. The Metropolitan Police Department is eager to communicate with companies and issued a document entitled "About the situation of threats surrounding cyberspace in the first half of 2021" to alert companies on 9 September 2021.

However, many companies are at a loss as to what to do due to the lack of human resources with knowledge and technology on cyber security.

Source: Cybercrime Countermeasure Project <https://www.npa.go.jp/cyber/ransom/index.html>

<https://www.paloaltonetworks.com/blog/2021/08/ransomware-crisis/>

■ ■ ■

Bark of Neem tree can protect against COVID variants, suggests study

WE MAY have often heard the elders in our family boast about the properties of Neem and its use in treating many physical ailments and diseases. But what about the infamous coronavirus? Does our trusty old Neem tree have any chances of protecting against it? A recent study has suggested that this may be actually possible!

According to a new study led by scientists at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Kolkata, extract from the bark of the Neem tree may help treat and reduce the spread of coronavirus.

The study was published in the journal, 'Virology'.

The study reported showed that components of Neem bark may target a wide range of viral proteins, suggesting its potential as an antiviral agent against emerging variants of coronavirus

(including SARS-CoV-2).

The Neem tree, indigenous to India, has been used for thousands of years for its anti-parasitic, anti-bacterial and antiviral properties. The bark extract has helped treat malaria, stomach and intestinal ulcers, skin diseases and many other diseases.

"The goal of this research is to develop a Neem-based medication that can reduce the risk of serious illness when someone is infected with coronaviruses," said study co-author Maria Nagel, MD, research professor in the department of neurology and ophthalmology at the University Of Colorado School Of Medicine on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

"We hope that scientists won't have to continuously develop new therapies every time a new SARS-CoV-2 variant emerges," she said. "Just like how we take penicillin for strep throat, we envision taking the Neem-based drug for COVID,

allowing us to resume our normal lives without fear of hospitalization and death."

The scientists investigated the impact of the bark extract against coronaviruses in their laboratories. In India, researchers tested it in animal models and showed that it had antiviral properties against coronavirus. Using computer modeling, the researchers predicted that Neem bark extract will bind to the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein at various locations, preventing virus entry to host cells.

At CU Anschutz, Nagel's lab tested the Neem bark extract in SARS-CoV-2 human lung cells. It proved as effective as a preventive drug for infection and also decreased virus replication and spread after infection.

"The next step in our research is to identify the specific components in Neem bark extract that are antiviral. Because



Neem, (Azadirachta indica), also called nim or margosa, fast-growing tree of the mahogany family (Meliaceae), valued as a medicinal plant, as a source of organic pesticides, and for its timber. Neem is likely native to the Indian subcontinent and to dry areas throughout South Asia. **PHOTO: ANI**

these components bind to various regions of SARS-CoV-2, we believe that it will be effective on emerging variants with spike mutations," said Nagel. "We will

then determine the formulation of dosage for an antiviral drug to treat coronavirus infections."

The scientists said this research could guide new antiviral

therapeutic efforts to combat the ongoing pandemic while holding out the promise for treating new coronavirus strains.

SOURCE: ANI

Myanmar Gazette

Appointment of Head of Service Organization

THE State Administration Council has appointed U Tin Ko Ko, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Labour Relations of the Ministry of Labour, as Director-General of the Factory & General Labour Laws Inspection Department of the same ministry on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 4 March 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the Depression over Southwest Bay of Bengal moved north-northwestwards. It is centered at about (690) Nautical miles West-Southwest of Coco-Island, (790) Nautical miles west-southwest of Hainggyigyun(Myanmar), (105) Nautical miles east-northeast of Trincomalee(Sri Lanka), (180) Nautical miles east-southeast of Nagapattinam, (220) Nautical miles southeast of Puducherry and (255)Nautical miles south-southeast of Chennai (India). Weather is cloudy over the Bay of Bengal and a few clouds to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 05th March, 2022: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Taninthayi regions and Rakhine, Kayin, Mon states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in upper Sagaing, Yangon regions and Kachin, Shan, Chin 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 rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi region.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 March, 2022: Likelihood of rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Depression News, No.8, 2022

4 March, 2022 19:00 MST Today

Depression

According to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the Depression over Southwest Bay of Bengal moved north-northwestwards. It is centered at about (690) Nautical miles west-southwest of Coco-Island, (790) Nautical miles west-southwest of Hainggyigyun(Myanmar), (105) Nautical miles east-northeast of Trincomalee(Sri Lanka), (180) Nautical miles east-southeast of Nagapattinam, (220) Nautical miles southeast of Puducherry and (255)Nautical miles south-southeast of Chennai (India).

It is not moving towards Myanmar coasts, the present stage of the depression is coded yellow stage.

Position of depression, center pressure and wind

Depression is located at Latitude (9.5) degree North and Longitude (82.6) degree East, centre pressure of depression is (1004) hPa and maximum wind speed near the center is (32) miles per hour at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today.

During next (48) hrs Forecast

The depression is continuous to move northwestwards and may further intensify into a Deep Depression during next (9) hours. It is likely to reach coast of Sri Lanka till 5 March morning towards north Tamil Nadu Coast during next (48) hours.

