LET'S JOIN HANDS IN COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKERS PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 336, 5th Waning of Taboung 1383 ME www.gnlm.com.mm Monday, 21 March 2022

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.

Vice-Senior General Soe Win stresses the needs for readiness of the Tatmadaw to discharge relief and aid in the natural disasters round the clock

IT is necessary to maintain the trusts of Tatmadaw members and families as well as the ethnic national people, said Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win in comforting with officers, other ranks and families the military hospital in Aungban, Shan State (South) yesterday morning.

First, the Vice-Senior General gave words of encouragement to officers, other ranks and families receiving medical treatment at the hospital and presented foodstuff and aid to the patient Tatmadaw families.

At the separate meetings with specialists, medical officers and nurses at the hospital, the Vice-Senior General explained duties of those medical corps members with same vision to serve the national cause, needs for readiness of the Tatmadaw to discharge relief and aid in the natural disasters round the clock, and it is necessary to maintain the trusts of Tatmadaw members and families as well as the ethnic national people. The Vice-Senior General stressed the need for officials at different levels to take convenient measures for general staff, adjutant and quartermasters of servicemen and families.

Vice-Chairman of State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win comforts a serviceman receiving medical treatment at military hospital in Aungban on 20 March 2022.

The Vice-Senior General inspected Angiogram machine at the intensive care unit for cardiac patients.

Daw Than Than Nwe, wife of the Vice-Senior General, and party presented aids at the maternity ward where she gave words of encouragement to pregnant mothers.

The Vice-Senior General presented cash assistant for health staff from the hospital to the commandant of the hospital.—MNA

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL
COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various regions, states
PAGE-2

NATIONAL
SAC members attend dinner in honour of 48th Anniversary Mon State Day
PAGE-3

NATIONAL
787-ft long Kyungon bridge commissioned into service in Wakema, Ayeyawady Region
PAGE-4

LOCAL BUSINESS
Tamarind fetching handsome price in NyaungU Tsp
PAGE-7

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

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

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

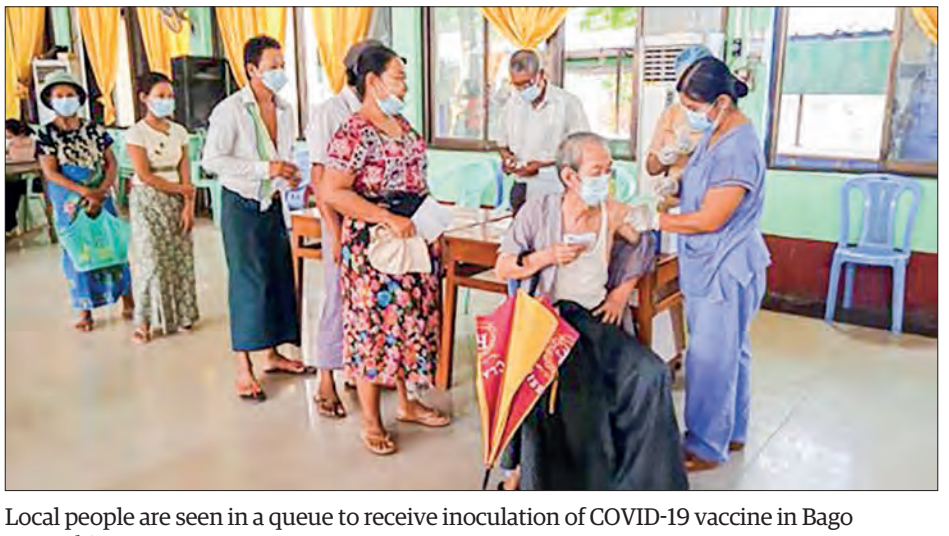
Information Team
State Administration Council

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

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various regions, states

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

The COVID-19 vaccine is inoculated daily to target groups regardless of race or religion, including Buddhist monks and nuns, local people over the age of 40, students, religious leaders, prisoners, people with disabilities, ethnic armed organizations, people with chronic diseases, people in IDP camps and over 12-year-old students, respectively.



Local people are seen in a queue to receive inoculation of COVID-19 vaccine in Bago Township.

On 20 March, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers injected COVID-19 vaccines to 44 people from Monghkat Township in Shan State (East), 350 people from Myeik Township in Taninthayi Region, 25,626 people from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region, 6,218 people from five townships in Rakhine State, 5,620 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region and 830 people from Htantabin and Bago townships in Bago Region, respectively. It is reported that officials from the respective Military Commands visited the sites and coordinated the necessary work. —MNA

People invited to celebrate 77th anniversary of Armed Forces Day

PEOPLE wishing to honour the Tatmadaw parades which will march on the 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day along the way from the training ground to the military parade ground can pre-register by telephone.

People can claim their citizenship scrutiny cards by registering in person with their ID card (original) and two colour licence-sized photos on 24 and 25 March.

Please be informed that people can contact the following address.

Security Subcommittee
Nay Pyi Taw Command
Nay Pyi Taw
Phone- 032-30009

Situation on Peacemaking Process

THE National Unity and Peace Restoration Coordination Committee, the Work Committee and the Negotiation Committee were formed to carry out the tasks to ensure national unity and perpetual peace. Our coordination committee has met NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations 16 times, non-NCA signatory EAOs nine times, political parties seven times and the religious leaders and peace negotiators two times, totalling 34.

Tatmadaw issued 20 statements for a ceasefire from 21 December 2018 to 28 February 2022. A joint declaration after the meeting with the Cambodian Prime Minister in early 2022 mentioned that the ceasefire will last for the end of this year.

(Excerpt from the speech made by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on one-year State responsibilities discharged by the State Administration Council on 1-2-2022)

All servicemen need to focus on vertical respects with fair administration to have the unity: Vice-Senior General

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets officers, other ranks and families of Mongmaw Station of Central Command on 20 March.

COMMANDERS need to always consider life security of servicemen and families, said Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win at the meeting with officers, other ranks and families from Mongmaw Station of Central Command, yesterday afternoon.

In his address, the Vice-Senior General said that as Tatmadaw is a part of the country, servicemen need to dutifully serve the national cause in their respective sectors. The political extremists leading to the utter devastation are committing persuasion of government servants into the CDM activities under coercion. The country successfully overcame various crises through united strengths of the people, loyal servants and security forces amid the high infection period in the third wave of Delta variant of VOVID-19 pandemic. The Vice-Senior General said all will successfully overcome difficulties and challenges through the unity.

Those terrorists attempt to disintegrate the Tatmadaw as final stage. They apply social network to broadcast false and fake information. As they are sure to continuously commit disintegration to the Tatmadaw, servicemen and families need to build the compact unity and prevent designation acts of extremists. All servicemen need to focus on vertical respects with fair administration to have the unity. Commanders need to always consider life security of servicemen and families. They have to fulfill the requirements of servicemen and families as much as possible under their authority with sympathy. If so, servicemen can serve the State duty conveniently. Then, the Vice-Senior General immediately attended to the needs of servicemen and families in individuals.

The Vice-Senior General presented foodstuff for officers, other ranks and families of Mongmaw station, Lt-Gen Aung Zaw Aye of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and Daw Than Than Nwe, wife of the Vice-Senior General, sports equipment and cash assistance for station MCWA through officials.—MNA

SAC members attend dinner in honour of 48th Anniversary Mon State Day

A dinner to commemorate the 48th Anniversary Mon State Day was held at Mon State Hall in Mawlamyine at 6 pm on 19 March.

Members of the State Administration Council Dr Banyar Aung Moe and Mahn Nyein Maung, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung and U Saw Tun Aung Myint, Mon State Chief Minister U Zaw Lin Tun, Commander of South-East Command Maj-Gen Ko Ko Maung, State Ministers and officials attended the dinner.

The 48th Anniversary Mon State Day Commemorative Gallery Awards were awarded during the event and Mon State Chief Minister U Zaw Lin Tun presented the third prize to the Mon State Fire Services Department, and SAC member Dr Banya Aung Moe presented the second prize to the State Fisheries Department. Next, SAC member Mahn Nyein Maung, presented the first prize to the Mon State Education Office.

Afterwards, the SAC members and guests enjoyed the Mon traditional songs and dances performed by Mon dance troupe. Next, the SAC members, Union Ministers, the State Chief Minister and the commander presented bouquets and cash award to the dance troupe followed by hosting the dinner by officials.—MNA

SAC member Mahn Nyein Maung presents first prize of Mon State Day commemorative gallery awards to Mon State Education Office through an official on 19 March.

787-ft long Kyungon bridge commissioned into service in Wakema, Ayeyawady Region

AS a gesture of hailing the 77th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, the opening ceremony of the 787 feet long Kyungon bridge built on the Bogale-Mawlamyinekyun-Kyonmange-Wakema-Myaungmya Road yesterday morning under the COVID-19 rules and regulations.

