THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

About 300,000 visses of fish products circulated in Shwe Padauk Fish Market

THE average daily sales volume of saltwater and freshwater fishery products is estimated at 300,000 visses (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) at the Shwe Padauk Fish Market, Hline Township in Yangon Region.

Tracking the gain in international crude oil prices, fuel oil prices are bullish in the domestic market. Yangon, being a commercial hub, sees daily trade flows.

The saltwater fishery products that primarily came from Ayeyawady Region, Rakhine State, Mon State, Taninthayi Region and coastal areas are supplied to the Sanpya and Shwe Padauk fish markets with the use of vehicles and vessels. Moreover, freshwater fish and prawns from Ayeyawady, Bago and Yangon regions are flowing into the markets daily. Over 200,000 visses of freshwater fishery products such as rohu, mrigal fish, hilsa, big head carp, great white sheatfish, giant sea perch, whisker sheatfish, catfish, tilapia, striped catfish, striped snakehead, prawn, shrimp and others, and 14,000 visses of seafood enter the market every day, circulating about 300,000 visses of fishery products per day.

The Shwe Padauk Fish Market is in action. It was established in 2014, with a small number of stalls. **PHOTO : KA NU**

"There is no market holiday. The market serves as a distribution hub of fishery products across the country. Although COVID-19 second wave negatively battered the sales yet, nearly 300,000 visses of fishery products are daily traded for now. Nevertheless, transport costs can slightly rise following the high fuel oil price. The fish products are delivered up to the cross-border posts – the Sino-Myanmar border Muse and Myanmar-India border Tamu," said U Wai Lin, assistant director of the Shwe Padauk fish market and Thiri Mingala market.

The Shwe Padauk Fish Market was established in 2014, with a small number of stalls. Kyimyindine Fish Market was bustling then. The vendors from the Kyimyindine market moved to the Shwe Padauk market during the pandemic. The number of vendors has been steadily growing in Shwe Padauk Fish Market since 2019 and it has become the leading wholesale distribution market for seafood.

The market has 444 shops, over 266 stalls for vendors. The aquatic products are daily delivered to the mountain regions, border areas and upper Myanmar regions.

It was developed on 8.122 acres of land. Over 200 trucks loaded with fishery products daily enter the market. It employs over 90,000 workers. It is available between 4 am and 7 pm.—Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

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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

Students visit Kanbawzathadi Palace

Students pose for the group photo at the front of the Kanbawzathadi Palace.

THE Headmistress of the MMH (MYINT MO HOUSE) Private Primary School Daw Myint Myint Than conducted a field trip to the Kanbawzathadi Palace in Bago Region for students yesterday.

Director U Myint Zaw of the Archaeology and National Museum Department greeted the headmistress, teachers and students at the Mya Nan Pyathat building.

Then, the students viewed the Thiha Thana Throne, Myay Nan Pyathat building, teak posts kept in the left side and right side building, the Bamara Thana throne, the Chief Queen Khin Khin Gyi building, the Su Pan Kalayar building, the Mingala Lake, teak posts, the statue of King Bayintnaung, and the model of cart pulled by 16 horses of King Bayintnaung, and Assistant Director Daw Thin Thin Shwe of the Department explained necessary things.

The trip leader, the headmistress said she made the trip for students so that they can know the history of Myanmar being a Myanmar national. If they know about King Bayintnaung who had his palace in Bago, they must be proud of being Bago residents, look up the King and achieve a proper mindset to conserve the natural environment.

A total of 20 teachers and 138 students joined the field trip to the Kanbawzathadi Palace. — Maung Yin Oo/GNLM

Mann Chaung Shwesettaw elephant resort alive with buffet-feed providers for elephants

THE Mann Chaung Shwesettaw Elephant Resort has now reopened after a temporary closure due to COVID-19, and the elephant resort is alive with buffet-feed providers for elephants during the Shwesettaw Pagoda festival, according to the in-charges of the elephant resort.

The Mann Chaung Elephant Resort was established with 11 elephants on 13 February 2019 by Myanma Timber Enterprise under the Ministry of Resources and Environmental Conservation for the travellers from all over the country to enjoy the scenery along the Mann Creek while riding on an elephant.

There are elephant lovers from different parts of the country who are donating the buffet-feed either online or in person. The buffet includes Napier grass, bananas, banana stems, pumpkins, watermelons, cucumber, mangoes, corn, and the donors are requested to make the reservation one day in advance as the elephant feeds need to be searched and bought.

The elephant sanctuary is located on 60 acres of land near the Mann Creek near Shwesettaw Pagoda. There are 50 acres of the cordoned-off forest and 700 acres of elephant grazing area, just two miles from the eight-mile road near Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda.

There are 22 elephant camps in Myanmar and 204 logging elephants in Magway Region. U Htet Naing Aung, in-charge of the elephant camp, said that the camp was based on tourism to make it easier for staff to work due to reduced logging activities. — Zeya Htet (Minbu)/GNLM

Elephants enjoy their buffet-feed.

Visitors are seen riding on the elephants.

956 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 March, total figure rises to 604,219

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 604,219 after 956 new cases were reported on 11 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 555,290 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,403 after 2 died.—MNA

Tatmadaw is a guardian for implementing multiparty democracy

ALL need to carry out all tasks with their capability holding a concept that Tatmadaw is a guardian for implementing multiparty democracy to be firm and maintain all situations of the State.

(Excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in meeting with officers, other ranks and families of Mongpyin Station of Triangle Region Command and Kholan Station of Eastern Central Command on 18-2-2022)

5th Meeting of Task Force to facilitate provision of Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar through the AHA Centre held

THE 5th Meeting of the Task Force to facilitate the provision of Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar through the AHA Centre (ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management) was held at 2:00 pm hrs on 11 March 2022 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The Meeting was chaired by U Ko Ko Hlaing, Union Minister for International Cooperation and Chairman of Myanmar Task Force. The Meeting was also attended by Vice-Chairpersons of Task Force, Dr Thet Khaing Win, Union Minister for Health and Dr Thet Thet Khine, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and members of Myanmar Task Force from respective ministries.

During the Meeting, Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing led the discussions on matters related to the provision of humanitarian assistance from ASEAN to Myanmar through the AHA Centre, as well as on matters related to distribution of humanitarian assistance on prioritized areas and needs.

The Task Force Vice-Chairpersons, Union Ministers and members also exchanged views on the preparation for swift and smooth implementation of the provision of humanitarian assistance for Phase-2. —MNA

MoHT Union Minister joins Awareness Programme on ASEAN Tourism Standards, meets newly-elected EC members of MTEA (2021-2023) online

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung joined the virtual Awareness Programme on ASEAN Tourism Standards yesterday.

During the event, the Union minister talked about the activities being implemented under the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP 2016-2025) to ensure a highly competitive destination offering a unique, diverse, ASEAN tourism experience and a contribution towards the sustainable socio-economic well-being of the ASEAN people in 2025, 69 strategic plans set according to the study conducted in 2021, development in ASEAN tourism industry before the outbreak of COVID-19 and also in Myanmar starting 2011 and the effectiveness of Eight ASEAN Tourism Standards and ASEAN MRA-TP.

The Union minister also said that the talks on ASEAN Tourism Standards have been organized in main tourist destination sites of Myanmar 10 times since 2016 and the county won 99 tourism awards. The hotels and tourism entrepreneurs should follow the instructions of the COVID-19 central committee and the Health Ministry in addition to the ASEAN tourism standards.

Then, the respective in-charges discussed the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (2016-2025), sustainable ASEAN tourism standards with public participation, ASEAN public toilet standards, ASEAN community-based tourism standards and the MRA-TP.

The programme will also be held on 12 March.

The Union minister also met elected executive committee members for 2021-2023 of the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association via videoconferencing on the same noon.