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Cambodia launches “zero-snaring” campaign to protect animals

CAMBODIA'S Ministry of Environment and partner groups on Thursday launched a “zero-snaring” campaign in protected areas to protect animals from being trapped and killed, officials said.

The ministry's secretary of state and spokesman Neth Pheaktra said the six-month campaign will be conducted in protected areas in provinces situated in the eastern side of the Mekong River, including Kratie, Stung Treng, Ratanakiri, Mondulhiri, Preah Vihear and Kampong Thom provinces.

The partner organizations in the campaign included the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Birdlife International, and Conservation International, he said.—Xinhua ■

Ford unveils new structure as it speeds electric car push

FORD announced Wednesday it is creating separate businesses for its conventional and electric-auto operations, as it accelerates its build-out of emission-free vehicles.

Under the plan, which sent Ford shares sharply higher, the conventional internal combustion operations will be known as “Ford Blue,” while the electric vehicle (EV) products will be run through “Ford Model e”. The reorganization, while significant, keeps both operations under the same corporate roof and avoids a potential spin-off that had generated speculation on Wall Street. “Our legacy organization has been holding us back,” said Chief Executive Jim Farley. “We had to change.”

Ford said the intention is to give the EV venture “the focus and speed of a start-up,” while the conventional business will try to excel at the challenges of a mature business, “relentlessly attacking costs, simplifying operations and improving quality.”—AFP ■

Long road ahead for Iraq pledge to phase out gas flares

IN the oilfields of southern Iraq, billions of cubic feet of gas literally go up in smoke, burnt off on flare stacks for want of the infrastructure to capture and process it. The flares produce vast amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, contributing to global warming without any economic or social benefit.

Analysts say the waste is particularly egregious, as Iraq is a significant importer of natural gas, meeting a third of its

needs through expensive and not always reliable supplies from neighbouring Iran.

The government has pledged to phase out the practice by 2030 but the road to a greener, less wasteful energy sector is proving a long one.

For the oil companies exploiting the mega fields around Basra, it is actually cheaper to flare off the associated gas than to capture, process and market it, despite the obvious environmental costs.—AFP



The government has pledged to phase out the practice by 2030 but the road to a greener, less wasteful energy sector is proving a long one. Iraqi gas workers work in Basra. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

UN Environment Assembly endorses resolution to end plastic pollution



With only an estimated nine per cent of plastics ever produced recycled, campaigners say the only long-term solution to the plastic waste crisis is for companies to make less and consumers to use less. **PHOTO: AFP/BRENTON EDWARDS**

THE resumed fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) wrapped up on Wednesday with delegates adopting a resolution to pave the way for establishment of a legally binding global treaty by 2024 to end plastic pollution.

More than 3,400 in-person and 1,500 virtual participants from 175 UN member states who attended the three-day global environment forum resolved

to back legal tools that would revitalize action on the plastic menace.

Espen Barth Eide, the outgoing president of UNEA-5 and Norway's minister for Climate and Environment, hailed the unanimous endorsement of a resolution to eliminate plastic pollution, terming it a milestone in the transition from linear to circular economy that promises jobs, human and ecological

health.

“Plastic pollution has grown into an epidemic. With today's resolution we are officially on track for a cure,” Eide remarked, adding that the treaty would address plastic pollution from the source to end users.

Proposed by Rwanda, Peru, Japan and India, the resolution to end plastic pollution took centre-stage during discussions at the three-day global environment forum, alongside other pressing ecological challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss.

Billed as the most important global environmental accord since the Paris climate deal of 2015, the resolution to end plastic pollution will open a new chapter in circularity.

The historic resolution titled “End plastic pollution: Towards an internationally legally binding instrument” establishes an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) that begins its work in 2022 with the aim of finalizing a global legally binding agreement by 2024.—Xinhua ■

Sony and Honda plan electric vehicle joint firm

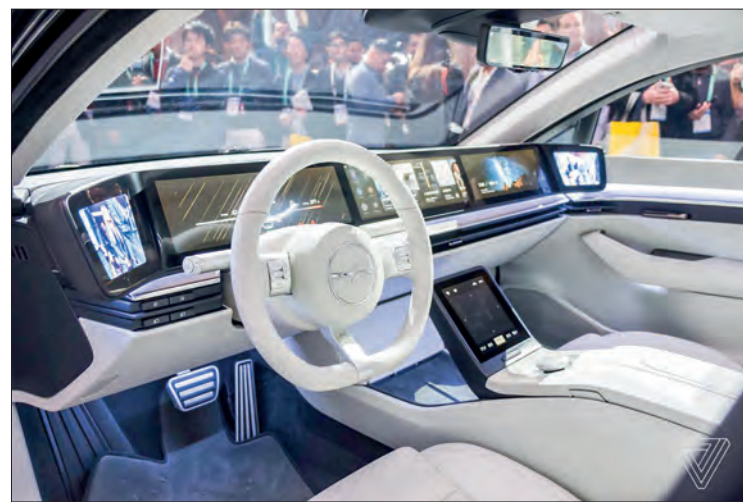
SONY is teaming up with automaker Honda to start a new company that will develop and sell electric vehicles, the electronics giant said Friday, its latest step into the rapidly growing sector.