While addressing the ceremony, State Administration Council member Daw Aye Nu Sein said the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has coexisted with 135 ethnic groups since ancient times. Priority is given to the infrastructural development which includes improving transportation and access to electricity.

She added the essence of the 2008 Constitution, which is the inclusion of all ethnic nationalities in the legislature, judiciary and administrative sectors, and the goal of the State Administration Council is to build a Union based on democracy and federalism by practising true and disciplined multi-party democracy with full justice.

SAC members Daw Aye Nu Sein and U Moung Har and party pose for group photo at opening of Kyungon Bridge on 20 March 2022.

She also said that during the governance of the State Administration Council, the Central Committee, Working Committee and National Solidarity and Peace-making Negotiate Committee were formed in order to restore perpetual peace. The government is also implementing road/bridge development both in urban and rural areas and remote regions as well.

Afterwards, SAC members Daw Aye Nu Sein and U Moung Har, Union Minister for Construction U Shwe Lay, the Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister, and the command commander cut the ribbons to open the bridge.

The Kyungon Bridge is built right next to the old cable-stayed bridge and is a 24-foot-wide two-lane reinforced concrete bridge, with the foundation constructed with Bored Pile and the superstructure made of steel mesh.—MNA

Regional, human resource development inspected in Mon State

Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung visits women's Vocational Training School in Mudon of Mon State on 18 March.

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, together with Mon State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Nay Htut Oo, inspected the completion of repaved Wekali-Aaingshay Road, in Wekali village-tract, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State, on the afternoon of 18 March.

During the inspection, Mon State Development Supervisor and Engineers-in-charge were instructed to improve drainage in order to maintain the long-term sustainability of the road. The Wekali-Aaingshay Road is contributing a lot to the development and socio-economic life of more than 1,700 people in Wekali village and Aaingshay Road.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party arrived at the Basic Education Middle School (branch) situated on the road in Aaingshay village, asked about the needs of the school during the meeting with the headmistress and teachers, and coordinated to provide needs for student halls, computers, solar panels and related accessories.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party visited the Women's Vocational Training School in Mudon and fulfilled necessary requirements. The Union Minister and party arrived at the Mon State Development Supervision Office in Mawlamyine on 19 March. Yesterday, the Union Minister inspected the Kyaikmaraw Township Development Supervision Office and the staff housing.—MNA

227 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 20 March, total figure rises to 608,990

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **608,990** after **227** new cases were reported on 20 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **564,660** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **19,425** after **2** died.

COVID-19 vaccine is being injected to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 19-3-2022, a total of **25,654,190** people have been vaccinated. Of them, **21,624,647** people have been fully vaccinated and **4,029,543** people have yet to get the second shots.—MNA

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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

Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

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

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email **aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm** with your name and title.

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

Union Minister for Information inspects completion of Yadanabon Amusement Park in Mandalay

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn views ancient objects kept in Yadanabon Amusement Park in Mandalay on 20 March.

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn and Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Maung Ko inspected the construction of Yadanabon Amusement Park in Mandalay and discussed recreation plans for the people yesterday.

Firstly, Chief Minister U Maung Ko explained Mandalay's rich history and plans to preserve its cultural heritage, completion of Yadanabon Amusement Park and conditions for public recreation, and the conditions to see and enjoy the beauty of the moat and the walls of the palace.

The Union Minister said the Ministry of Information will help raise public aware of the activities of the Region/State Governments through media, adding that the Mandalay royal walls and moats are valuable historical heritage of all Myanmar people. We believe that not only the people of Mandalay but also visitors from all over Myanmar can take pride in the creation of such a large amusement park near Mandalay royal walls.

Yadanabon Amusement Park has been established since October 2021, with sidewalks, flowers, landscapes and lanterns.

Afterwards, the Union Minister met with staffs from the District Information and Public Relations Department in Pyigyidagun Township, discussed matters to step up youth development activities, to open vocational training courses for young people and to hold sports events, and provided cash assistance and foods.—MNA

A scene depicts pleasant view of Yadanabon Amusement Park in Mandalay.

IPRD surveys Mayu FM listeners in Buthidaung, Rakhine State

THE government implements seven prioritized projects of ASEAN and Myanmar technological working groups for the repatriation processes of IDPs in Rakhine State as per the recommendations in Preliminary Needs Assessment-PN of the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team.

The officials conducted a field survey on getting the Mayu FM radio in Thabyaygon, Myothit (South), Meeyahtaseik and Taung wards of Buthidaung Township of Rakhine State yesterday.

Daw Aye Aye Aung, Staff Officer of the Buthidaung Township Information and Public Relations Department and U Nyi Nyi Thant, In-charge of Retransmission Station of MRTV (Buthidaung) explained the survey and the township IPRD staff collected the data following the COVID-19 health rules. They then gave presents to the participants in the survey.

A total of 750 residents from the wards of Buthidaung Township joined the survey.—Township IPRD/GNLM

Officials present gifts to a local in survey on getting Mayu FM radio in Buthidaung Township on 20 March.

Depression Warning No 4, 2022

Issued at (19:00) hours MST on 20-3-2022

According to the observations at (17:30)hrs MST today, the depression over South Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal has moved North-Northeastwards and it is centred at about (210) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Coco Island, about (330) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Hainggyikyun, about (370) Nautical miles Southwest of Dawei, about (330) Nautical miles West-Northwest of Kawthaung (Myanmar), about (415) Nautical miles Southwest of Yangon, about (80) Nautical miles North of Nicobar Islands and about (60) Nautical miles South-Southeast of Port Blair (India).

It will move towards Myanmar coasts, the present stage of the depression is coded orange stage.

Position of depression, centre pressure and wind

Depression is located at Latitude (10.6) degree North and Longitude (93.0) degree East, centre pressure of depression is (1002) hPa and maximum wind speed near the centre is (35-40) miles per hour at (17:30) hrs MST today.

During next 36 hrs forecast

The depression is likely to move Northwards along and off Andaman and Nicobar Islands and forecast to intensify into a deep depression during next (24) hrs and into a cyclonic storm during next (36) hrs. It may lead to near Coco Island in the evening of (21.3.2022), near Hainggyikyun, Ayeyawady Region in the morning of (22.3.2022)and near Rakhine coast in the evening of (22.3.2022), Myanmar.

General caution

Due to the depression, rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread to widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi regions and Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states with regionally and isolated heavy falls in some regions and states during today evening to (22.3.2022).

Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) mph. Wave height will be about (9-12) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

Advisory

Due to the depression, people should be aware rain or thundershowers with strong wind and domestic flight, trawlers, vessels and ships in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture inspects MraukU cultural heritage site

DEPUTY Minister U Tun Ohn for Religious Affairs and Culture, accompanied by the Rakhine State Minister for Transport, arrived at Mrauk U cultural heritage site on 19 March 2022 and inspected Anandacandra stone inscription post engraved on the Shitthaung pagoda archway at MraukU cultural heritage site.

It's recognized as Asia Pacific heritage and it is designated for inclusion of World Heritage listing. This being so, the deputy minister instructed the officials to conduct systematic assessment for maintenance and describe the historical information of Anandacandra stone inscription to raise awareness among the people.

Deputy Minister U Tun Ohn views ancient objects at MraukU Cultural Heritage Site in MraukU of Rakhine State on 19 March.

Next, the deputy minister came to Shitthaung pagoda and instructed the officials to work together with Myanmar Engineering Society to repair rainwater leaks and restore them.

After that, they went to Antawthein Temple, Laungbunpyauk Pagoda, Cheinkaik Pitakat Chamber and Htukkanthein Temple. MraukU is the National Cultural Heritage Site and it has been proposed to be enlisted on World Heritage Sites. The Deputy minister directed them to maintain its cultural value, preserve historical building to have original appearance, not to have squatting, preserve religious buildings in accordance with the recommendation, rules and standards of the Sangha committees, raise awareness of cultural heritage site for local community and make systematic maintenance approach in restoring the site without changing its original state and carry out systematic assessment for construction of the new ones.—MNA

Health officials give COVID vaccines to public in Pwintbyu Township

HEALTHCARE officials gave COVID-19 vaccines to local people in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region.

Chairman of the township administration body U Aung Myat Khaing said that a combined team of health workers and departments was conducting daily COVID-19 vaccinations to ensure that the remaining townships were fully vaccinated and the remaining rural people will be vaccinated next.

Health workers are conducting field vaccinations in nine villages. In the wards and villages, people who have difficulty getting around for various reasons and the elderly are given health check-ups and vaccinations to prevent COIVD-19 disease. A total of 3,171 local people from Kanthagyi Village, Seinpan Village, Shwehlay Village and Shannaw Village in the Pwintbyu Township got the vaccinations yesterday morning.