During the meeting, the Union minister highlighted the cooperation works for Myanmar tourism industry development, preparations to be ready for tourist arrivals and further collaboration to ensure the tourism development. — MNA

Central Bank of Myanmar
Press Release

THE Central Bank of Myanmar allowed Myat Nang Yon Financial Services Company Limited to operate a financial company under the 1990 Financial Institutions Law of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 25-1-2013 and issued the Registration Certificate No. NBFI/FC (R) – 02/07/2016 on 28-7-2016 to carry out non-bank financial institutional activities.

On-site and off-site inspections by the Central Bank of Myanmar found that the legal entity of the Myat Nang Yon Financial Services Co., Ltd was missing due to its cooperation with other organizations without the permission of the Central Bank of Myanmar, lack of the implementation of activities in the registration certificate, inability to currently operate, non-compliance with the provisions of the Directive 1/2021 on the Code of Conduct for establishing and operating non-bank financial institutions, and the inability to submit financial statements and external audit reports.

Although the company was repeatedly warned to make amends, it failed to comply. Therefore, the registration certificate of the non-bank financial institution issued to the Myat Nang Yon Financial Services Company Limited has been revoked since 31-1-2022, according to the decision of the Board of Directors' meeting of the Central Bank of Myanmar held on 29-12-2021.

Central Bank of Myanmar

8th State Sangha Central Working Committee holds 3rd Meeting

THE 3rd Meeting of Eighth State Sangha Central Working Committee was held at Maha Pasana Cave on Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill in Mayangon Township of Yangon Region yesterday.

The meeting was attended by State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee member Sayadaws, State Sangha Working Committee member Sayadaws, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko and other officials of relevant departments.

The eighth State Sangha Central Working Committee's third meeting in progress.

State Sangha Central Working Committee Chairman Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa presided over the meeting and Joint Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Setthila acted as the master of ceremonies.

Then, the MC Sayadaw reported on the numbers of attendees to the meeting and announced the event was successful as 80 per cent of Sayadaws joined the event.

The Sayadaws then recited the relevant sermons for three times at the meeting.

They presented the procedures of meetings to be held on 11, 12 and 13 March and sought the approvals.

Afterwards, State Ovadacariya Sayadaws delivered the sermons.

The Committee Chairman Sayadaw then gave Saraniya Ovada to start the meeting.

Union Minister U Ko Ko presented the religious affairs.

They then took records of deceased Ovadacariya Sayadaws, State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee member Sayadaws, State Sangha Central Working Committee Sayadaws and Tipitakadhara, Tipitaka Kovida and Tipikadhaka Dhamma Bhandagarika from Taboung 1383 ME to date.

Then, they approved the names of newly selected State Ovadacariya Sayadaws and State Sangha Central Working Committee member Sayadaws.

The summary records of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee conducted from Taboung 1383 ME to date was read out by Joint Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Candina Bhivamsa and concluded the first session of meeting.

During the second session of meeting at noon, Joint Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Setthila discussed the suggestions submitted by the State Sangha Central Working Committee member Sayadaws.

Finally, the respective Sayadaws presented summary reports of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and concluded the meeting.

Donor U Thein Maung and wife Daw Papa, Sandi indigenous medicine shop, offered alms for the whole day to the Sayadaws who attended the ceremony yesterday. — MNA

Deputy Information Minister inspects media activities in Magway Region

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Ye Tint arrived at the Information and Public Relations Department in Myothit Township of Magway Region yesterday morning and met the staff.

Then, he visited the Natmauk Township Information and Public Relations Department and inspected the community-based centre which is being prepared to launch with the State grant.

Next, the deputy minister met the director of the Magway Region Information and Public Relations Department, the district assistant director, the Natmauk township officer and staff and discussed work-related matters. He also inspected the Taungdwingyi Township Information and Public Relations Department.

Then, he arrived at Aunglan Township Office and met the township staff officer, staff and person in charge of the MRTV retransmission station.

During the meeting with the staff, the deputy minister urged officials to perform their duties faithfully and correctly with the right ideology. The main responsibilities are to provide information, to entertain and provide knowledge and do with good intentions, the deputy minister stressed.

"Youth development and awareness-raising activities to be cooperated with the people is important," he was quoted as saying. "Approaching to summer, all need to prepare for the danger of fires and other natural disasters," the deputy minister pointed out. — MNA

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CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 454237515
ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmnews@gmail.com
www.gnlm.com.mm

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Zinghmuh Mountain designated as National Park in Chin State

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has announced 9,984.28 acres in Thantlang Township in Haka District and Falam Township in Falam District, Chin State, as Zinghmuh Mountain National Park for biodiversity conservation by Notification No. 52/2022 since 11 March 2022, exercising its authority conferred under Sub-Section (a) of Section 9 of the Biodiversity and Natural Conservation Law promulgated in May 2018.

Zinghmuh Mountain has been designated as a national park for conservation purposes as it is the main catchment area of Kunthe Creek, an area inhabited by wildlife, a biodiversity hotspot, due to its unique geographical features and the need for the timely prevention of unregulated poaching.

Due to the presence of Hlinethithi Lake which is also known as Nat Lake; pine trees, white and red rhododendrons which are the most prominent symbols of Chin State; a variety of orchids and endangered wildlife such as mountain goats, wild goats, leopards, and pangolins; being a breeding ground for hornbill and its unique geological features; it will provide many opportunities for nature-based tourism and is considered as a national park.

Source : Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Picture shows an aerial view of the Zinghmuh Mountain.

Mud Volcano becomes famous destination in Minbu Township

Like the Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival and other famous places of Minbu Township, the Naga Pwet Hill and its vicinities become one of the crowded destinations in Magway Region.

AS one famous place named Naga Pwet Hill (Mud Volcano) located in Ward 1, Minbu Town in Magway Region, it is crowded with travellers from all over the country, said U Aung Win, Chairman of Naga Pwet Hill Multi-Purpose Landscaping Administration Body.

The history of Naga Pwet Hill indicated that Nammada Dragon King's son and daughter, Nanda and Thusita, were killed by an eagle when they came to pay homage to Lord Buddha as He was having a nap on an emerald bed at the Emerald Temple donated by King Sakka in Minbu on His way back from the Sandalwood Temple in Sunaparanta region.

The mountain where the eagle bit and carried the dragon brother and sister was first called Thein Kok Hill and then Theingon Hill. The place where the dragon brother and sister fell from the eagle and died was named Naga Thay. Then they suffered pains and rolled over seriously at the place where Dragon Lake is located at present.

The story of two dragons initially started at the Naga Pwet Hill. At present, the hill and its vicinities have been renovated to build halls for taking rests and guesthouses for crowds of visitor from far during the open season and holidays. Like the Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival and other famous places of Minbu Township, the Naga Pwet Hill and its vicinities become one of the crowded destinations in Magway Region. — Zaya Htet (Minbu)/GNLM

World biggest star tortoise seen in Lawkananda Sanctuary in Bagan

PEOPLE can come and see the world's biggest star tortoise in Lawkananda Sanctuary in Bagan, Mandalay Region, said U Shwe Htay Aung, the warden of the Lawkananda Sanctuary in Bagan.

The Department of Forest in Bagan, NyaungU Township, has been engaging in a captive-breeding programme with 82 star tortoises — 42 males and 40 females — to attempt to increase the population of this tortoise since 2001. The rare star tortoises, the only species in Myanmar, have been released back into their native places for the public and researchers to observe.

One of the 84 tortoises caught in the illegal trade has been recorded as the biggest tortoise in the world in 2022. This biggest tortoise is numbered 146 and the approximate lifespan of her is estimated 22 years old by counting the lines that appear annually on the backs of tortoises, said U Shwe Htay Aung.

The information of the world's biggest star tortoise at Lawkananda Sanctuary is recorded in the diary. The number of the world's biggest tortoise is 146. The back length of the tortoise is 47.8 centimetres and the back width is 32.7 centimetres.

The chest length is 40 centimetres and the chest width is 27 centimetres. Her weight is 18 kilogrammes and her height is 25.5 centimetres, U Shwe Htay Aung clarified.

The Department of Forest in Bagan, NyaungU Township, has been engaging in a captive-breeding programme with 82 star tortoises – 42 males and 40 females – to attempt to increase the population of this tortoise since 2001.