Major global carmakers are increasingly prioritising electric and hybrid vehicles as concern about climate change grows.

Sony's news comes on the heels of a January unveiling of a new prototype, its Vision-S electric vehicle, and the announcement that its new subsidiary Sony Mobility will explore jumping into the sector.

Sony Group said in a statement Friday that the two Japanese names hope to establish their firm by the end of this year, calling it “a strategic alliance”. “This alliance aims... to realize a new generation of mobility and services that are closely aligned with users and the environment,” Sony said in a statement.

Sales of their first electric



Japanese electronics giant Sony and carmaker Honda have created a joint venture to make and sell electric vehicles. **PHOTO: SONY/AFP**

model are expected to begin in 2025, with Honda responsible for its manufacturing but both companies working on design, tech and sales. “Although Sony and Honda are companies that share many historical and cultural similarities, our areas of technological expertise are very different,” Sony Group president Kenichiro Yoshida said.

“I believe this alliance

which brings together the strengths of our two companies offers great possibilities for the future of mobility.”

At present, around 10 per cent of European car sales are EVs, and the US figure is just two per cent. But demand is growing, and other major automakers including Honda's Japanese rivals are investing money and resources into electric vehicles.—AFP ■

WHO recommends Merck Covid pill for non-severe, at-risk patients

THE World Health Organization on Wednesday recommended an anti-Covid pill be taken by sufferers who have mild symptoms but are at high risk of hospitalization, such as older people or the unvaccinated.

The pill, called molnupiravir and developed by US pharmaceutical Merck, is taken as soon as possible after Covid-19 symptoms develop and then for the following five days.

A WHO group of experts said in the British Medical Journal that people with weak immune systems or chronic disease were also recommended to take the pill if they had non-severe Covid.

However “young and healthy patients, including children, and pregnant and breast-feeding women should not be



Eight capsules of molnupiravir are taken orally for five days, for a total of 40 capsules. **PHOTO: AFP**

given the drug due to potential harms,” they said.

The UN agency’s new recommendation was based on the results of six randomized controlled trials involving 4,796 patients, the “largest dataset on

this drug so far”.

The trials suggested that molnupiravir reduced the risk of going to hospital, with 43 fewer admissions per 1,000 high-risk patients, as well as speeding up the pace at which symptoms

cleared up by an average of 3.4 days.

There was less indication it had an affect on mortality, with just six fewer deaths per 1,000 patients.

The WHO acknowledged “that cost and availability issues associated with molnupiravir may make access to low- and middle-income countries challenging and exacerbate health inequity”.

While vaccines remain the foremost tools in the fight against the pandemic, experts have welcomed the addition of the new oral treatments, which inhibit the virus’ ability to replicate and should withstand variants.

The only other main anti-Covid pill available is Pfizer’s Paxlovid.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan to further ease COVID-19 border controls, give priority to students

ABOUT 150,000 foreign students are said to be still waiting for entry into Japan due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions that have been imposed in the past two years.

Japan will further relax its COVID-19 border controls from 14 March, increasing the daily cap on overseas entrants to 7,000 from the current 5,000, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Thursday.

Kishida revealed a new scheme at a press conference to give entry priority to foreign students, as business travel demand is not high.—Xinhua ■

India records 6,561 new COVID-19 cases, tally rises to 42,945,160

INDIA’S COVID-19 tally rose to 42,945,160 on Thursday as 6,561 new cases were registered during the past 24 hours across the country, showed the federal health ministry’s latest data.

Besides, 142 deaths due to the pandemic since Wednesday morning took the total death toll to 514,388. There are still 77,152 active COVID-19 cases in the country with a fall of 8,528 active cases during the past 24 hours. This was the 38th consecutive day when the number of active cases declined in the country.—AFP ■

South Korea reports 198,803 new COVID-19 cases



A couple wearing face masks walk through Seoul Plaza in front of the City Hall in Seoul on 23 April 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

SOUTH Korea reported 198,803 new COVID-19 cases as of midnight Wednesday compared to 24 hours ago, raising the total number of infections to 3,691,488, the

health authorities said Thursday.

The daily caseload was down from a record high of 219,240 in the previous day, but

it stayed high around 200,000, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA).

The recent resurgence was driven by infections in the Seoul metropolitan area amid the Omicron variant spread.

Of the new cases, 43,675 were Seoul residents. The number of the newly infected people living in Gyeonggi province and the western port city of Incheon was 51,941 and 15,964 respectively. The virus spread also raged in the non-metropolitan region. The number of new infections in the non-capital areas was 87,169, or 43.9 per cent of the total local

transmission.

Among the new cases, 54 were imported, lifting the total to 29,497.

The number of infected people who were in a serious condition stood at 766, up four from the previous day.