A combined team of departments and health workers, led by the township administrator, will carry out vaccination activities to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 in Pwintbyu Township.

Those remaining for the vaccination will be inoculated by the end of this month, said U Aung Myat Khaing, chair of Pwintbyu Township Administration body.—Hlaing Win Lay (Pwintbyu Myay)/GNLM

Youth Education Seminar held at Mawlaik high school

A youth education seminar was held at Basic Education High School in Mawlaik on the afternoon of 19 March to help students make the most of their time during the summer holidays and increase their knowledge.

At the seminar, Assistant Director of the District Education Office U San Lwin Tun gave a talk on good morale and discipline. The Assistant Director of the District Information and Public Relations Department spoke on youth and behavior, youth and patriotism, and the benefits of reading literature. The Assistant Director of District Sports and Physical Education Department gave a talk on youth and sports and provided sports equipment to the school.

The seminar was joined by the headmistress of the school, teachers and students.—Mawlaik Tharlay/GNLM

CRIME NEWS

Illegal teak, utensil, foodstuff and vehicles seized

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

An inspection team led by the Forest Department conducted an inspection under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force on Thandwe-Taungup road, Thandwe Township, Rakhine State on 18 March.

A total of 3.8862 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated at K388,620) was seized and action is being taken in accordance with the forest law.

Similarly, a combined inspection team on duty at the Mayangchaung Permanent Checkpoint conducted inspections under the management of the Customs Department of Mon State on the same day.

Consumer goods (estimated at K2,014,474) were seized in excess of what was stated in the import declaration ID.

On 19 March, police seized M-150 energy soft drinks (estimated at K1,300,000) in one passenger van driving from Myawady to Mandalay with undocumented goods and action is being taken in accordance with the customs law.

Similarly, inspections were conducted in Sagaing Region under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force on 20 March.

An investigation team led by the Myanmar Police Force conducted inspections in Lahe Township, Naga Self-Administered Zone and five CANDA and KENBO (unlicensed) motorcycles (estimated at K1.6 millions) were seized under the Import and Export Law.

An inspection team led by the Forest Department visited in Indaw Township of Katha District, and 14.2622 tonnes of illegal teak (estimated at K4,278,660) were confiscated under the Forest Law. Thus a total of K5,878,660 of estimated value were arrested.

In addition, a combined inspection team led by the Department of Forest conducted inspections under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force in Bago Region on the same day.

Customs officials check seized cartons of M-150 soft drinks at Mayanchaung checkpoint in Mon State on 19 March.

A total of 12.0424 tonnes of illegal sawn timber of teak, ironwood and others (estimated at K1,338,484) were seized and action is being taken in accordance with the forest law.

Therefore, a total of ten arrests (estimated at K10,920,238) were made on three consecutive days, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee.—MNA

New corn export policy causes trade slowdown

AS traders need licence for corn exports, the trade has become sluggish at the moment, said a trader from Mandalay market.

According to 2017 Customs Tariff of Myanmar, 12 HS lines (10 digits) are no longer exemption from export licence starting from 1 April 2022. Those items include maize, starch, corn, seed, maize and corn flour, cereal grains, millets, cereal groats, meal and pellets, buckwheat and canary seeds. Traders must seek export licence whatever trade routes (maritime, border or air) they use.

A total of 778 HS line (6 digits) or 1,224 HS line (10 digits) including corn and wheat related export has been notified to seek export licence with a view to ensuring food security and national security and measuring environmental impacts, according to a notification released by the Ministry of Commerce on 9 March 2022.

Corn plantations are thriving with buds in the farm.

At present, the price of corn is approximately K1,000 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg) and K48,500-K49,000 per bag. The prevailing price is down by K100-K150 per viss compared to the rate recorded in the early March 2022, Yangon market's data indicated.

"Next, corn price is likely to slide due to tariff. If more policies are laid down to control the corn price and export, the price will certainly drop," a market observer shared his opinion.

The corn FOB price stands at US$320-340 per tonne, according to Bayintnaung wholesale market.

Thailand gives green light to corn imports through Mae Sot under zero tariff (with Form-D), between 1 February and 31 August.

Thailand has granted tax exemption on corn imports between February and August. However, Thailand imposed the maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on corn import to protect the rights of their growers if the corns are imported during the corn season of Thailand.

Myanmar targeted to deliver 1.5 million tonnes of corn to the external market in the current 2021-2022 corn season.

Last 2020-2021 financial year, the country shipped more than 1.7 million tonnes of corns to Thailand, Myanmar Corn Industrial Association stated.

Myanmar exported 2.3 million tonnes of corns to foreign trade partners in the previous FY. Majority of them were sent to Thailand and the remaining went to China, India and Viet Nam. At present, corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar yearly produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corns.—GNLM

Tamarind fetching handsome price in NyaungU Tsp

Local people are sorting tamarind with seeds in NyaungU Township.

TAMARIND businesses in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region are thriving during the harvest season, benefiting the local community, said a worker U Than Saung from Kalatel village.

The local residents earn daily income of K3,000-K8,000 depending on hour and regions while harvesting the tamarind. The tamarind growers allow them to earn for livings in summer. The ripe tamarinds are sent to warehouses in Kyaukpadaung city. The prices stand at K2,000 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg) for tamarind with seed and 3,000 for processed tamarind without seed.

Furthermore, byproduct seed can be sold at K5,000 per basket. The processed tamarinds are stored well as the growers wait for the right time to sell them.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the price of seeded tamarinds was K800 to K1,450 per viss, whereas the seedless tamarinds were priced K2,850 per viss in 2020.

Normally, the tamarinds are highly traded once they enter the market. Traders for Bangladesh market purchase them a lot, according to Mandalay market.

Myanmar's tamarinds are regularly purchased by Bangladesh and India every year. China has started to buy them from last seven years.

Every year, all the tamarind producing areas across the country will abundantly supply them at the market in the pre-Maha Thingyan Festival period.

Myanmar shipped US$9.6 million worth of 20,662 tonne in the 2021-2022 Financial Year, which was an increase of 9,796 tonne (estimated value of $5.6 million) compared to the 2020-2021 FY.

Tamarind trees are mostly found in central Myanmar regions — Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway. They can be harvested only once a year in summer. Myanmar people use tamarind in traditional cuisine besides making traditional medicines. It is also a lucrative export item.
— Ko Htein (KPD)/ GNL

Myanmar border trade records over $3.13 bln in mini-budget period

THE total border trade value has reached over US$3.13 billion in over five months of this current mini-budget period, down over $2.34 billion, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Until 11 March of this mini-budget period, the total border trade value amounted to $3.126 billion. The border trade value hit $5.47 billion last year.

The total border trade value, as of 11 March this FY, included $2.29 billion in exports and $829.6 billion in imports. Compared with the last same period, the exports earnings declined by $1.43 billion, while the import value dropped by $913.78 million.

Myanmar is trading with neighbouring countries such as China, Thailand, Bangladesh, and India. Myawady border sees the highest value of border trade with an estimated cost of more than $1.16 billion this FY followed by Hteekhee with $912.65 million and Muse with $616.66 million.

Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products, animal products, marine products, minerals, forest products, manufacturing goods and others while capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer goods are imported to the country.
— ACM

Let's join hands in combatting human traffickers

PEOPLE from both urban and rural areas may face the dangers of human traffickers and human smuggling cases. Although authorities are striving for raising public awareness of human trafficking and human smuggling measures, unscrupulous persons breach the laws to commit these cases.

Indeed, any society does not accept human trafficking in various forms. However, the cases of trafficking in persons and human smuggling are based on human traffickers and brokers.

On the other hand, difficulties in families, jobs and monetary problems place some persons as victims under human traffickers. Moreover, some victims fall under the human traffickers due to the persuasion of others foolishly.

Some cases of trafficking in persons were based at home but abroad. The cases which happened at home proved that traffickers sent the victims to remote areas of the country for various reasons not to easily return home. Some cases leading to the foreign countries were primarily based on forced labour, and forced marriage.

> All the people are responsible for preventing human trafficking in all areas of the nation and for saving the victims of human trafficking from various regions of the world. Consequently, the global people will be safely growing up in the society to be free from disturbances. Let's join hands in combatting human traffickers!

Hence, the people need to take preventive measures against trafficking in persons and dutifully inform relevant organizations about the human traffickers so as to save innocent people from the lives of victims in time. The people should report to the authorities in time about persuasion of someone with jobs abroad or some incentives.

As the majority of human trafficking victims do not have adequate knowledge about human trafficking, they have to accumulate their knowledge through reading various subjects of fiction and non-fiction books as well as watching TV programmes. If so, they will have the talent to analyze everything. The people need to analyze the events whether it is correct or not and whether they should be done or not.