The adult star tortoises are released to their native towns such as Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary in Minbu/Sagu township, Minbu district in Magway region and Minsonetaung, Natogyi township, Myingyan district in Mandalay region.

In fact, Lawkananda Sanctuary is home to one of the largest tortoise farms in the world, with more than 1,000 tortoises breeding each year, which has also been dubbed the Star Tortoise Factory. — Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM

Tatmadaw aircraft transports COVID vaccines to cities in Taninthayi region

IN collaboration with civil society organizations, COVID-19 vaccines are being transported to different states and regions as per the Cold Trail Standards, which are provided by the Air Force.

Both Covishield and Covaxin vaccines are transported by a Cold Chain Delivery Logistics system to cities in Taninthayi Region in accordance with the quality control standards, officials said.

A total of 393 Covishield vaccines, 9,122 Covaxin vaccines for Dawei Township, 1,356 Covishield vaccines, 6,034 Covaxin vaccines for Myeik Township, 132 Covishield vaccines, and 141 Covaxin vaccines for Kawthoung Township were transported by the Tatmadaw aircraft.

Vaccines are loaded onboard the Tatmadaw aircraft to transport them to states/regions.

Authorities from each township have received all the vaccines and these will be distributed to the public as soon as possible following the target population groups, officials added. —MNA

Notification of COVID Vaccination Fund Management Sub-Committee

FROM 7-3-2022 to 11-3-2022, local/foreign donors contributed K0.200 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 11-3-2022 is as follows: -

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund OA-013733 List

	Kyat
Account opening balance on 4-3-2022	162,556,433,692.53
Received amount of money from (+) 7-3-2022 to 11-3-2022	200,000.00
Closed balance on 11-3-2022	162,556,633,692.53

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund EDC 600012 List

	USD
Account opening balance on 4-3-2022	22,267,349.53
Received amount of money from (+) 7-3-2022 to 11-3-2022	-
Closed balance on 11-3-2022	22,267,349.53

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 480 oxygen cylinders were imported via international seaports yesterday.

Officials from the 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 inquires can be reached through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA

CRIME NEWS

Authorities seize illegal timbers, food items, medicines

SUPERVISED by the Anti-illegal Trade Steering Committee, action is being taken against illegal trades effectively under the law.

On 11 March, combined inspection teams led by the Department of Forest in Bago Region conducted inspections and confiscated 10.8542 tonnes of illegal timbers (estimated value of K3,034,900) from the Bago District Forest Reserve and Paungde Township in Pyay District under the Forest Law.

Similarly, combined inspection teams conducted inspections at Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) combined checkpoint and seized illegal 150 cartons of apple-pear, 20 cartons of cough syrup bottles, (estimated in total at K4,800,750) and action is taken under the Customs Law.

Therefore, three arrests (estimated value of K7,835,650) were made on 11 March, Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee stated. — MNA

Confiscated illegal goods.

Drug seizures in some townships

Three arrestees are seen together with seized heroin and Mitsubishi Pajero.

THE combined inspection team consisting of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force members examined suspect Zaw Lin near the Zaycho car stand on the Mawlamyine-Mudon Road of Zaycho ward in Mawlamyine Township on 10 March and found 1,900 stimulant tablets from him.

On the same morning, the police raided the house of Htu Poh in Kethtike Village-track of Kengtung Township and seized 3,660 stimulant pills and one kilogramme of raw heroin. Moreover, the anti-narcotic agents inspected the motorcycle driven by Aik Sai on the Tachilek-Kengtung Road in Mongkoe Village-tract of Tachilek Township in the same evening and found 1,700 stimulant tablets.

The anti-narcotics task force members also examined the Mitsubishi Pajero driven by Nay Myo Aung accompanied by Thein Zaw and Nyein Ko on the Loilem-Taunggyi Road in Pangwoe Village-tract of Loilem Township and seized 1.21 kilogrammes of heroin on the same day. The suspects were charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA

Thandaunggyi Tsp sees successful yield of turmeric, good market prospect

TURMERIC growers in Thandaunggyi Township, Kayin State are delighted with high yield and good price.

Local residents in Thandaunggyi Township are mainly relying on perennial plants such as rubber, coffee, durian, cardamom and betel for a living. This year, some of them turned to turmeric.

"Turmeric plantation began last year. We cannot solely rely on perennial plants amid uncertain market conditions. The prices of dried turmeric significantly rose from K4,000 to K6,000 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes). It allows the local community to generate income," Saw Thar War, a grower from Thandaunggyi Township said.

Turmeric is sundried after harvesting and boiling. Later, they are sent to the Taunggoo market.

Next, Myanmar delivered Tumeric to Bangladesh, China, India and Thailand.

Additionally, Myanmar has shipped them to Singapore and the UAE markets. The turmeric fetches about $1,000-1,200 per tonne in the previous years.

Myanmar exported over US$11.147 million the worth of 18,614 metric tons of turmeric to its neighbouring countries in the financial year 2019-2020 and $7.7 million valued 13,553.49 MT of turmeric in the FY2020-2021, according to statistics released by Myanmar Customs Department.

Of the kitchen crops, turmeric and ginger have penetrated the foreign market. The exports of kitchen crops such as turmeric, ginger, tamarind, onion and garlic have been growing.

There are over 12,000 acres of turmeric plantations across the country, with an estimated production of 100,000 tonnes per year.

Of the kitchen crops, turmeric and ginger have penetrated the foreign market. The exports of kitchen crops such as turmeric, ginger, tamarind, onion and garlic have been growing.

Myanmar sent the kitchen crops to India, Singapore, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Viet Nam and other neighbouring markets through border posts as well as maritime trade. — Naw Naw Mu, KK/GNLM

Manufacturing sector attracts over $138 mln in October-February

Female workers are seen working at one of the manufacturing workplaces.

THE majority of foreign enterprises eye the manufacturing sector for investments, pumping the estimated capital of US$138.6 million into 25 projects in the past five months of the current mini-budget period (October 2021-March 2022), as per the statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The manufacturing enterprises and businesses that need a large labour force are prioritized, according to the Myanmar Investment Commission.

At present, labour-intensive enterprises are facing financial hardships amid the COVID-19 negative impacts and political changes. Myanmar's garment export drastically dropped on the back of a slump in demand by the European Union market in the previous months.

Consequently, some CMP garment factories permanently and temporarily shut down and left thousands of workers unemployed.

Nonetheless, the industry is returning to normal after the COVID-19 vaccination programme for the workers, as per the HIS Markit's September report.

Myanmar's manufacturing sector is largely concentrated in garment and textiles produced on the Cutting, Making, and Packaging basis, and it contributes to the country's GDP to a certain extent.

Myanmar has drawn foreign direct investment of more than $530.77 million from 34 enterprises during the October-February period. The investments are flowing agriculture, livestock and fisheries, manufacturing, power, construction, transport and communication, hotel and tourism and other services sectors, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises, the DICA's statistics indicated. — KK/GNLM

Myanmar to ship 150 tonnes of lowland coffee to foreign countries this year

ABOUT 150 tonnes of speciality Robusta coffee will be conveyed to the foreign trade partners this coffee season, said Daw Mi Mi Myint, deputy director of the Coffee Research, Information, Extension and Training Centre in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Region.

The foreign countries proposed to purchase that Robusta coffee in the Thandaung area. The ripe coffee beans are harvested and processed at present. Thailand, the Republic of Korea and Japan offered to buy them. The shipment of 150 tonnes of lowland coffee is scheduled to commence in April.

"The foreign buyers recognize the quality of Myanmar's lowland coffee. The foreign demand can help grow the market. It can also avoid offering the below-market rate. As the growers follow the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), quality coffee beans are produced. Last year, the export price stood at K4,500-K5,000 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes). This year, we negotiated with them to offer higher prices than those of last year," she elaborated.

Myanmar exported about 5 to 10 tonnes of Robusta coffee to the international market last year. As the foreign trade partners enjoy the taste, they sent purchase orders.