A total of 128 more deaths were confirmed, leaving the death toll at 8,394. The total fatality rate was 0.23 per cent. The country has administered COVID-19 vaccines to 44,863,511 people, or 87.4 per cent of the total population, and the number of the fully inoculated people was 44,375,275, or 86.5 per cent of the population.—AFP ■

Spain’s Covid death toll passes 100,000

MORE than 100,000 people have died from Covid-19 in Spain, health ministry figures showed on Wednesday as the country emerged from a sixth wave of the pandemic.

Spain passed the grim milestone some two years after the pandemic took hold, with official figures showing 154 people had died since Tuesday, raising the overall death toll to 100,037.

Spain detected its first case of coronavirus on 31 January 2020 in a German tourist visiting the Canary Islands and since then it has diagnosed 11,054,888 infections, of which 18,803 in the

past 24 hours.

When the pandemic first took hold, Spain was badly hit, imposing one of the world’s strictest lockdowns where no one was allowed out for walks or exercise for six weeks until the government began slowly easing the rules, first for children.

At the end of 2020, the Spanish authorities began a rapid vaccination campaign, becoming one of the global frontrunners with more than 91 per cent of the population over the age of 12 now fully vaccinated.

Despite high vaccination rates, Covid cases exploded over



Tourists wearing face masks outside the Prado museum in Madrid after all of the city’s state-run museums were closed to the public due to the coronavirus outbreak. **PHOTO: AFP**

Christmas, with Spain’s daily infections hitting a record of nearly

180,000, giving it one of Europe’s highest incidence rates.—AFP ■

Chile begins compulsory in-person classes amid COVID-19 health protocols

CHILE began compulsory in-person classes on Wednesday for all students in the country, amid special health protocols to prevent COVID-19 infections and with almost 90 per cent of schoolchildren vaccinated against the virus, President Sebastian Pinera said.

On the first day of in-person classes, Pinera stressed that school is a safe place because “all precautions and protocols” have been taken.—Xinhua ■

NEWS
IN BRIEFG7 looks to stop
cryptoassets use as
Russia sanctions
dodge

THE Group of Seven industrialised nations are examining ways to stop individuals or companies targeted by Western sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine using cryptocurrencies to dodge the punitive measures, Germany's finance minister said Wednesday.

"We should take measures to prevent listed persons and institutions from switching to unregulated cryptoassets. We are working towards this in the context of the German presidency of the G7," said Christian Lindner.

Cryptocurrency purchases in rubles have climbed to a record high since the United States and Western allies have sought to cripple Russia's banking sector and currency with a barrage of sanctions over last week's invasion.

They include cutting selected Russian banks from the SWIFT messaging system, rendering them isolated from the rest of the world.—AFP ■

World Bank halts all
projects in Russia
and Belarus

THE World Bank on Wednesday announced it was halting all of its ongoing projects in Russia and Belarus in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

Citing the "hostilities against the people of Ukraine", the development lender said it "has stopped all its programmes in Russia and Belarus with immediate effect".

The bank finances infrastructure projects and provides policy advice to members, but "has not approved any new loans to or investments in Russia since 2014. There has also been no new lending approved to Belarus since mid-2020".

According to the website, the institution has 11 ongoing projects in Belarus for a total cost of USD1.2 billion, and which deal with energy, education, transportation and Covid-19 response.

With Russia, there are just four projects costing USD370 million, which largely deal with policy issues.—AFP ■

China-Laos Railway transports over 1.7 mln
passengers since launch

The China-Laos Railway connects Kunming in Yunnan Province with the Laotian capital Vientiane. It is the first overseas railway jointly constructed and operated by the two countries. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

THE China-Laos Railway has transported over 1.7 million passengers and 1.1 million tonnes of cargo since it was launched in December 2021, said the transport authorities of southwest China's Yunnan Province.

At present, an average of 23.5 pairs of passenger trains run on the railway's section in China every day, while its Lao section handles an average of two pairs every day. The safe, eco-friendly, efficient and convenient China-Laos Railway has become a favoured means of transportation for passengers along the route.

Over the past three months since its launch, the railway

has handled 1,500 freight trains transporting 1.1 million tonnes of goods. Among them, about 350 international freight trains delivered more than 250,000 tonnes of cargo via the railway, according to the China Railway Kunming Group Co., Ltd.

The China-Laos Railway connects Kunming in Yunnan Province with the Laotian capital Vientiane. It is the first overseas railway jointly constructed and operated by the two countries.

The 1,035-km railway, a landmark project of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, started operation on Dec. 3, 2021. —Xinhua ■

World's largest sovereign wealth fund
says Russia assets down 90 pct

NORWAY'S sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest, on Thursday estimated that its Russian assets had been reduced to a tenth of their value, over the war in Ukraine and sanctions imposed on Russia.

At the end of 2021, the fund held some 27.4 billion Norwegian kroner (\$3.1 billion, 2.8 billion euros) in Russian equities, or 0.2 per cent of the total portfolio, it said in an annual report published on Thursday.

Their value is now estimated at about 2.5 billion kroner, a figure described as "very, very uncertain", fund officials said.

"It might be that they are essentially worthless," Trond Grande, the fund's deputy head,



The Moscow stock exchange has been closed since Monday and Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin announced on Tuesday that Russia was preparing a decree to stop the hemorrhaging of foreign investment to the country. A woman walks past a currency exchange office in central Moscow. **PHOTO: ALEXANDER NEMENOV / AFP**

told a press conference.