Currently, the problems of trafficking in persons are very dangerous for all families around the globe. Parents and guardians need to educate their offspring to be free from the danger of human traffickers. As such, they all need to cooperate with each other in the prevention of trafficking in persons in all processes such as exchanging information about human trafficking and monitoring the unscrupulous persons for their acts.

All the people are responsible for preventing human trafficking in all areas of the nation and for saving the victims of human trafficking from various regions of the world. Consequently, the global people will be safely growing up in the society to be free from disturbances. Let's join hands in combatting human traffickers!

■ ■ ■

Blood test may indicate higher risk pregnancies in patients with COVID-19: Study

A pregnant woman wearing a face mask as a precautionary measure walks past a street mural in Hong Kong, on 23 March 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

A small preliminary study from Northwestern Medicine has shown that a blood test may identify the risk of stillbirth and placentitis in pregnant individuals who have had COVID-19.

The finding published in the journal PLACENTA illuminates a link between placentitis and the circulating SARS-CoV-2 virus. Research has shown pregnant people with COVID-19 have a higher risk of stillbirths and other pregnancy complications. Anecdotal reports have also reported potentially higher cases of stillbirths caused by certain variants, leading to increased concern in the scientific community. Scientists identified a link between COVID placentitis, in which the virus infects the placenta, and these poor outcomes, but can only diagnose instances of placentitis after delivery by examining the placenta. "Right now, we don't know if there's placentitis until after the fact," said Northwestern's Dr Leena Mithal, the paper's first author.

Get a test that will help identify pregnancies

"We're laying the groundwork for further studies so that in the future, people who are diagnosed with COVID during pregnancy may be able to get a test that will help identify pregnancies that may be at higher risk of stillbirth or fetal distress." Mithal is an assistant professor of pediatric infectious diseases at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and an attending physician at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. Dr Jeffery Goldstein, the director of perinatal pathology at Feinberg, led the study and is the corresponding author. Placentitis affects between 1 per cent and 2 per cent of pregnant people infected with COVID-19. Unlike many pregnancy complications, the risk of placentitis and stillbirth isn't linked to the severity of the virus.

Placentas are at risk next to impossible

Dr Elisheva Shanes, a co-investigator of the study and assistant professor of perinatal and autopsy pathology at Feinberg, said that makes predicting which placentas are at risk next to impossible because an asymptomatic infection could just as easily have complications as a very sick person. Using a biorepository of blood taken from pregnant people during the pandemic in 2020, the scientists looked at the blood of participants who had tested positive for COVID-19 during pregnancy – six who were positive for placentitis and 12 controls who were not. Then, scientists at the Center for Pathogen Genomics and Microbial Evolution looked for RNA of the virus in maternal blood using the same PCR-based test usually performed on nasal swabs.

Low levels of viral RNA

Of those who had placentitis, two had low levels of viral RNA (called viremia) in their blood; none of the controls did. One of the people with viremia had a stillbirth, and the other had a good infant; all participants who tested negative for the marker delivered healthy babies. "The part of the placenta infected by the virus is also the part that's in contact with maternal blood," Shanes said. "So if there's an infection in these cells, the virus may also be found in the blood.

If a pregnant person had COVID and no placentitis, we wouldn't expect to find the virus in the blood." Most pregnant patients with COVID-19 will go on to have normal pregnancies. Improved versions of this test and additional studies to validate the finding could help obstetricians develop plans for those who are at a high risk of placentitis and stillbirth, Shanes said. Investigators plan to conduct follow-up studies with larger pools of participants and hope other labs will build on the small body of literature to further validate the findings. The best way to protect both the parent and baby is to get vaccinated, the authors said. In their observations, stillbirths have been more common in unvaccinated patients.

SOURCE: ANI

Pandemic upsurge continues, deaths drop by a fifth

THE Covid-19 pandemic continued its resurgence this week, in particular in Asia and Europe, but the number of related global deaths plunged by a fifth.

Here is the state of play based on AFP's database:

The average number of global daily cases increased over the week by 12 per cent to 1.8 million, after taking a new turn for the worse the week before, according to an AFP tally to Thursday.

Western European countries are seeing a rebound, including France, where the number of cases increased 35 per cent, while Italy and Britain were up 42 per cent each.

In Asia, several countries beat their own records, including South Korea, Vietnam and Thailand.

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

The pandemic's upturn

The pandemic's upturn is being driven by Oceania, where the number of new cases increased by 86 per cent compared to the previous week. They also increased 23 per cent in Asia and seven per cent in Europe.

However, the situation continues to greatly improve in Africa, where the numbers dropped 56 per cent.

In the Middle East, cases declined by 26 per cent, while the Latin America-Caribbean zone saw a fifth fewer cases and the United States-Canada zone registered a 12 per cent drop.

Laos recorded the biggest new case increase with 151 per cent over the week, followed by Ireland with 52 per cent more, South Korea 47 per cent, and Finland 44 per cent.

By head of population South Korea recorded the biggest number of new cases this week, with 5,288 per 100,000 people.

Austria followed with 3,484, New Zealand (2,706), Cyprus (2,613) and the Netherlands (2,504).

The number of Covid-linked deaths continued to decline, shrinking 20 per cent to an average of 5,401 a day.

Return to in-person classes in September 2021 in Brazil. Safe reopening of schools in the northeastern state of Rio Grande do Norte, in Brazil. **PHOTO: ALESSANDRO POTTER /UNICEF**

The decline was reflected in all regions of the world.

Hong Kong reported by far the highest death rate in proportion to population with 26.49 per 100,000 inhabitants.

It was followed at a distance by Latvia with 4.61, Denmark 4.33, Slovakia 4.08 and Chile 3.76.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 20 March 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs MST today, the depression over South Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal has moved North-North-eastwards and it is centred at about (210) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Coco Island, about (330) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Hainggyikyun, about (370) Nautical miles Southwest of Dawei, about (330) Nautical miles West-Northwest of Kawthoung (Myanmar), about (415) Nautical miles Southwest of Yangon, about (80) Nautical miles North of Nicobar Islands and about (60) Nautical miles South-Southeast of Port Blair (India). Weather is cloudy over the Andaman Sea, East Central and Southeast Bay and a few cloud elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 21 March 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi Region, fairly widespread in Kayin and Mon states, scattered in Bago, Yangon, and Ayeyawady regions and Kayah State and isolated in Kachin, (Southern and Eastern) Shan and Rakhine states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40)mph. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (9–12) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (5-7) feet off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of fairly widspread to widespread rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi regions and Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 March 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 March 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 March 2022: Partly cloudy.

Advertise With Us
The Global New Light of Myanmar
PLEASE CALL
09 974 424 848

NEWS IN BRIEF

China's highest-altitude mega hydropower plant fully operational

WITH the last 500,000-kW power generation unit officially putting into use, a mega hydropower plant built at an average altitude of 3,000 meters, the highest one of its kind in China, went fully operational on Friday.

With a planned total installed capacity of 3 million kW, the Lianghekou hydropower plant is located on the Yalong River in Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Garze, southwest China's Sichuan Province.

Construction of the project, with an approved investment of 66.5 billion yuan (about 10.5 billion U.S. dollars), started in October 2014 and is expected to be fully completed by 2023, according to the Yalong River Hydropower Development Company, Ltd. — Xinhua ■

New microscopic organisms found in deep sea trench baffle Chile scientists

WHEN Chilean scientist Osvaldo Ulloa led an expedition 8,000 meters under the sea to an area where no human had ever been, his team discovered microscopic organisms that generated more questions than answers.

The January submarine expedition dove into the Atacama Trench, created by the meeting of two tectonic plates in the eastern Pacific Ocean. — AFP ■

Netherlands doubles wind energy targets for 2030

THE Dutch government on Friday doubled its forecasts for offshore wind power generation in the country by 2030 as the Netherlands seeks to curb its reliance on fossil fuels and imports from Russia.

"This is an important step in the transition to more sustainable energy," said Dutch Climate and Energy Minister Rob Jetten in a statement. By 2030, the Netherlands also hopes to "produce much more sustainable energy so that it no longer has to import carbon, gas and oil from other countries like Russia," Jetten said, speaking to NOS national broadcaster. — Xinhua ■

Second class from China's space station scheduled on March 23

Shenzhou XIII crew members Wang Yaping (left) and Ye Guangfu give a lecture to students on 9 December 2021 from China's space station. During the class, fellow astronaut Zhai Zhigang introduced the special uniform Ye was wearing, saying it is called a "penguin jumpsuit". **PHOTO: ZHANG JINJIA/XINHUA**

THE second lecture from China's Tiangong space station is scheduled at 3:40 pm on 23 March, the China Manned Space Agency announced Friday.

The lecture will be given by the Shenzhou-13 astronauts Zhai Zhigang, Wang Yaping and Ye Guangfu.