Myanmar's coffee industry will try to penetrate more foreign markets. — Maung Aye Chan/GNLM

Myanmar exported about 5 to 10 tonnes of Robusta coffee to the international market last year. As the foreign trade partners enjoy the taste, they sent purchase orders.

Totally drive out human traffickers from society

EVERYBODY has the right to life, the right to freedom of movement and the right to development. They lose these rights when they fall under human traffickers in violation of human rights.

Indeed, trafficking in persons is a shameful crime comprising human exploitation, and encroachment on others to tarnish their images. Human trafficking is unacceptable in society.

The case of trafficking in persons can be seen in various forms such as forced labour in the workplaces, orders to forced begging, sexual abuses, and victims in drug trafficking. Some people fall under the incentives of human traffickers and some people hope for better lifestyles and some people want the larger profits as expected. Hence, although the governments are combatting the trafficking in persons, such a shameful business is still booming in the black world.

> Acts of trafficking in persons are forms of bullying others. Hence, the government gives the people legal protection. It is not to seem that the government has obligations to combat human trafficking and to protect the people from the danger of those traffickers. In fact, people should join hands with the government in driving out the human traffickers from society.

Cases of trafficking in person happen not only in Myanmar but in other countries in various forms. The global countries set up various special service organizations and armed forces to combat human trafficking gangs but those crime breakers dodge the legal actions of those government authorities as much as possible.

Trafficking in persons becomes an illegal business booming across the world with US$150 billion profits on a yearly basis, according to the International Labour Organization-ILO. In their violation of human rights, thousands of cases of human trafficking in which various ages of men, women and children may suffer from the lives of victims happen across the world. Most of them, the vulnerable group such as women and children become the targets of human traffickers.

Myanmar enacted the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law on 13 September 2005. Moreover, Myanmar has signed the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols. As such, the successive governments have been striving for the eradication of trafficking in persons applying various tactics.

In this regard, authorities hand down severe punishments on human traffickers under the law not to commit more similar cases with the purpose of preventing the attempts of human traffickers to violate crimes and of enabling the people to enjoy a secure and safe society to be free from the danger of human traffickers.

Acts of trafficking in persons are forms of bullying others. Hence, the government gives the people legal protection. It is not to seem that the government has obligations to combat human trafficking and to protect the people from the danger of those traffickers. In fact, people should join hands with the government in driving out the human traffickers from society.

■■■

The Civil-Society grew up by Disasters in Japan

By Yoshida Suzuka

Damage of Tsunami caused by Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011

11TH March is a special day for the people living in Japan. Great East Japan Earthquake struck the coastal areas of Japan's Eastern-North region, killed or missed more than 22,000 people, and gave 300 billion and more USD damage to infrastructures. When the day is coming, people all over Japan might feel pain in their minds.

Japan is a country having all kinds of natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, landslides, heavy rain, floods, and volcanic eruptions, which give large damage every year somewhere. Disasters affect everybody equally, regardless of the victim's wealth, age, nationality or gender. Although the speed of recovery has a comparative advantage in rich people with assets, it is meaningless if they die. Therefore, everybody has to cooperate together to save lives, rehabilitate the local community as their social responsibility. For example, if somebody were being underlaid by a broken building, nearby people have to get rid of obstacles and rescue them from the ground before rescue teams arrive. If someone's house is flooded, you have to get rid of obstacles and help clean it up. These actions should better be done by not experts, just human resources by hands that are not the role of the government. In order to do small scale- handy work, volunteers come together from all over the nation. Particularly after Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake was caused in 1995 and 6,500 people died, this movement began spontaneously. Furthermore, it has become more severe due to climate change from about 10 years ago.

The bigger the damage is, the more volunteers are expected to come to help disaster-affected people as they can work flexibly, efficiently and effectively. Nowadays they made a nationwide volunteer network. It can be said that this movement nurtured more resilience among people, which is a characteristic of the Japanese people, and grew the civil society up in Japan.

What the government can do is just to provide financial support to encourage a network of mutual help for civilians in peacetime, mobilize their resources such as a large number of human resources, equipment and budget, and prepare legislation support. Under the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Law, the government provides subsidies for the protection of victims (individuals, companies) and rebuilding their lives/businesses, and rebuilds the infrastructure of the affected areas indeed. The local government have applied the Law Concerning Special Fiscal Aid for Coping with Disasters (the Disasters Law) for relief, especially for severely damaged disasters so far.

Ultimately, all people living in Japan realize that not only the government can minimize the damage caused by disasters, but also people-to-people ties beyond nationality or gender are so functional and effective to rebuild their town both soft and hard. Paradoxically, the disaster strengthens the tie among people living in Japan, which might create a kind of Democracy in the Japanese style.

List of Great Disaster after 2011

Month/Year	Name of Disaster	Number of Deaths and Missing
Mar/2011	Great East Japan Earthquake	22,503
Aug-Sep/2011	Typhoon 12	98
Nov/2011-Mar/2012	Deep snowfall from November 2012 onwards	133
Dec/2012-Mar/2013	Deep snowfall from December 2012 onwards	104
Nov/2013-Mar/2014	Deep snowfall from November 2013 onwards	95
July-Aug/2014	Torrential rains of August 2014	77
Sep/2014	2014 Eruption of Mount Ontake	63
Apr/2016	2016 Kumamoto Earthquakes	273
Jun-July/2018	Heavy Rain Event of July 2018	271
Sep/2018	2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi earthquake	43
Oct/2019	Typhoon Hagibis in 2019	108
July/2020	Heavy Rain Event on July 2020	86

Source: See p.3 of "Disaster Management in Japan" by Cabinet Office, Government of Japan
http://www.bousai.go.jp/1info/pdf/saigaipamphlet_je.pdf

People who desire to travel are more likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19: Study

A NEW study from Washington State University stated that wanderlust could be a powerful motivator in people's decision to get vaccinated against COVID-19. According to a survey of US residents, it was revealed that people with a strong desire to travel are less likely to express concern about the vaccine's potential side effects or long-term complications and more likely to say they would get vaccinated. The study was published in the journal, 'Tourism Management'.

Part of their lifestyle

"Many people consider travel an essential part of their lifestyle and a contributor to their sense of well-being," said Dogan Gursoy, Taco Bell Distinguished Professor in Hospitality Business Management at the WSU Carson College of Business.

"They'll weigh the value of travel experiences they might miss by not being vaccinated against the vaccines' possible risks," he added.

Even if they think COVID-19 vaccines pose risks, they still may be willing to get vaccinated, he said. Gursoy was the lead author on the research published in Tourism Management, which also involved Jessica Murray, a WSU School of Hospitality Business Management doctoral student, and UK research collaborators at the University of Portsmouth.

Travel desire

The findings about travel desire were part of the study's larger look at how messaging influences people's intentions related to the COVID-19 vaccine. In the survey, researchers found that emotional, loss-based appeals were most persuasive in changing people's intent to get vaccinated. Some popular tourism destinations, such as the European Union, require a digital COVID certificate for unrestricted travel that verifies vaccination status, a negative COVID test or recovery from the illness. However, the study's findings about travel desire and vaccination intention were true even for people who didn't have upcoming vacations plans or business trips, the authors said. "We define travel desire as a yearning to travel," Gursoy said. "It describes people's longing to escape from their everyday environment, see new places and have new experiences," he added.

Researchers surveyed 1,021 US residents who rated their travel desire on a five-point scale. Survey respondents with the highest travel desire also had the highest COVID-19 vaccination intentions, the study found.— ANI

Tourists visit the Mausoleum of Mohamed V in Rabat. **PHOTO: FADEL SENNA/ AFP**

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday11 March 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 12 March, 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Taninthayi Region and (southern and eastern) Shan, Kayah, Kayin, Mon states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, west Bago regions and partly cloudy 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: Slight increase of day temperatures in Nay Pyi Taw, lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 March, 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 March, 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 March, 2022: Generally fair weather.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay regions. and partly cloudy in Yangon region.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Four endangered American crocodiles are born in Peru

A Lima zoo announced Thursday the birth in captivity of four American crocodiles, an endangered species, after a successful artificial incubation.