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Norwegian

government announced on Sunday that the sovereign wealth fund, which is now worth over

11 trillion kroner, would initially freeze its investments in Russia before divesting them — a process that is likely to take time.

The Moscow stock exchange has been closed since Monday and Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin announced on Tuesday that Russia was preparing a decree to stop the hemorrhaging of foreign investment to the country.

"I think we will manage to sell our shares, but the question is whether we will get any money out of it," fund chief Nicolai Tangen, said.

The fund's directors said they were unable at this stage to provide a timetable for the withdrawal from Russia. —AFP ■

US lawmakers seek to halt Russian oil imports

US lawmakers urged President Joe Biden Thursday to ban oil imports from Russia as further punishment for its invasion of Ukraine, a step the US administration has so far opposed.

"The United States should not be subsidizing Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine by purchasing and importing Russian oil, petroleum, natural gas and coal," said West Virginia Senator Shelley Moore Capito.

She is among a group of senators from both parties that introduced a bill Thursday seeking a ban on such imports. Many of them are from oil and gas pro-

ducing states.

Biden on Wednesday said he had not ruled out halting imports of Russian oil.

But the White House later warned that such a step could cause further jumps in oil prices and hurt US consumers.

"Well, our objective and the President's objective has been to maximize impact on President Putin and Russia, while minimizing impact to us and our allies and partners," Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Thursday.

The senators' proposal was also supported by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.—AFP ■



A petrochemical facility on the outskirts of Tobolsk, at the heart of Russia's Siberia. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Sanctions on Russia add to troubles facing global helium industry



This image courtesy of North American Helium shows an employee working at the Battle Creek helium plant near Consul, Saskatchewan, Canada. **PHOTO: NORTH AMERICAN HELIUM/AFP**

HELIUM is the second most-abundant element in the known universe, but to the semiconductor fabricators and doctors who rely on it for their businesses, it is better known as the latest raw material to grow scarce -- and the war in Ukraine could make the shortage worse.

Russia is expected to eventually begin producing

the equivalent of a third of the world's current helium production from a massive gas plant in its Far East, but with Western nations cutting off the country's financial flows over its invasion of Ukraine, experts worry that gas won't reach the global market.

"The world is going to need the new supply from Russia or others to come

into the market," said Phil Kornbluth, a consultant with decades of experience in the helium industry.

While there's no telling how long the country will face sanctions, "If they leave them in place for a long period of time, it's going to be tough to do business with Russia," Kornbluth said. An inert gas that is used to inflate balloons, liquified to cool magnetic resonance imaging scanners and was once deployed on space shuttle missions, helium is also used in the manufacturing of semiconductors, which are running in short supply worldwide. Rich Gottwald, president and CEO of the US-based Compressed Gas Association industry group, said companies that rely on the gas are today unable to get as much as they need.—AFP ■

Cyberdog and robo-barman: Spotted at Spain tech congress

PHONE makers and telcoms firms unveiled a series of gadgets and innovations at one of the industry's biggest get-togethers this week in Barcelona. Here is a selection of the most curious objects from the Mobile World Congress.

5G bartender -

It shakes a mean cocktail, speaks a dozen languages and recognizes its most loyal customers by their faces.

The Kime robot is a "high added value" bartender developed by Spanish "food tech" group Macco Robotics.

Joan Laporta, president of Barcelona football club, was among the robot's customers at the tech gathering this week.

The 5G-enabled humanoid robot can "work 24

hours a day", according to its manufacturer.

In these Covid-affected times, the robot has another advantage over its human competitors -- it avoids "unnecessary contact" and reduces the risks of contamination, the company says.

Virtual disco -

No queueing around

the block to get in, no security guards at the entrance -- just a virtual reality headset and a booming soundtrack. On the stand of the South Korean operator SK Telecom, visitors had a lively taste of the metaverse, the immersive version of the internet touted as the centrepiece of the next online generation.— AFP ■



A robot bartender developed by Spanish food tech group Macco Robotics serves drinks -- but also speaks a dozen languages and recognizes customers by their faces.

PHOTO: AFP

<div>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</div> <div>M.V MAERSK NACKA VOY.NO. (207W)</div> <div>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK NACKA VOY.NO. (207W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-3-2022 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.</div> <div>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.</div> <div>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.</div> <div>Phone No: 2301185</div> <div>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</div> <div>Agent For:</div> <div>M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD</div>	<div>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</div> <div>M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (166N/S)</div> <div>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (166N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-3-2022 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.</div> <div>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.</div> <div>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.</div> <div>Phone No: 2301185</div> <div>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</div> <div>Agent For:</div> <div>M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES</div>	<div>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</div> <div>M.V GREEN CLARITY VOY.NO. (0257-047N)</div> <div>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V GREEN CLARITY VOY.NO. (0257-047N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-3-2022 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.</div> <div>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.</div> <div>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.</div> <div>Phone No: 2301185</div> <div>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</div> <div>Agent For:</div> <div>M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S'PORE) PTE., LTD</div>
<div>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</div> <div>M.V CHERRY VOY.NO. (103N)</div> <div>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (103N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-3-2022 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.</div> <div>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.</div> <div>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.</div> <div>Phone No: 2301185</div> <div>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</div> <div>Agent For:</div> <div>M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES</div>	<div>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</div> <div>M.V IAL 001 VOY.NO. (122N/S)</div> <div>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (122N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-3-2022 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.</div> <div>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.</div> <div>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.</div> <div>Phone No: 2301185</div> <div>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</div> <div>Agent For:</div> <div>M/S INTER ASIA LINES</div>	<div>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</div> <div>M.V MCL 12</div> <div>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCL 12 VOY. NO. (03/2022) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 07-3-2022 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.</div> <div>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.</div> <div>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.</div> <div>Phone No: 2301928</div> <div>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</div> <div>Agent For:</div> <div>M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD</div>