The upcoming lecture, the second of the "Tiangong Class" series, will also be held as a space-Earth talk among the astronaut crew in space and the youth on Earth, aiming to ignite their aspirations for science and space.

This time, they will conduct diverse experiments such as crystallization of saturated liquid, liquid bridge, and water-oil separation in space.

They will also demonstrate the difference between throwing objects in space and on Earth, and show the audience space science facilities.

The three Chinese astronauts went into space aboard the Shenzhou-13 spacecraft and entered China's space station on 16 October, embarking on the country's longest-ever crewed space mission. The upcoming class will be the second by Chinese astronauts from the country's space station and the third by Chinese astronauts from space. — Xinhua ■

Belgium delays nuclear energy exit by 10 years due to Ukraine war

BELGIUM on Friday delayed by a decade a plan to scrap nuclear energy in 2025, spooked by the huge rise in energy prices due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"The federal government has decided to take the necessary steps to extend the life of two nuclear reactors by ten years," Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said in a statement.

"This extension will strengthen our country's independence from fossil fuels in a turbulent geopolitical environment," he added.

The push to 2035 comes as calls are rising that neighbouring Germany, Europe's biggest economy, should also rethink its nuclear energy exit, but ministers in Berlin last week doubled down on their country's no atom pledge despite the price shock.

Europe is scrambling to find ways to wean itself off its energy dependency on Russia, which provides 40 percent of Europe's gas needs, mainly to Germany, Italy and several central European countries.

Prices have skyrocketed for Europeans since the invasion by Russia of Ukraine and EU leaders will meet next week to agree on fresh emergency measures to soften the blow for consumers and businesses.

Belgium currently, operates two nuclear power plants with a total of seven reactors.

The Tihange Nuclear Power Station is one of two nuclear energy production sites in Belgium and contains 3 nuclear power plants. **PHOTO: HULLIE /CC BY-SA 3.0/WIKI/AFP**

The promise of a gradual phase-out of nuclear power has been enshrined in Belgian law since 2003 and the decision to again delay the moratorium was fiercely resisted by the Greens party. — AFP ■

Antarctica hits record temperatures, say experts

Normally, temperatures fall with the end of the southern summer, but the Dumont d'Urville station on Antarctica registered record temperatures for March with 4.9C (40.82F), at a time of year when normally temperatures are already sub-zero. **PHOTO: JOHAN ORDONEZ/AFP**

EASTERN Antarctica has recorded exceptionally high temperatures this week, more than 30 degrees Celsius above normal, say experts.

The Concordia research base at Dome C of the Antarctic, which is at an altitude of 3,000 metres (9,800 feet), on Friday registered a record -11.5 degrees Celsius (11.3 Fahrenheit), Etienne Kapikian, a meteorologist from France-Meteo tweeted.

Normally, temperatures fall with the end of the southern summer, but the Dumont d'Urville station on Antarctica registered record temperatures for March with 4.9C (40.82F), at a time of year when normally temperatures are already sub-zero.

Gaetan Heymes of France Meteo described the unseasonably mild weather as a "historic event".

And geoscientist Jonathan Wille wrote on Twitter: "And there it is, Concordia broke its all time record temperature by 1.5°C. "This is when temperatures should be rapidly falling since the summer solstice in December. "This is a Pacific Northwest 2021 heat wave kind of event," he added. "Never supposed to happen." — AFP ■

India's daily COVID-19 cases drop below 2,000 mark, positivity rate at 0.41 pc

WHILE several countries in the world are witnessing a fresh COVID-19 wave, India continued to witness a declining trend with daily infections dropping below the 2,000 mark on Sunday. In the last 24 hours, 4,31,973 tests were conducted and 1,761 new cases were found positive across the country. On Saturday, India had logged 2,075 fresh infections. The active caseload further declined to 26,240.

They account for 0.06 per cent of the country's total positive cases, as per government data. Total 3,196 people recovered from the infection in the last 24 hours, increasing the cumulative tally to 4,24,65,122.

While several countries in the world are witnessing a fresh COVID-19 wave, India continued to witness a declining trend with daily infections dropping below the 2,000 mark on Sunday. **PHOTO: ANI**

Consequently, the recovery rate improved to 98.74 per cent. Both the daily and weekly positivity rates stood at 0.41 per cent.

With 127 deaths recorded in the last 24 hours, the death toll of the country rose to 5,16,479. The case fatality rate is at 1.20 per cent. Meanwhile, India's COVID-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 181.21 crores. A total of 1,81,21,11,675 vaccine doses have been administered so far, as per provisional reports till 7 am today.

This has been achieved through 2,13,75,059 sessions, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said in a statement. Over 17 lakh vaccine doses have been administered to the age group 12-14 years, whose vaccinated commenced on March 16 this year.

As many as 17,36,464 children in the said age group have taken their first dose of the Corbevax vaccine. 'Precaution dose', whose identified beneficiaries include frontline workers, healthcare workers and those above the age of 60 years, have been given to 2,17,33,502 people so far. — ANI ■

Hong Kong COVID-19 cases cross 1 million

HONG Kong's COVID-19 case count surpassed 1 million on Friday, amid the fifth and the worst wave of the disease.

As many as 20,082 new COVID-19 infections were reported in the city on Friday, of which 12,116 were identified through rapid tests, Hong Kong Free Press (HKFP) reported. As of Thursday, Hong Kong reported 996,862 COVID-19 infections and 5,136 people lost their lives to its fifth-wave COVID-19 outbreak, according to Hong Kong's Centre for Health Protection (CHP). Chuang Shuk-Kwan, the head of the CHP's Communicable Disease Branch, during the press briefing on Thursday said that over the past week, the number of daily cases had gone "up and down" around 30,000 and authorities needed to observe the statistics for a few more days before a conclusion could be drawn. ANI ■

Around 1.24 billion people in China fully vaccinated against COVID-19

NEARLY 1.24 billion people across the Chinese mainland had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as of Friday, a Chinese health official said Saturday.

Mi Feng, spokesperson for the National Health Commission (NHC), released the data at a press conference, adding that close to 3.22 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses had been administered on the mainland.

Citizens receive COVID-19 testing at a mobile testing station in a park in Hong Kong, south China, 10 February 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA/LO PING FAI**

Lei Zhenglong, another NHC official, said that 649.16 million people had received a booster jab as of Friday. More than 80 per cent of people aged 60 and above had taken at least two doses of the vaccine.

Studies show that a booster jab is effective in preventing death or severe conditions, Lei noted, advising elderly people who have not been vaccinated and those who meet the conditions for booster immunization to get inoculated as soon as possible. Cautioning against relaxing precautions in the face of the still raging pandemic, Mi Feng called for earlier, faster and stricter implementation of the current measures for COVID-19 prevention and control. — Xinhua ■

NEW DIGEST

THE following are the updates on the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN — Brunei reported 1,465 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, bringing the national tally to 123,422.

All the new cases were local infections, the country's health ministry said.

As of Friday, 59.4 per cent of Brunei's 420,000 population had received three doses of the COVID-19 vaccines, while more than 94 per cent of Brunei's population have received one dose and two doses.

The COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer, BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Sinopharm are administered in Brunei.

The health ministry reported two more deaths in the past 24 hours, bringing the death tally to 180.

Currently, Brunei has 14,423 active cases and has registered 108,819 recoveries.

- - - - - - - - - -

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina reported 14,416 new COVID-19 infections over the last 24 hours, raising the total tally to 9,004,829, said the country's Health Ministry.

Meanwhile, 77 more deaths were registered in the past day, taking the total death toll to 127,439, the ministry said, adding there are currently 74,185 active cases in the South American country.

Health Minister Carla Vizzotti on Friday urged everyone in Argentina to get a booster shot against COVID-19, noting that "when the perception of risk declines, turnout at vaccination centers also goes down."

- - - - - - - - - -

DAR ES SALAAM — Tanzanian health authorities have released an updated COVID-19 international travel advisory in which fully vaccinated travellers, including Tanzanians, returning residents and those in transit, will be exempted from COVID-19 test requirements.

"Travellers will be required to present a valid vaccination certificate with QR code for verification upon arrival," said the updated COVID-19 travel advisory released late Friday by the Ministry of Health.

The travel advisory that became effective from March 17 and signed by the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Health Abel Makubi said the only accepted vaccines are those which have been approved by the government of Tanzania and the World Health Organization.

- - - - - - - - - -

QUITO — Ecuadorian President Guillermo Lasso on Friday announced the lifting of caps on indoor capacity at offices, shops, restaurants and other venues amid a significant decline in COVID-19 infections, deaths and hospitalizations in the country.

Nearly 14 million Ecuadorians, almost 85 per cent of the population, are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, facilitating economic recovery, Lasso told reporters in the port city of Guayaquil, after the country's National Emergency Operations Committee approved the lifting of capacity limits.