The crocodile hatchlings were born in mid-January after 78 days of incubation from the eggs of a pair of adult crocodiles that live in the Huachipa Zoological Park, east of Lima.

"We have now shown these crocodile pups that were just born 45 days ago at the zoo," Jose Flores, head of the zoo's reptile area, told AFP.

"Any birth of any species that is threatened and (in) danger of extinction must be considered an achievement," he stressed.

The hatchlings live in a special fish tank, measure 26 centimetres (10.2 inches) and weigh between 70 and 90 grammes (0.15 to 0.19 pound) each.—AFP ■

Elephant kills Maasai man in Tanzania's Ngorongoro

ELEPHANTS in Tanzania's famed Ngorongoro conservation area have killed a Maasai man who had gone there hunting for firewood, police said Thursday.

The attack occurred against a backdrop of government concern over the increasing human population and activities in Ngorongoro, a World Heritage Site renowned for its rich wildlife including elephants and big cats.

Tanzania allows some communities such as the Maasai, who graze their livestock alongside wild animals, to live within the country's national parks. However, they are often in conflict with the wildlife which can attack people and livestock and destroy crops, and debate is now raging about the possible eviction of the indigenous Maasai. The Maasai man, 45, died on the spot in the elephant attack Wednesday when a group of the residents went to gather firewood, Arusha regional police chief Justine Masejo said in a statement.—AFP ■

NASA opens sample taken from the Moon 50 years on

THE Apollo missions to the Moon brought a total of 2,196 rock samples to Earth. But NASA has only just started opening one of the last ones, collected 50 years ago.

For all that time, some tubes were kept sealed so that they could be studied years later, with the help of the latest technical breakthroughs.

NASA knew "science and technology would evolve and allow scientists to study the material in new ways to address new questions in the future," Lori Glaze, director of the Planetary Science Division at NASA Headquarters, said in a statement.

Dubbed 73001, the sample in question was collected by astronauts Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt in December 1972, during the Apollo 17 mission -- the last of the programme.

A sample of moon rock collected during the Apollo 17 mission is opened by NASA 50 years on. **PHOTO: NASA/AFP**

The tube, 35 cm long and 4 cm (13.8 inches by 1.6 inches) wide, had been hammered into the ground of the Moon's Taurus-Littrow valley to collect the rocks.

Of the only two samples to have been vacuum sealed on the Moon, this is the first to be opened.

It could as such contain gases or volatile substances (water, carbon dioxide, etc.)

And the aim is to extract these gases, which are probably only present in very small quantities, to be able to analyze them using spectrometry techniques that have become extremely precise in recent years.

In early February, the outer protective tube was first removed.

It was not itself revealed to contain any lunar gas, indicating that the sample it contained remained sealed.

Then on 23 February, scientists began a weeks-long process aimed at piercing the main tube and harvesting the gas contained inside.— AFP ■

Thailand makes green push with floating hydro-solar power project

The floating solar farm at Sirindhorn Dam in Ubon Ratchathani. **PHOTO: WORLD ENERGY.ORG/AFP**

A vast array of solar panels floats on the shimmering waters of a reservoir in northeast Thailand, symbolizing the kingdom's drive towards clean energy as it seeks carbon neutrality by 2050.

The immense installation, covering 720,000 square metres of water surface, is a hybrid system that converts sunlight to electricity by day and generates hydropower at night.

Touted by the authorities as the "world's largest floating hydro-solar farm", the Sirindhorn dam project in the northeastern province of Ubon Ratchathani is the first of 15 such farms Thailand plans to build by 2037.

The kingdom is stepping up efforts to wean itself off fossil fuels, and at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow last year, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha set the target of carbon neutrality by 2050 followed by a net-zero greenhouse emissions by 2065.

The Sirindhorn dam farm — which began operations last October — has more than 144,000 solar cells, covering the same area as 70 football pitches, and can generate 45 MW of electricity."We can claim that through 45 megawatts combined with hydropower and energy management system for solar and hydro powers, this is the first and biggest project in the world," Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) deputy governor Prasertsak Cherngchawano told AFP.—AFP ■

Radioactive fuel, contaminated water: the Fukushima clean-up

ELEVEN years after a devastating tsunami hit Japan's northeast, thousands of workers at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant are involved in the complex and decades-long process of decommissioning the site.

Here are some facts about the situation at the plant, which AFP visited this month:

Three of Fukushima's six reactors were operating when the tsunami hit on 11 March 2011. They went into meltdown after their cooling systems failed when waves flooded backup generators.

There was no fuel in the three other reactors, but hydrogen blasts at units 4, 1 and 3 caused extensive damage.

Evidence of the blasts' power is still visible at the top of unit 1, where the warped metal framework remains exposed to the air, and on unit 3 damaged walls stripped of paint sit under a new roof cover.

Cranes tower over several units, while workers in coveralls and wearing dosimeters, full-face respirators, and helmets operate machinery nearby. —AFP ■

Thousands of workers at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant are involved in the complex and decades-long process of decommissioning the Fukushima nuclear site. **PHOTO: AFP**

IMF report recognizes Hong Kong's strong economic recovery

People wearing face masks walk on a street in south China's Hong Kong, 5 March 2022. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) reported 37,529 new COVID-19 cases and 150 deaths on Saturday, official data showed. **PHOTO: XINHUA/LO PING FAI**

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reinforced its assessment of Hong Kong's economic and financial positions, recognizing that Hong Kong's financial sector has continued expanding robustly even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In its Staff Report released on Tuesday, the IMF reaffirmed Hong Kong's position as a major global financial centre with a resilient financial system, sound macroprudential policies, and robust regulatory and supervisory frameworks.

The IMF also welcomed that a large fiscal stimulus has helped mitigate the impact of economic shocks and speed up economic recovery. It supports the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government's three-pronged approach to containing housing market risks and increasing housing affordability.

Paul Chan, financial secretary of the HKSAR government, said, "I welcome the IMF's recognition of our strong economic recovery supported by swift and bold policy responses."

The HKSAR government will continue to closely monitor the local epidemic situation, take necessary and effective fiscal measures and further strengthen Hong Kong's already robust institutional frameworks with a view to fostering economic recovery after the pandemic and safeguarding financial stability, he said.

Eddie Yue, chief executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, said, "I welcome the IMF's reaffirmation of the robustness and resilience of our banking and financial system. The well-functioning Linked Exchange Rate System will continue to be an anchor of economic and financial stability for Hong Kong."— Xinhua ■

Austria suspends Covid mandatory vaccination law

Ukrainian refugees are being tested for the coronavirus at a reception centre in Vienna, Austria, 4 March 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

AUSTRIA said Wednesday it is suspending mandatory Covid-19 vaccinations for all adults saying the pandemic no longer poses the same danger, just weeks after the law took effect in an EU first.

The Alpine nation of nine million people was among few countries in the world to make jabs against the coronavirus compulsory for all adults.

The law took effect in February and called for fines up to 3,600 euros ($3,940) from mid-March for those who do not comply.

But minister Karoline Edtstadler said the law's "encroachment of fundamental rights" could no longer be justified by the danger posed by the pandemic.

"After consultations with the health minister, we have decided that we will of course follow what the (expert) commission has said," Edtstadler told reporters after a Cabinet meeting.

"We see no need to actually implement this compulsory vaccination due to the (Omicron) variant that we are predominantly experiencing here."

The highly-contagious variant is widely believed to be less severe than previous strains of the virus, and so far Austrian hospitals have been able to cope with a surge in cases. This has led to the government to drop most coronavirus restrictions in recent weeks.

The government has stressed it needs to act flexibly in line with the epidemiological situation. "Just like the virus keeps on changing, we need to be flexible and adaptable," Edtstadler said.