NEWS IN BRIEF

Several media websites, including Facebook, partially down in Russia: report

FACEBOOK and other multiple media websites were partially inaccessible in Russia on Friday, as authorities cracked down on critical voices and conflict erupted in Ukraine.

In Moscow, AFP journalists were unable to access Facebook and the websites of Meduza, Deutsche Welle, RFE-RL, and the BBC's Russian-language service. GlobalCheck, a monitoring organization, reported that the sites were partially down.

The independent outlet Meduza, on its Telegram account, stated that its site is no longer available to some of its users in Russia. Also, it had not received any notification from the authorities regarding a block. —AFP ■

UK broadcasting regulator opens more probes into Russia's RT

THE British broadcasting regulator has announced another dozen investigations into the "impartiality" of news programmes aired on Russian state-funded television channel RT.

Ofcom said on Wednesday that it now has 27 open investigations into RT and is considering whether the channel should keep its UK licence. "We are very concerned by the volume of programmes on RT that are raising potential issues under the Broadcasting Code," Ofcom said in a statement.

The regulator first announced its probe on Monday, saying it had seen "a significant increase" in the number of potential breaches on RT news programmes after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. When covering topics as important as the Ukraine crisis, all media with licences "must comply with the special impartiality requirements in our Code", the body said. —AFP ■

One million refugees fled Ukraine in week: UNHCR



Some people from Ukraine arrive at Palanca checkpoint, Moldova, 2 March 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA/WANG QING**

ONE million refugees have fled Ukraine in the week since Russia's invasion, the United Nations said Thursday, warning that unless the conflict ended immediately, millions more were likely to flee.

"In just seven days we have witnessed the exodus of one million refugees from Ukraine to neighbouring countries," UN refugee chief Filippo Grandi tweeted.

"Unless there is an immediate end to the conflict, millions more are likely to be forced to flee Ukraine," Grandi warned.

According to frequently updated UNHCR data, 1,002,860 have now fled Ukraine since Russian President Vladimir Putin launched the full-scale invasion on 24 February.

Grandi said the numbers were rising with incredible speed. "I have worked in refugee emergencies for almost 40 years, and rarely have I seen an exodus as rapid as this one," he said.

"Hour by hour, minute by minute, more people are fleeing the terrifying reality of violence," he said.

More than half of those who have fled Ukraine have crossed into neighbouring Poland. Hungary, Moldova, Hungary and Slovakia have also welcomed many refugees.

The UNHCR said more than 505,500 people have left Ukraine for Poland in the past week. Poland's border guards put the figure at over 575,000 by early Thursday, with 95,000 having crossed on Wednesday alone.

Countless people have also been displaced inside the Ukraine.

Grandi said UNHCR staff and other humanitarian workers were "working where and when they can in frightening conditions" inside Ukraine.

"Our staff stay, even at great risk, because we know the needs in the country are huge."

The UN refugee chief also hailed the "remarkable" response of governments and local communities in surrounding countries that have received the more than one million refugees.

"International solidarity has been heart-warming," he said. —AFP ■

Nearly 17,000 Russian, Ukrainian tourists stuck in Dominican Republic

NEARLY 15,000 Russian and 2,000 Ukrainian tourists are stuck in the Dominican Republic due to travel restrictions imposed after Moscow's invasion of its neighbour, the government in Santo Domingo said Wednesday.

The Caribbean country said it had reached a deal with hotel chains to "guarantee" the tourists' accommodation "until such time as a solution is found".

Hotels in the Dominican Republic, a country renowned for its beautiful beaches, welcomed five million guests in 2021.

The 14,800 Russian tourists are mainly in the eastern province of La Altagracia, home to visitor hotspot Punta Cana. An official survey also found some 1,900 Ukrainian visitors in the country, who will remain in their hotels until a repatriation plan is in place. —AFP ■

Germany to send Soviet-made anti-aircraft missiles to Ukraine

GERMANY will increase weapons deliveries to Ukraine following the Russian invasion by sending 2,700 anti-aircraft missiles to the conflict zone, a government source told AFP on Thursday.

The government "approved further support for Ukraine", involving the delivery of STREL-type anti-aircraft missiles of Soviet manufacture, which were previously used by the army of communist East Germany, the source said.