Meanwhile, Ecuadorian Health Minister Ximena Garzon said the government aims to achieve a COVID-19 positivity rate below 5 per cent by May.

- - - - - - - - - -

OTTAWA — Canada's chief public health officer on Friday called for more people to get a booster to make the public health system more resilient as the country began to lift COVID-19 restriction measures, such as limits on social gatherings and mask mandates.

Speaking at a press conference, Theresa Tam said that COVID-19 policies may soon shift from "an emphasis on requirements to recommendations" and that it Is critically important that more people, especially for those 50 years of age or older, get a booster dose.

SOURCE: XINHUA

Russia-Ukraine conflict heightens worries over Indian economy

THE ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine is casting a heavy cloud over the Indian economy. The surge in international costs of commodities driven by the conflict is creating a drag on India, which is pursuing an economic recovery following two deadly waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. The strict lockdown imposed by the South Asian country during the pandemic has sent its growth in a downward spiral.

Ukraine is the fifth largest exporter of wheat, accounting for seven per cent of sales globally in 2019. A combine harvesting picks up the wheat on a field near the Krasne village, in the Chernihiv area, 120 km to the north from Kyiv, on 5 July 2019. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

According to official data, India's gross domestic product growth during the financial year 2021-22 is estimated at 8.9 per cent after a 6.6 per cent contraction last fiscal year. While that recovery will be one of the quickest among major economies, it is still slower than the 9.2 per cent expansion projected by the government last month.

RISING FOOD PRICES, FARMING COSTS

As Ukraine and Russia, two major suppliers of agri-products, are caught up in the conflict, the cost of edible oils may well skyrocket in India in the days to come. Agri-commodity pundits and future traders are putting a big bet on mustard. Insiders said that hoarding has also begun in parts of the country. Russia and Ukraine together supply 90 per cent of India's sunflower oil. India's imports from Ukraine stood at 2.6 billion US dollars in 2021, of which 1.85 billion dollars were spent on vegetable oils, mainly sunflower oil. With tensions escalating, traders and experts are expecting a hike in prices. "Indian frying pans may miss this precious oil, and with no healthier alternatives, prices are already up and shipping companies are charging higher insurance premiums for freight consignments from the Black Sea," said Indra Shekhar Singh, an independent agri-policy analyst.— Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

China's trade with N Korea recovers to 50% of pre-pandemic levels

CHINA'S trade with North Korea recovered to about 50 per cent of pre-coronavirus pandemic levels in January and February, government data showed Friday.

The comparison with the same months in 2019 shows the impact of resumption in railway freight between the two countries in late January after around two years of hiatus and points to further recovery in bilateral trade in the coming months.

In February, the total value of China's trade with North Korea spiked 57 per cent from the same month in 2019 to $60.9 million, after a 40 per cent increase to $75.4 million the previous month, according to the Chinese General Administration of Customs.

The bilateral trade plunged nearly 90 per cent in 2021 from 2019, as leader Kim Jong Un bolstered antivirus measures, including closing its border with China.

North Korea had cut off land traffic to and from China amid concern that the virus, first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019, could enter the country. Pyongyang claims it has found no COVID-19 infection cases. — Kyodo ■

Serbian, Hungarian leaders inaugurate section of Belgrade-Budapest railway

AN inauguration ceremony was held at the railway station in Novi Sad, Serbia's second largest city, on Saturday for the Belgrade-Novi Sad section of the 350-kilometer Belgrade-Budapest railway.

The ceremony was attended by Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Prime Minister Ana Brnabic, as well as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and representatives of the Chinese and Russian embassies in Serbia.

The Serbian president said the 75-kilometer-long railway section was built by Chinese and Russian companies, and German companies installed surveillance, and the trains were manufactured in Switzerland.

Orban congratulated the Serbians on the newly built railway, saying that the two countries have historical good ties.

"In the past 70 years we have been connecting countries in the east-west direction and forgot the importance of north-south connections," Orban said, "this resulted in an inappropriate situation that it took too many hours to arrive from Belgrade to Budapest."

"So we made an alliance with President Vucic aiming to change this, and we will succeed in this effort," Orban added. — Xinhua ■

China details efforts to boost agricultural production

CHINA'S top economic planner has detailed tasks to boost agricultural production, urging efforts to stabilize grain output, expand the planting of soybean and oilseed crops, and ensure the supply of farm produce.

A worker checks the growing condition of rice with a drone at the Sanhe farm in Xingde Village of Huinan County, northeast China's Jilin Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHANG NAN/FILE**

Primary agriculture production areas should improve their comprehensive grain production capacity, said a National Development and Reform Commission circular. The main sales areas should effectively stabilize and increase grain self-sufficiency rates, while regions where agriculture production and sales are balanced should ensure basic self-sufficiency.

Vigorous efforts should be made to expand the planting of soybean and oilseed crops to support coordinated development between grain and oilseed crops production, said the circular.

The economic planner also called for close attention to the supply and demand of live pigs, pledging to take targeted measures to stabilize the basic production capacity and prevent fluctuations. — Xinhua ■

LNG projects in the Gulf of Mexico boosted as Russian gas alternative

An LNG processing plant is seen in Cameron, Louisiana in August 2020. **PHOTO: AFP/ ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS /FILE**

TWO years ago, the American liquified natural gas (LNG) company Tellurian was in free fall: Its stock price collapsed, it laid off 40 per cent of its staff, and suspended a key project in Louisiana.

Now, executive chairman Charif Souki says investors "are lining up at the door to ask me: 'Can we finance your project?'"

At the annual CERAWeek energy conference in Houston, Souki told AFP that LNG projects have been boosted by the renewed emphasis on energy independence after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "Global market demand and the desire of the Europeans to divest from their reliance on Russian gas… those are all positive market signals, which will obviously help stimulate those projects and get them moving towards final investment decisions," said Charlie Riedl, vice president of the natural gas industry's advocacy group. — AFP ■

GM buying out SoftBank's $2.1 bn stake in Cruise self-driving cars

AMERICAN automaker General Motors announced Friday it is acquiring SoftBank's $2.1 billion stake in its autonomous car venture Cruise.

In addition, GM will chip in another $1.35 billion investment to cover a commitment made in 2018 by the Vision Fund of SoftBank, a Japanese telecom giant.

The Detroit firm has ramped up its investments in autonomous technology and its build-out of electric vehicle capacity as it looks to curb emissions and engage in a technology race with Tesla and other self-driving ventures.

Cruise last month opened a sign-up page to allow consumers to take a driverless ride.

"Cruise has made self-driving cars a reality and is a leader on the pathway to commercial autonomous ridesharing and delivery, creating significant value for both GM shareholders and Cruise's minority shareholders," GM said in a statement.

GM bought Cruise Automation in 2017, which was spun out as a separate company in May 2018.

GM is the main investor in the venture, which also is backed by Microsoft, Honda and Walmart.

Late last year, the company announced plans to boost investment in electric and autonomous vehicle technology by $7 billion to $27 billion through 2025.

GM chief Mary Barra has said the goal is to have a "world with zero crashes, zero emissions and zero congestion." — AFP ■

Dubai's transport authority has signed an agreement with Cruise, a General Motors unit, to operate its autonomous vehicles in the emirate by 2023. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED/AFP**

Shenzhen launches chartered freight flights to Hong Kong

This undated file photo shows cargo being loaded onto a flight of SF Express Co Ltd in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. **PHOTO: CHEN WEN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE/XINHUA**

THE southern Chinese metropolis of Shenzhen has launched a chartered air-freight service to Hong Kong, starting Saturday.

Early on Saturday morning, a Boeing 767 freighter operated by SF Airlines left Shenzhen for its neighbour Hong Kong, carrying 45 tonnes of goods, including donated anti-pandemic materials and also export goods from local businesses.

The freighter will fly six times a week, with the chartered service initially planned to last until early April.

The air-freight service was launched after the cross-border truck-freight capacity between Shenzhen and Hong Kong was reduced due to COVID-19.

The flights will help guarantee the transport of anti-pandemic materials for Hong Kong, as well as meeting the transport demands of enterprises in Shenzhen and neighbouring regions, thereby safeguarding the safety and stability of the supply chain and industrial chain.

Shenzhen previously launched three express shipping routes, as well as freight-train transport, to ensure the supply of materials to Hong Kong. — Xinhua ■

Japan to invest 42 billion USD in India over next 5 years

JAPAN will invest 42 billion U.S. dollars in India over the next five years, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced here Saturday, accompanied by visiting Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Addressing the media after their meeting, the two noted with appreciation the significant growth in economic cooperation between the two countries. They expressed satisfaction that the investment target of 3.5 trillion Japanese Yen (29 billion US dollars) announced in 2014 had been achieved, said a joint statement issued after their talks.