The decision to suspend the law will be reviewed in three months, said Johannes Rauch, who took over as health minister this week as the third since the start of the pandemic. Tens of thousands have demonstrated in regular weekend rallies across the country since the government said last November that it would seek to force people to get jabbed in an effort to boost the staggering vaccination rate.—AFP ■

Heathrow Airport posts big loss on UK COVID-19 curbs

LONDON'S Heathrow airport announced Wednesday it narrowed annual losses only slightly in 2021 despite the reopening of global air travel, blaming what it said were stricter passenger curbs in Britain compared to the neighbouring European Union.

Heathrow recorded pretax losses totalling £1.8 billion ($2.4 billion) last year, it said in a statement.

Passenger numbers slumped 12.3 per cent to 19.4 million — the lowest annual total since 1972.

The airport, one of the world's busiest hubs, had already suffered a £2 billion loss in 2020 as the pandemic grounded flights worldwide.

"Heathrow was the only European hub to see a reduction in traffic last year, due to tighter travel restrictions than EU countries," the airport said.

The UK aviation sector had strongly criticized the British government over its long-lasting travel curbs that especially hit the tourism industry.

However, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has decided to scrap all pandemic legal curbs in England from Thursday, urging a shift from government intervention to personal responsibility.—AFP ■

People wait for passengers at one of the International Arrivals halls at London Heathrow Airport in west London on 14 February 2021. **PHOTO: JUSTIN TALLIS / AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

UN chief warns pandemic not over, decries vaccine inequality

AFTER two years the Covid-19 pandemic is not yet over and could be prolonged further due to "scandalously unequal" vaccine distribution, the UN secretary-general warned Wednesday.

"The pandemic's most tragic toll has been on the health and lives of millions, with more than 446 million cases worldwide, more than six million deaths confirmed, and countless more grappling with worsening mental health," said UN chief Antonio Guterres in a statement marking the second anniversary of the global crisis. "Thanks to unprecedented public health measures, and the extraordinarily rapid development and deployment of vaccines, many parts of the world are bringing the pandemic under control," he said.—AFP ■

New Yorkers cautiously welcome end to school mask mandate

NEW YORK City residents sounded cautiously optimistic on Monday (7 March), the day the removal of the indoor mask mandate for public schools between K through 12 went into effect.

"I feel I feel much better. After two years of wearing masks, we feel very good now, very confidence, " said Guillaume Chamot-Rooke, father of two.

His son Lucien Chamot-Rooke was a bit more wary. "Fun, but it might not be safe," he said.—AFP ■

Putin says sanctions will disrupt food, energy markets

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin warned Thursday that Western penalties against Moscow for its military incursion in Ukraine would destabilize the global energy and food markets and vowed the country would emerge stronger from the crisis.

Putin's "special military operation" in Ukraine that began on 24 February has triggered unprecedented Western sanctions and sparked an exodus of international corporations from Russia.

Putin on Thursday however downplayed the massive sanctions, saying Moscow will find a way to "adapt".

McDonald's has 850 restaurants in Russia. Many Western companies, like McDonald's, have said they will suspend operations in Russia. **PHOTO: AFP**

Speaking at a televised government meeting on the 15th day of Moscow's advance into Ukraine, Putin said that Western sanctions on Moscow had begun to hurt the United States and Europe. "Their prices are rising, but that's not our fault. It's the result of their own miscalculations. There's no need to blame us," Putin said. While the 69-year-old Kremlin chief said Moscow was continuing to export oil and gas, including through conflict-torn Ukraine, he blamed the West for sky-rocketing energy prices.

"They are telling their citizens to tighten their belts, to dress warmer," Putin said.

He stressed that Russia was "respecting all of our obligations in terms of energy supplies".

Putin scoffed at Washington for what he said were their efforts to sign energy contracts with Western adversaries Iran and Venezuela. He also warned that the Western penalties could send global food prices soaring, as Russia was one of the world's main producers of fertilizer.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US consumer prices hit new 40-year high as Ukraine shock looms

US consumer prices hit a new 40-year high last month as the world's largest economy continued to be battered by a surge of inflation, which the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine is expected to worsen.

The consumer price index (CPI) was 7.9 per cent higher in February compared to the same month last year, its biggest jump since January 1982 as costs for gasoline, food and housing rose, the Labour Department said Thursday.

The Federal Reserve is expected to increase interest rates next week for the first time since the pandemic began to fight the price increases that have marred the recovery from Covid-19. But analysts warn of another shock to come from the sanctions imposed on Russia, a major producer of oil and gas.—AFP ■

Bitcoin use on rise to launder drug money, report says

DRUG cartels in Mexico and Colombia are increasingly using cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin to launder money, the UN-linked International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) said Thursday.

Mexican cartels are estimated to launder $25 billion a year in Mexico alone, the board's annual report said, describing them "as among the richest and most powerful organized criminal groups" in the world. "The use of bitcoin to launder money is increasing, in particular among drug gangs such as the Jalisco New Generation Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel," it said.—AFP ■

China's 5.5% GDP goal for 2022 "not easy" to be achieved: premier

CHINESE Premier Li Keqiang said Friday achieving the government's economic growth goal of around 5.5 per cent in 2022 is "not easy" and will need to be supported by macroeconomic policies.

Regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Li told reporters after this year's seven-day parliamentary session that China opposes punitive sanctions imposed on Russia by Western countries as they would hurt global economic recovery.

At the National People's Congress, China cut its gross domestic product growth target for 2022 from last year's of over 6.0 per cent, amid mounting fears of serious downward pressure on the global economy.

"There are a lot of complexities and rising uncertainties" in the global sphere, Li said at the press conference. "It will be very hard for such a big economy to maintain a medium to high growth rate."

A robot works at a lithium battery factory in Tangshan, north China's Hebei Province, 29 Nov 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/YANG SHIYAO**

While it is "not easy" to achieve the growth target this year, he added, "This kind of steady progress is very important in itself, and it needs to be enabled by the support of a series of macroeconomic policies."

In 2021, the world's second-largest economy expanded 8.1 per cent from a year earlier. In the October-December period, however, it grew only 4.0 per cent against a backdrop of concern about potential financial market turmoil and another wave of coronavirus infections.—Kyodo ■

IMF to cut global growth forecast in April

Ireland and the EU as a whole need to take the security of gas supplies more seriously as the Russian invasion of Ukraine highlights vulnerabilities. **PHOTO: SERGEI SUPINSKY/AFP**

THE International Monetary Fund is set to lower its global growth projection next month due to the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has triggered massive economic sanctions on Moscow and is sending energy and food prices higher, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said Thursday.

"We have tragic impact of the war on Ukraine. We have contraction on a significant basis in Russia," the IMF chief said, while noting that even a default by Russia on its debt "is no more an improbable event".

In January, the IMF slashed the global growth forecast for 2022 by 0.5 percentage point from its October estimate to 4.4 percent, with disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation weighing on the United States and China.

Japan, meanwhile, saw its year-on-year growth projection revised upward by 0.1 point from an earlier projection to 3.3 per cent, following the rollout of additional fiscal stimulus.

Georgieva said Thursday that Russia, now facing "unprecedented sanctions", is seeing an "abrupt contraction" of its economy and is moving into a "deep recession". The United States, the European Union and other US allies such as Japan have been taking steps to isolate Russia from the global financial system and their economies, including by removing some Russian banks from the SWIFT international payment system and limiting transactions with the Russian central bank.—Kyodo ■

United Airlines allowed unvaccinated employees to return to work

UNITED Airlines, one of the first American companies to have imposed a Covid-19 vaccine mandate for its staff, announced Thursday it will allow employees who have been granted an exemption to return to work.

The move came as the US government extended its mask mandate on public transportation for another month till 18 April.

United had given its pilots, flight attendants and ground staff until the end of last September to upload proof of their vaccination or request an exemption for religious or medical reasons.

The group ended up laying off more than 200 employees and granting about 2,200 exemptions to employees who were given positions away from customers, though some decided to take unpaid leave.

"We plan to welcome back those employees who have been out... to their normal positions starting on Monday, 28 March," the company said in a message to staff seen by AFP.