Germany's first arms consignment of 1,000 anti-tank and another 500 anti-aircraft missiles has already been despatched to the front, the government said on Wednesday.

Another 18,000 helmets were also sent to Ukraine over the weekend, bringing the total number donated by Germany to 23,000.

"Further military equipment is ready to be sent," a defence ministry spokeswoman told AFP without giving details, noting



Military assistance shipped from Lithuania to Boryspil Airport, in Kyiv, on 13 February. **PHOTO: SERGEI SUPINSKY/AFP**

that some items had yet to be approved.

The move came after Germany reversed its long-standing policy of not sending weapons to conflict zones, a position rooted in Nazi-era war guilt.

Allies had criticized Berlin for failing to support the Ukrainian government with lethal weapons, having initially offered to send 5,000 helmets and build a

field hospital.

On Saturday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz recognized that the Russian invasion represented a "turning point in history" that compelled Germany to rethink its priorities.

Germany has pledged to invest 100 billion euros (\$111 billion) in the build-up of its own armed forces in the face of the Russian threat. —AFP ■



Tourists enjoy a beach in Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic, on 7 January 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

Russia, Ukraine end second round of talks, agree to organize humanitarian corridors



Photo taken on 3 March 2022 shows a view of the second round of talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations at the Belovezhskaya Pushcha on the Belarus-Poland border. **PHOTO: BELTA NEWS AGENCY VIA XINHUA**

RUSSIA and Ukraine agreed to organize humanitarian corridors to evacuate civilians in the second round of talks in Belarus on

Thursday, Advisor to the Head of the President's Office of Ukraine Mykhailo Podoliak confirmed on Twitter. "There is a solution only

for the organization of humanitarian corridors," Podoliak tweeted.

During the talks on Thursday, the two sides discussed military issues, humanitarian issues, and a future political settlement of the conflict, said Russian presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky, also the head of the Russian delegation. "The positions were made absolutely clear ... On some of them, we managed to reach an understanding," he said, noting that creating humanitarian corridors is "substantial progress".

Russia's TASS news agency reported earlier Thursday that the second round of talks has ended. Podoliak told a media briefing that the third round of peace negotiations may take place soon, according to Ukrainian media.—Xinhua ■

Russian forces attack Ukrainian nuclear plant, blaze extinguished

RUSSIAN troops attacked Europe's largest nuclear power plant on Friday, setting part of the Ukrainian facility ablaze in an assault the country's leader branded "nuclear terror" and said could endanger the continent.

After hours of uncertainty throughout the night, local authorities reported the fire was extinguished at dawn. They had earlier reported that no immediate radiation rise was detected and "essential" equipment was unaffected.

But it remained unclear what the invading forces planned next. President Volodymyr Zelen-



Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant houses six of Ukraine's nuclear energy reactors, and videos emerged of a fire there after reports it was under Russian attack. **PHOTO: FACEBOOK/TWITTER/AFP**

sky spoke with world leaders, including US President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Boris

Johnson, who called for a halt to fighting at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant.—AFP ■

Moldova fears being next target in Putin's crosshairs

FOR Moldovans, watching Russia's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine brings back painful memories of the country's own conflict involving Moscow-backed separatists 30 years ago — and is stirring fears that the country might become Russia's next target.

In the town of Palanca, "everyone is scared", 23-year-old Alexio Mateev told AFP.

He is volunteering to provide tea and coffee to the stream of Ukrainian refugees who have been pouring across the border since Russia's attack on their country began. In a sign of the



Refugees from Ukraine wait to enter a camp in the Moldovan capital Chisinau on Thursday. **PHOTO: NIKOLAY DOYCHINOV/ AFP**

heightened tensions, Western diplomats have been showering

Moldova with an unusual amount of attention.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia won't send observers to Norway Nato exercise: Norway military

RUSSIA has declined to send observers to upcoming military manoeuvres involving tens of thousands of troops from NATO countries later this month in Norway, the Norwegian military said Thursday.

The largest Nato exercise planned for this year, Cold Response 2022 will bring together around 30,000 troops from 27 nations.

From mid-March to early April, they will train on land, at sea and in the air, deploying troops to help an attacked Nato country. As usual, member states of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), including Russia, have been invited to send observers to follow the exercise, which was planned long before Russia's military offensive in Ukraine last week.

"Russia thanked for the offer to send observers during Cold Response 22 but declined," Norwegian army spokesman Preben Aursand told AFP.

Russia's lower house passes law penalizing spreading of 'fake' information about army

THE lower house of the Russian parliament on Friday passed a law which makes it a jailable offence to spread "fake" information about the armed forces.

The law, passed by the State Duma in the third and final reading, introduces fines and jail terms for those who intentionally spread false information about the armed forces that has a serious impact, according to a statement by the lower house.

UK's Johnson presses for emergency UN Security Council meeting after Russian attack on nuclear plant

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of endangering all of Europe Friday, after invading Russian forces attacked a Ukrainian nuclear power plant.

"The Prime Minister said the reckless actions of President Putin could now directly threaten the safety of all of Europe," according to a Downing Street statement, adding that Johnson will seek an emergency UN Security Council meeting in the coming hours.