The joint statement also said that the two welcomed the launch of the India-Japan Clean Energy Partnership for cooperation towards achieving sustainable economic growth, addressing climate change and ensuring energy security. They also discussed regional and global issues during their talks. — Xinhua ■

Sri Lanka cancels school exams over paper shortage

SRI Lanka cancelled exams for millions of school students as the country ran out of printing paper with Colombo short on dollars to finance imports, officials said Saturday.

Education authorities said the term tests, scheduled a week from Monday, were postponed indefinitely due to an acute paper shortage as Sri Lanka contends with its worst financial crisis since independence in 1948.

"School principals cannot hold the tests as printers are unable to secure foreign exchange to import necessary paper and ink," the department of Education of the Western Province said. — AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PHUC THAI VOY.NO. (2219S/2220N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PHUC THAI VOY.NO. (2219S/2220N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-3-2022** 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.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HIDAYAH VOY.NO. (0321N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HIDAYAH VOY.NO. (0321N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-3-2022** 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.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (189W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (189W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-3-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

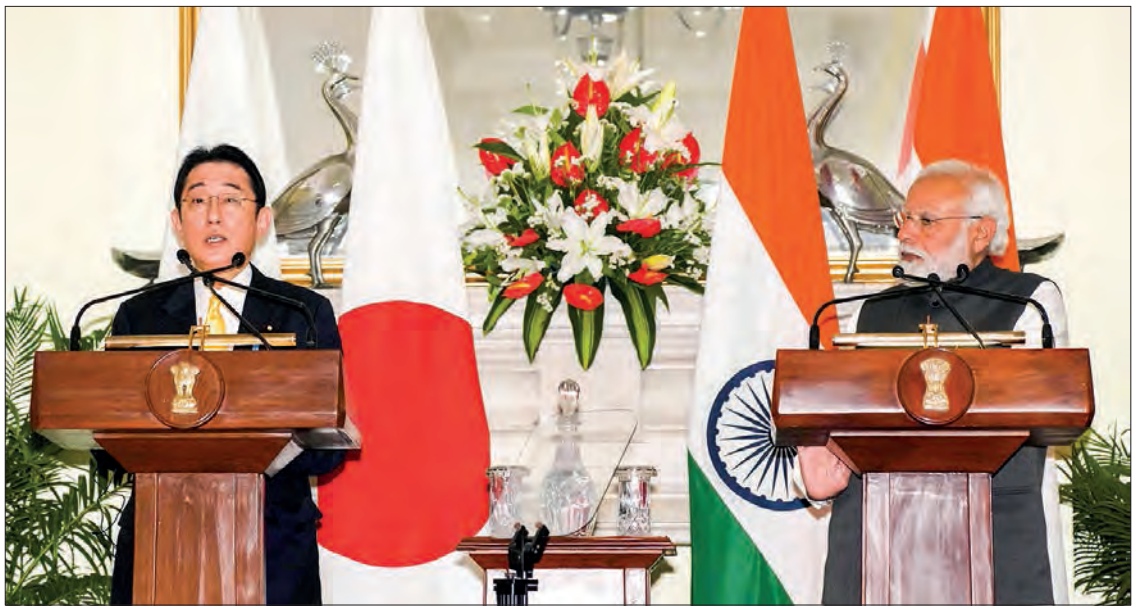
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Kishida, Modi urge immediate halt to violence in Ukraine



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (L) and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi attend a joint press conference after holding talks in New Delhi on 19 March 2022. **PHOTO: KYODO**

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi on Saturday called for an immediate halt to the violence in Ukraine in response to Russia's aggression on its neighbour.

In a joint statement issued after their meeting in New Delhi, Kishida and Modi underscored the importance of safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, and pledged to take steps to address the humanitarian crisis in the Eastern European country.

The leaders called for "an immediate cessation of violence and noted that there was no other choice but the path of dialogue and diplomacy for resolution of the conflict," the statement said.

Calling Japan and India "two leading powers in the Indo-Pacific region," Kishida and Modi vowed to "meet challenges against the rules-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas," taking aim at Beijing's assertive claims in regional waters.

They "emphasized the importance of non-militarization and self-restraint," the statement said, in reference to Beijing's militarization of outposts in disputed areas of the South China Sea and repeated incursions by official Chinese ships into Japanese waters around the Senkaku Islands, a group of East China Sea islets controlled by Tokyo but claimed by Beijing. — Kyodo ■

Israel urges US not to drop Iran Guards from terror list

ISRAEL on Friday appealed to the United States not to remove Iran's Revolutionary Guards from its blacklist of foreign terrorist organisations as part of a revived nuclear deal.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps "is a terrorist organisation that has murdered thousands of people, including Americans," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said in a joint statement.

"We refuse to believe that the United States would remove its designation as a terrorist organisation," they said.

The statement comes after the United States on Wednesday said Washington and Tehran were close to agreement on restoring the 2015 nuclear accord.

"We are close to a possible deal, but we're not there yet," said State Department spokesman Ned Price. "We do think the remaining issues can be bridged."

Sources close to the talks said outstanding issues included Tehran's demands for Washington to delist the Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist group.

The United States designated the Guards as a "foreign terrorist organisation" under then-president Donald Trump in April 2019.

It came the year after Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from the nuclear deal, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is a branch of the Iranian Armed Forces, founded after the Iranian Revolution on 22 April 1979 by order of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The JCPOA gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

It was seen by world powers as the best way to stop Iran from building a nuclear bomb — a goal it has always denied. — AFP ■

Thousands protest racism, police brutality, in French cities

Police put the Paris turnout at 2,100, while organise said at least 8,000 marched. **PHOTO: AFP**

THOUSANDS of people in several French cities marched Saturday to protest racism and police brutality.

In Paris, protesters paraded through the city centre behind a banner condemning "state crimes". Other demonstrators carried "Black Lives Matter" banners.

Several people spoke at the rally to tell the stories of members of their families who had died at the hands of the police.

Interior ministry figures put the turnout out at 2,100, but the march organisers estimated 8,000-10,000.

The interior ministry said another 11 protests took place elsewhere in France, saying the total turnout for these protests was 1,400.

Other protests took place in Bordeaux and Toulouse in the southwest, and Lyon in the southeast.

Saturday's demonstration comes two days ahead of International Day for the Elimination of Racism.

It is held on 21 March to mark the day, in 1960, that police in apartheid South Africa opened fire on a peaceful demonstration, killing 69 people. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran's navy commander warns foreign forces off Gulf waters

The navy commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Saturday warned foreign forces off the regional waters, noting regional countries are responsible for security in the Gulf, Press TV reported.

The IRGC Navy has boosted control over the Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and north of the Indian Ocean by equipping its units with advanced homegrown defense hardware, said Alireza Tangsiri at a meeting with officials and commanders of the IRGC Navy's bases. – Xinhua ■

Russia not to initiate reconciliation with West: Lavrov

RUSSIA remains open to cooperation with Western countries, but will not initiate an improvement in the relations with them, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Saturday.

"Let's see how they will get out of the impasse they have driven themselves into. Their values, the principles of the free market, the inviolability of private property, and the presumption of innocence are all trampled on by themselves," he said. According to Lavrov, the United States is sending diplomats to many countries to ask them to withdraw from cooperation with Russia. – AFP ■

US basketball star detained in Russia, in shadow of Ukraine war

DETAINED for more than a month in Russia, US basketball star Brittney Griner has become an unlikely victim of the war in Ukraine – and the best way to free her remains a crucial question. Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist and WNBA champion, was detained in Moscow airport on 17 February on charges of carrying vape cartridges that contained cannabis oil in her luggage. She was immediately placed in a detention center, and on Thursday a Russian court extended her arrest until 19 May. – AFP ■

With Ukraine, Vatican balances diplomacy and inter-faith ties

Pope Francis on Saturday visited Ukrainian children who have fled the Russian invasion and are being cared for at the Vatican's paediatric hospital in Rome. The Bambino Gesu hospital is treating 19 Ukrainian children. **PHOTO: HANDOUT /VATICAN MEDIA/AFP**

THE Vatican has long played global mediator but has struggled to make its mark in the Ukraine conflict, walking a tightrope between its desire for peace and ties with the Russian Orthodox Church.

With a self-proclaimed "willingness" to help in the negotiations, Pope Francis' unprecedented visit to the Russian embassy and high-level phone calls, the Holy See has spared no effort since Russia invaded Ukraine last month to achieve a ceasefire.

But despite past successes, notably in the historic rapprochement between Cuba and the United States in 2014, its attempts to play peacemaker in the Ukraine conflict have yet to yield results.

This is because, say analysts, the Argentine pontiff has been forced to perform a diplomatic balancing act.

He has been drawn into the conflict as the spiritual guide of five to six million Catholics in Ukraine.

But the Vatican has also spent years fostering closer ties with the Russian Orthodox Church led by Patriarch Kirill — a close ally of President Vladimir Putin and a key pillar of his ruling apparatus.