"Of course, if another variant emerges or the Covid trends suddenly reverse course, we will reevaluate the appropriate safety protocols at that time." The extension of the transportation mask mandate announced by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention will affect airplanes, buses, subways and ferries, and the agency noted in a statement they'll use the time to determine where masks should be mandatory going forward. —AFP ■

United Airlines airport check-in counters.
PHOTO: PATRICK TFALLON/AFP

Chinese manufacturer unveils new generation of commercial maglev train

This 20 July 2021 photo shows China's new maglev transportation system in Qingdao, east China's Shandong province. **PHOTO: LI ZIHENG / XINHUA**

CHINESE manufacturer CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive Co., Ltd. said Thursday that tests have been completed for its next generation of commercial maglev train.

The train, with a designed speed of 200 km per hour, has achieved multiple tech breakthroughs such as unmanned driving and non-contact power supply, said Zhang Wenyue, deputy head of CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive's maglev research institute.

It is expected to be applied to intercity and urban lines of 50 km to 200 km, he added. Equipped with autonomous driving and 5G millimetre-wave communication, the train is operated by a ground control system. Real-time data are gathered for troubleshooting to ensure its safety. Compared with the previous generations of commercial maglev trains, the new model shows significantly improved traction efficiency, hill-climbing ability, and acceleration performance, according to the company. —Xinhua ■

Google, Meta face EU-UK antitrust probes over online ads deal

THE EU and Britain on Friday opened antitrust probes into a 2018 deal between tech giants Google and Facebook owner Meta allegedly aimed at cementing their dominance over the online advertising market. The European Commission said it was investigating the so-called "Jedi Blue" agreement to see if it had been used to "restrict and distort competition in the already concentrated ad tech market". EU competition supremo Margrethe Vestager said if confirmed, the arrangement will have served to distort competition, squeezing rival ad tech companies, publishers "and ultimately consumers."

The UK's Competition Market Authority also launched its own investigation into the agreement and the two authorities will "closely cooperate" on the investigation, the EU said.—AFP ■

Japan to freeze assets of three Belarus banks

JAPAN will freeze the assets of three Belarusian banks, the government said Thursday, days after EU countries agreed to toughen sanctions on Minsk over its support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Japanese government also announced a $100 million humanitarian donation to Ukraine and its neighbouring nations to help Ukrainians fleeing the war.

Tokyo's latest sanctions on Belarus, to be imposed from 10 April, come as Japan acts with its G7 partners to pressure Moscow with a series of constraints on financial institutions and exports including semiconductors. Japan had previously announced sanctions on Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.—AFP ■

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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.

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TB; NAUTILLUS & BG; SINGA BESAR 2801

Consignees of cargo carried on **TB; NAUTILLUS & BG; SINGA BESAR 2801** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-3-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **ADANI** 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: **2301191/2301178**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CEA PROJECT LOGISTIC MALAYSIA

US lawmakers accuse Amazon of blocking anti-trust probe

A panel of US lawmakers urged the Department of Justice on Wednesday to open a criminal probe into their allegations that Amazon has tried to obstruct their anti-trust investigation of tech giants.

The lawmakers accused Amazon, and some of its executives, of misleading the House of Representatives judiciary committee during its probe of business competition online launched in 2019.

"After Amazon was caught in a lie and repeated misrepresentations, it stonewalled the committee's efforts to uncover the truth," said the committee's letter asking for a Department of Justice probe.

US lawmakers have accused Amazon of obstructing their anti-trust probe. **PHOTO: AFP**

The Department of Justice did not immediately reply to a request for comment, while Amazon rejected the allegations saying, its "good faith cooperation with this investigation" was evidenced by the "huge volume of information we've provided over several years".

The letter, signed by committee chairman Jerrold Nadler, went on to allege that Amazon worked to "influence, obstruct, or impede the committee's investigation and inquiries".

The committee has been looking into questions that include Amazon's powerful place on its e-commerce platform, where it sets and enforces the rules for marketing products through third-party companies' products, but also its own.

"Amazon lied through a senior executive's sworn testimony that Amazon did not use any of the troves of data it had collected on its third-party sellers to compete with them," the letter alleged.

The committee has questioned several representatives of Amazon, but also titans of Silicon Valley, which it accuses of abuse of dominance. In July 2020, Google parent Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai, Apple chief Tim Cook, Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos spoke to the committee.— AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran says US made 'new demands' in nuclear talks

IRAN said on Thursday the United States has made extra demands and accused it of working to "complicate" efforts to restore a 2015 nuclear deal, after new Russian requests linked to the Ukraine war raised concerns of fresh delays.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say in major state policies, meanwhile, stressed his country will not give up on elements of "national strength", such as nuclear progress and regional influence. Tehran is locked in negotiations with world powers to revive the nuclear deal that offered it sanctions relief in return for curbs on its atomic programme. Its arch-foe the United States, under former president Donald Trump, unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from the accord known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.—AFP

Hungarian parliament elects Katalin Novak as president

HUNGARIAN parliament on Thursday elected Katalin Novak as the country's first female president for a five-year term, winning over economist Peter Rona in a vote split along party lines.

Novak, a former member of the government as minister without portfolio for family affairs, is taking over from incumbent president Janos Ader, who is ending his second term as president.

Hungary's president is not a member of any political party and represents the unity of the Hungarian state. The Hungarian president's duties are largely ceremonial.— Xinhua ■

US urged not to harm China's legitimate interests in handling ties with Russia

People walk past a petrol station in London, Britain, 25 February 2022. After days of bearish trading amid concern over the escalating Russia-Ukraine tension, a flare-up of the conflict battered major European markets on Thursday, bringing the stocks down to new lows. **PHOTO: STEPHEN CHUNG/XINHUA**

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Thursday the United States should not undermine China's legitimate rights and interests in handling with ties with Russia, otherwise China will make firm and resolute responses.

Spokesperson Zhao Lijian made the remarks at a daily press briefing, in response to a query about recent claims by a few countries including the United States which said China has not made concrete measures to help resolve the conflict in Ukraine, nor has it coordinated with the West to impose sanctions on Russia.

"For those accusing China of 'looking on unconcerned' on the Ukraine issue, they should first ask themselves what role they have played in the crisis?" Zhao asked.

On the Ukraine issue, Zhao said China has always adopted an objective and fair attitude, made judgments independently based on the merits of the matter itself, and played a constructive role in promoting peace talks.

"We hope the relevant sides can keep calm and restrained and encourage and support all diplomatic efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the Ukraine crisis, so as to jointly help cool down the situation," the spokesperson added.

Zhao said it has been proven by practice that sanctions will not solve problems, on the contrary, they will lead to new problems. They will not only result in two or multiple economic losers but also disturb the process of a political settlement, which is "not constructive at all," Zhao added. —Xinhua ■

Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson warned that "the war in Europe is going to affect the Swedish people". **PHOTO: TT NEWS AGENCY/AFP/FILE**

Sweden to raise military spending over Ukraine war

SWEDEN'S government announced plans Thursday for a major boost in military spending to two per cent of GDP "as soon as possible", citing the security threat from Russia's war in Ukraine.

Sweden, which ended decades of defence cuts after Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea, said it hoped to reach its goal within a decade but gave no specific date. "We hope to get there as soon as possible," Social Democratic Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson told reporters.

The Scandinavian country, which during the Cold War dedicated up to four per cent of its gross domestic product to the defence budget, drastically slashed its spending during the 1990s and early 2000s, to around one per cent. "The war in Europe is going to affect the Swedish people. We need to continue to strengthen the Sweden defence capability," Andersson said. "The security situation in Sweden's vicinity has deteriorated over time. The Russian attack on Ukraine further exacerbates that," she said.— AFP ■

Russia to no longer participate in Council of Europe

8 MARCH 2022: A Russian humanitarian convoy carries food supplies from Crimea to Ukraine. **PHOTO: ALEXEI KONOVALOV/TASS**

RUSSIA will no longer participate in the Council of Europe, the country's foreign ministry said Thursday.