A summary of the latest developments

- Putin said earlier Thursday the fight against "neo-Nazis" in Ukraine was going "according to plan".
- French President Emmanuel Macron believes "the worst is to come" in Ukraine after a 90-minute phone call with Putin, who appears intent on seizing "the whole" of the country, an aide to the French leader said.
- Zelensky on Thursday promised Ukrainians that damage to infrastructure inflicted by invading Russian forces would be repaired and that Moscow would foot the bill.
- In a news conference with foreign journalists, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said he believed some foreign leaders were preparing for war against Russia and that Moscow would press on with its military operation in Ukraine until "the end".
- More than 1 million people have fled Ukraine since Russia launched its invasion, the United Nations said, amounting to the swiftest refugee exodus this century.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar placed in Group B of NSDF Futsal invitation 2022



Myanmar National Futsal Team are seen with team's head coach and team administration officials. **PHOTO: MFF**

MYANMAR National Futsal Team will compete in NSDF Futsal invitation 2022 organized by the Thai Football Federation and is placed in Group B according to drawing-lot result.

The drawing-lot event for the tournament was held on 4 March and the six teams including Myanmar will be divided into two groups.

According to the group division, Group A includes the host Thailand, Oman and Maldives while Myanmar, Iran and

Mongolia are participating in Group B.

The tournament will be held from 15 to 20 March, with group matches of Iran vs Mongolia and Thailand vs the Maldives will be on 15 March, Mongolia vs Myanmar and the Maldives vs Oman on 16 March, Myanmar vs Iran, and Oman vs Thailand on 17 Match respectively.

Tajikistan was previously scheduled to compete in the tournament but dropped out to replace Asia's top team, Iran.

The Myanmar national futsal team will compete in the 2022 ASEAN Futsal Championship to be played in April. The competition is in preparation for the 31st SEA Games in May, according to the football officials.

The Myanmar national futsal team is training with 22 players for the tournament, and head coach Boonlert Charoenwong will handle the team Myanmar, officials added. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Australia and Hungary share Davis Cup spoils

ALEX de Minaur got 28-time champions Australia off to a blistering start, but Thanasi Kokkinakis couldn't maintain the momentum Friday as they split their opening Davis Cup singles rubbers with Hungary. Twelve Davis Cup ties are being contested on Friday and Saturday, with the winners progressing to the finals, the first stage of which will be played in September with 16 teams. Croatia, Great Britain and Serbia are already through, with Davis Cup chiefs to decide next week who will replace defending champions Russia after they were axed over the invasion of Ukraine.

World number 30 De Minaur was pushed hard in the opening set, with the roof closed at Sydney's Ken Rosewall Arena by young Hungarian number two Zsombor Piros, ranked 240. But the Australian was relentless and piled pressure on Piros' serve in the 12th game to force three unforced errors, then a double fault, to break and take the set 7-5. He broke again to move 3-1 clear in the second set and raced home 6-2. "It's never easy playing for your country, there's always a lot more nerves going in," said de Minaur. "Very happy I was able to get the first win." Almost seven years since he last played Davis Cup, Kokkinakis was recalled after claiming a first ATP singles title in Adelaide in January then winning the Australian Open doubles crown with Nick Kyrgios. —AFP ■

Mykolenko-led Everton avoid FA Cup shock

EVERTON avoided one of the all-time FA Cup upsets by seeing off non-league Boreham Wood 2-0 thanks to a Salomon Rondon double to reach the quarter-finals on Thursday.

The Toffees were captained by Ukrainian international Vitalii Mykolenko on the day one of the club's key backers, Alisher Usmanov, was hit by sanctions from the British government amid the backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Usmanov is a long-time business partner of Everton owner, British-Iranian businessman Farhad Moshiri. The Russian billionaire sponsored Everton's training ground through his firm USM Holdings and had first-option naming rights for the club's new stadium. Everton suspended their sponsorship arrangements



Everton avoided one of the all-time FA Cup upsets by seeing off non-league Boreham Wood 2-0 thanks to a Salomon Rondon double to reach the quarter-finals on Thursday. **PHOTO: AFP**

with USM and other Russian companies Megafon and Yota on Monday with their advertising boards hastily removed ahead of the fifth round tie at Goodison Park.

Both sides entered the field bearing Ukrainian flags to the

tune of John Lennon's anti-war song "Imagine."

Once the action got underway it was difficult to imagine there are 78 places between the sides in the English football pyramid as fifth-tier Wood held their own. —AFP ■



South Korea's Ko Jin-young plays a shot during day two of the HSBC Women's World Championship. **PHOTO: AFP**

World number one Ko, Yang share lead in Singapore

WORLD number one Ko Jin-young of South Korea fired a five-under-par 67 to share the second-round lead with compatriot Amy Yang on Friday at the HSBC Women's World Championship.

Ko was two shots off the pace at the beginning

of the day but got off to a good start with an opening birdie, before sinking another pair of birdies on holes seven and eight. She reeled in another two birdies on her closing three holes at the Sentosa Golf Club in Singapore. —AFP ■