This led in 2016 to the historic meeting between Pope Francis and Kirill, the first encounter by the heads of the two churches since Christianity split into Western and Eastern branches in the 11th century.

In December, the pontiff even raised the possibility of going to Moscow to meet with this "brother" Kirill in the near future.

Francis "is inevitably considered as both judge and party" in the conflict, noted Bernard Lecomte, a specialist in the Vatican and eastern Europe.

The result has been a series of public statements by the pope condemning the war in increasingly emotive terms — without ever mentioning Russia as the aggressor. – AFP ■

Russia-Ukraine conflict continues amid efforts for peaceful solution

THE Russia-Ukraine conflict continues on Sunday as relevant parties are working to broker a peaceful solution.

Russian President Vladimir Putin had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Xavier Bettel, on Saturday, declaring the "unacceptable nature" of the military-biological activities of the United States in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Vyacheslav Volodin, chairman of Russia's lower house of parliament, said Saturday that the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) must stop supplying weapons and sending mercenaries to Ukraine.

Russian Defence Ministry announced the use of the Kinzhal hypersonic missiles to destroy a large warehouse of missiles and aviation ammunition of Ukrainian troops in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, according to Russian state news agency RIA Novosti.

According to RIA, it was the first use of the Kinzhal hypersonic weapons since the start of Moscow's "special military operation" in Ukraine.

Russian presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky, also head of the Russian delegation in several rounds of talks with Ukraine, said Friday that the two sides have moved closer to agreement on the key issue of Ukraine dropping attempts to join NATO and adopting a neutral status.

For the Ukrainian side, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for comprehensive peace talks with Moscow, saying Russia would otherwise need generations to recover from losses suffered during the war.

Ukraine's defence ministry admitted it had "temporarily" lost access to the Sea of Azov while Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said that Ukraine hopes to evacuate civilians on Saturday via 10 humanitarian corridors from cities and towns on the front line of fighting with Russian forces. Presidential Advisor Mykhailo Podolyak said on Friday that Ukraine's positions at the peace talks with Russia remain unchanged. – CGTN/Xinhua ■

Russian Offensive Edges Deeper Into Kyiv, More Talks Planned. **PHOTO: ANI**

NEWS DIGEST

HERE are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine:

Azovstal steel works damaged

Ukrainian officials say one of Europe's biggest iron and steel works, Azovstal, has been badly damaged by Russian forces.

"We will return to the city, rebuild the enterprise and revive it," Azovstal's director general Enver Tskitishvili writes on messaging app Telegram, without specifying the extent of the damage.

Hypersonic weapons

Russia says it has used hypersonic missiles for the first time in Ukraine to destroy a weapons storage site in the west of the country.

Hypersonic missiles travel faster than the speed of sound and can manoeuvre mid-flight, making them hard to track and intercept.

Russia's defence ministry says it used the technology to strike an underground arms depot in the village of Deliatyn, around 100 kilometres (62 miles) from Ukraine's border with Romania.

Air raids on Mykolaiv

Russian air raids on Mykolaiv were taking place in quick succession Saturday, Vitaly Kim, head of the regional administration, says, a day after a deadly strike on a military barracks in the southern Ukrainian city.

Dozens of soldiers are thought to have been killed after Friday's strike on the barracks, witnesses tell AFP as rescue operations continue. An official toll has not yet been given.

Russians in central Mariupol

Russia says its forces have broken through the defences of the besieged southern port of Mariupol and are now inside the war-torn city.

The mayor of Mariupol confirms to the BBC that Ukrainian and Russian forces are engaged in gun battles in the heart of the southern port, which has suffered relentless shelling.

Zelensky blasts Nestle, banks

In a live address to a Swiss rally, President Volodymyr Zelensky blasts firms including food giant Nestle for carrying on business as usual with Russia "even though our children are dying" and tells the country's banks to freeze funds belonging to the Kremlin elite.

Japan presses India to act

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida urges India's Narendra Modi to take a tougher line on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but a joint statement after talks in Delhi falls short of condemning Moscow's actions.

'Time to meet', says Zelensky

Zelensky calls for urgent talks with Russia, saying in a Facebook video they are the "only chance for Russia to minimise the damage done with their own mistakes".

He has been pushing for direct talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Moscow claims that several rounds of negotiations have made progress on one of its key demands -- that Ukraine becomes a neutral state. Kyiv, which is demanding international security guarantees, denies its position has changed.

'Dire' situation in east

The UN warns that the humanitarian needs are becoming ever more urgent across eastern Ukraine, with a potentially fatal lack of food, water and medicines in besieged cities such as Mariupol and Sumy.

SOURCE: AGENCIES

Myanmar miss third place in Thai Futsal Invitation

THE third-place and final matches of the NSDF Futsal Invitation Championship 2022, or the Thai Invitational Futsal Championship, was held on 20 March and the Myanmar team lost in the third place match.

The Myanmar team played against Oman in the third-placed match and lost in the penalty shootouts.

Myanmar and Oman drew 3 goals in normal match and were decided by the penalty shootouts.

In the first half, both teams drew 1-1. The second half ended in a two-goal draw, with Oman winning by 5-4 and finishing third place with a total of 8-7 in the penalty shootouts.

Myo Thet Aung, Chan Thar and Naing Lin Tun Kyaw scored important goals for team Myanmar during the match against Oman. The Myanmar Futsal squad entered the tournament in preparation for the ASEAN Futsal Championship in April and finished as a fourth placed team.

The Myanmar team will continue its training in Thailand after the tourney, officials said.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Liverpool reel in Man City for another 'insane' title tussle

LIVERPOOL and Manchester City are embroiled in another tense fight for the Premier League title with both sides having aspirations of multiple trophy-winning seasons in the final few months of the campaign.

City appeared to be cruising towards a fourth Premier League title in five seasons when a 1-0 victory over Chelsea in mid-January took them 13 points clear at the top and 14 ahead of Liverpool.

Two months on, the gap is down to one point as Liverpool have made full use of two games in hand and a few rare slip-ups from the champions to set up another fascinating title race between two of the best sides the English football has ever known.

Pep Guardiola's reign in Manchester and Jurgen Klopp's revival of sleeping giant in Liverpool have consistently seen the record books re-written in recent years.

Liverpool and Manchester City are embroiled in another tense fight for the Premier League title with both sides having aspirations of multiple trophy-winning seasons in the final few months of the campaign. **PHOTO: AFP**

Record breakers

Between them City and Liverpool have lifted the last four Premier League titles and at least one has reached three of the last four Champions League finals. Three years ago a historic title race was also decided by a solitary point as City's 98 held off Liverpool's 97.— AFP ■

Milan maintain title charge at Cagliari as Inter lose more ground

Ismael Bennacer's stunning winning volley was his second of the season. **PHOTO: AFP**

AC Milan kept hold of their three-point lead at the top of Serie A on Saturday with a 1-0 win at Cagliari, while Inter Milan fell further behind their local rivals after being held 1-1 by Fiorentina.

Ismael Bennacer struck the only goal in the 59th minute of a hard-fought match in Sardinia to keep Napoli at arm's length after they briefly drew level on points thanks to Victor Osimhen's double in a 2-1 win over Udinese.

A third win on the bounce for Stefano Pioli's side stretched their unbeaten league run to eight games and increased hopes of a first Scudetto since 2011, but it was a match marred by racist abuse directed at Mike Maignan and Fikayo Tomori from a section of home fans at the final whistle which sparked a on-pitch shoving match.

"Maignan said to me 'It's not possible that we're hearing these sorts of insults'," Pioli told DAZN.— AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

(a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.

(b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

(c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

(a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.

(b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.

(c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

(a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.

(b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.

(c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Lukaku strikes as Chelsea reach FA Cup semi-finals

THOMAS Tuchel saluted Chelsea's focus as they reached the FA Cup semi-finals for the third successive season after Romelu Lukaku inspired a 2-0 win against Championship side Middlesbrough on Saturday.

In what could have been a potential upset, Tuchel's team were never troubled as they made it six successive victories since Roman Abramovich put the European champions up for sale. Unsettled Belgian striker Lukaku opened the scoring with just his second goal in seven games. Hakim Ziyech increased Chelsea's advantage before the interval at the Riverside Stadium.

The Blues killed off the quarter-final with minimal fuss after that, ensuring a last-four appearance at Wembley in April as they look to reach the final for a third consecutive year.

Chelsea are operating under a special licence allowing them to fulfil fixtures after the UK government sanctions on Abramovich in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A host of bidders submitted their offers to buy Chelsea from Abramovich before Friday's deadline, offering hope that their current predicament will soon be over. — AFP ■

Chelsea striker Romelu Lukaku scored againstMiddlesbrough. **PHOTO: AFP**