The ministry said in a statement that the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries "are using their absolute majority in the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers to continue the destruction of the Council of Europe and the common humanitarian and legal space" on the continent.

The ministry stressed that Russia will not tolerate actions by the West to impose its own "rules-based order" and trample on international law.

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The country will not participate in efforts to turn the organization "into another platform for preaching about Western superiority and for grandstanding," it added.

"Let them enjoy each other's company without Russia," the statement read.

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organization with 47 member states. Twenty-seven members are from the EU. Russia joined the council in February 1996 as its 39th member.—Xinhua ■

Russia's Lavrov slams 'dangerous' arms deliveries to Ukraine

RUSSIA'S Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Thursday accused the European Union and other countries of "dangerously" backing the supply of arms to Ukraine, as it resists an incursion by thousands of Russian troops.

"We see how dangerously our Western colleagues, including in the European Union, are acting now, which, in violation of all their so-called principles and values, encourage the supply of deadly weapons to Ukraine," Lavrov said.

"We believe these countries are creating a colossal danger for themselves," the foreign minister told a press conference in Turkey following a meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba.

Lavrov singled out the deliveries of portable air defence systems, saying that they could be used to create "risks for civil aviation".

People rest by a road in Irpin, Ukraine, March 8, 2022. **PHOTO: DIEGO HERRERA/XINHUA**

"Where these thousands of portable missile systems are going to end up is a question we put to our colleagues in the European Union," Lavrov added.

Russia's military incursion into Ukraine, which is entering its third week, has seen Western countries sharply increase supplies of military aid to their pro-Western ally Ukraine.—AFP ■

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

UNSC to discuss US military biological activities in Ukraine

AS the Russia-Ukraine conflict entered its third week on Thursday, following are the latest developments of the situation.

The UN Security Council (UNSC) will convene on Friday to discuss the United States' alleged military biological research in Ukraine at Russia's request.

Dmitry Polyanskiy, first deputy permanent representative of Russia to the UN, made this request on Thursday.

"Russian Mission asked for a meeting of (the UNSC) for 11 March to discuss the military biological activities of the US on the territory of Ukraine," Polyanskiy tweeted.

Russia believes that there is a network of biolabs in Ukraine working on behalf of the US Department of Defence and forming part of its biological weapons program.

China says US addresses used its computers to launch cyberattacks on Russia, Ukraine

CHINA said on Friday that it has been the target of continuous cyber attacks since before the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, most of which originated in the US, according to state news agency Xinhua.

The attacks took control of computers in China to target other computers in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, the agency said. The National Computer Network Emergency Response Centre, a cybersecurity group, had "dealt with" the attacks to the "maximum extent", Xinhua said.

An analysis revealed that most of the source addresses were in the US, with a small number from Germany, the Netherlands and other countries.

"There were more than 10 attack addresses from New York state alone," Xinhua reported, citing the cybersecurity centre. Last week, NATO announced that Ukraine would join the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence as a "contributing participant.

China calls for supporting Russia-Ukraine ceasefire talks, offers humanitarian aid

CHINESE Premier Li Keqiang said on Friday that utmost efforts should be made to support Russia and Ukraine in overcoming difficulties to carry forward ceasefire negotiations, and China supports and encourages all efforts that are conducive to a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Ukraine.

Speaking at a press conference held after China's annual legislative session, Li said China is willing to work with the international community to play a positive role for the early return of peace in Ukraine.

Calling the current situation in Ukraine "disconcerting," Li said the pressing task now is to prevent tension from escalating or even getting out of control.

Russian, Ukrainian FMs say ready to continue dialogue over conflict

RUSSIAN Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Ukrainian counterpart, Dmytro Kuleba, failed to make progress on a ceasefire but agreed to continue negotiations over the conflict during their meeting in Turkey on Thursday.

The tripartite meeting, held on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomatic Forum in the presence of Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, was the first high-level meeting between Moscow and Kiev since Russia's special military operation in Ukraine started on 24 February.

Source: Xinhua

Myanmar women's Futsal team prepares for Viet Nam SEA Games

The Myanmar women's Futsal team pose for a group photo with team administrators and coaches. **PHOTO: MFF**

THE Myanmar women's Futsal team is taking training with 22 players for the 31st Viet Nam SEA Games to be held in May.

The Myanmar women's team was reorganized four years ago after competing in the 2017 Malaysia SEA Games.

There is no specific female futsal player in Myanmar, so it is based on football players.

Some of the players from the most recent 2017 Malaysia SEA Games squad will participate in the team and most of the young players have been selected.

The Myanmar women's futsal team has been training for the SEA Games since February and is headed by U Tin Maung Htay.

The women's futsal squad will compete in invitational competitions in Thailand in April before the SEA Games and travel directly to Viet Nam.

Team Administrator U Naing Thaung Htike, Head Coach U Tin Maung Htay, Assistant Coach U Zaw Ye Maung, Goal Coach U Han Min Htut, goalkeeper Zin Min Tun, Khaing Hnin Thet, Nwe Nwe Soe, Aye Aye Htwe, Nang Kham Moe, Win Win Khaing, Nant May Thazin, Khaing Thazin Oo, Khine Pyae Lin, Su Po Po Kyaw, Wah Wah Khaing, Khin Mar Lin, Aye Nyein Thu, Phyu Phyu Kyaw, Nang Hom Hlaing, Zin Moe Pyae, May Zin Oo, Lar Al Wah, May Thet Paing, Hnin Sanda Hlaing, Yamin Lwin, and Yoon Mi Mi Lwin participate in the Myanmar team. — 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.

Zhang Mengqiu wins second gold at Beijing Winter Paralympics

Zhang Mengqiu of China in action during the Beijing Winter Paralympics women's giant slalom standing event at the National Alpine Skiing Centre in Yanqing district, Beijing, 11 March 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

CHINESE skier Zhang Mengqiu won her second gold of the Beijing Paralympic Winter Games after claiming the title of women's giant slalom standing on Friday.

The 20-year-old racer, who took home the gold of women's super-G on Sunday, clocked a winning time of one minute and 55.12 seconds over two runs, 5.83 seconds ahead of Mollie Jepsen of Canada. German skier Andrea Rothfuss finished third in 2:01.91.

Zhang's main title contender Ebba Aasjoe of Sweden, who was 0.07 second behind after the first run, crashed in the second.

The Chinese skier looks forward to another gold at the women's slalom race on Saturday after taking four medals, two golds and two silvers, in Beijing. "I have the chance to win a gold tomorrow. You can expect it," she said.— Xinhua ■

Norway's Pedersen wins third gold at Beijing Winter Paralympics

JESPER Pedersen of Norway grabbed his third gold medal of the Beijing Paralympic Winter Games in convincing fashion, winning the men's giant slalom sitting on Thursday.

The 22-year-old racer, who has already won super-G and super combined gold at Beijing 2022, clocked a two-run time of one minute and 54.20 seconds, 3.30 seconds ahead of Italy's Rene de Silvestro. Chinese skier Liang Zilu took bronze in 2:00.92.

Jesper Pedersen of Norway competes during the alpine skiing men's giant slalom sitting of Beijing 2022 Winter Paralympic Games at National Alpine Skiing Centre in Yanqing District of Beijing, capital of China, 10 March 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA/LI GA**

"I am kind of the most consistent skier on the circuit," Pedersen said of his form at Beijing 2022. "We've just trained a lot. We probably have the most days on skis on the circuit. And in these conditions as well, we have a glacier on Norway we are on the whole summer."

"We've been through it all, we did a lot of training going into this season and we knew what to expect. Today we showed we've done a lot of good things," Pedersen added. Johannes Aigner of Austria won the men's giant slalom vision-impaired, taking his second gold at Beijing 2022.

The 16-year-old finished in 1:49.34 over two runs, 1.68 seconds faster than Giacomo Bertagnolli of Italy. Miroslav Haraus of Slovakia took bronze in 1:54.92. Aigner said he had targeted gold in the giant slalom after having won gold in the downhill, silver in the super combined, and bronze in the super-G.— Xinhua ■