RECOGNIZE PREVENTION OF RECRUITMENT OF CHILD SOLDIERS IN MYANMAR PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Press Statement

Myanmar categorically rejects remarks made by US Secretary of State at Holocaust Memorial Museum

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs observed that Mr. Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States of America made a public announcement at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. on 21 March 2022 determining that the Myanmar Tatmadaw has committed genocide and crimes against Bengali Community in northern Rakhine State.

The Ministry wishes to reiterate that Myanmar as a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) under the Charter of the United Nations is fully committed to respecting all the existing obligations. As such Myanmar has never engaged in any genocidal actions and does not have any genocidal intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, racial or religious group or any other group.

The narratives mentioned in the speech of the Secretary of State are found to be far from realities and references made were also from unreliable and unverifiable sources as well as sweeping allegations.

The Ministry, thus, strongly objects and categorically rejects the remarks made by the Secretary of State of the United States of America as the contents and narratives therein are politically motivated and tantamount to interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
Dated, 22 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.

Music concert held in commemoration of 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander- in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, his wife Daw Than Than Nwe, senior Tatmadaw officers, their wives, other ranks and family members watch the music concert in Nay Pyi Taw on 22 March 2022.

POPULAR artistes held a music concert marking the 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day at Thabin Hall of Zeya Thiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The singers sang Myanmar classical and modern songs to the accompaniment of the Myawady music band.

The event was enjoyed by Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, his wife Daw Than Than Nwe, senior military officers of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and their wives, officers, other ranks and family members.

After the concert, the Vice-Senior General and wife cordially greeted the musicians. — MNA

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Objectives of 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

1. THE Tatmadaw to participate in the leading role of national politics for the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism while safe-guarding 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

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

Statement to appreciate teachers' efforts

TEACHERS are honoured as part of the Five Infinite Venerables, and the manner of paying respect to the teachers can be only seen in Myanmar as a tradition. The teachers teach their pupils based on their goodwill like their own children and dutifully serve a teacher's duties. They must train their pupils and students in the best discipline. They see that they grasp their lessons well. They instruct them in the arts and sciences, they provide for their safety in every quarter, and they introduce them to their friends and associates.

As the COVID-19 infection rate is controlled to a certain extent, the basic education high, middle and primary schools under the Department of Basic Education have reopened across nation for the 2021-2022 academic year starting 1 June.

Those who want to seek good sake of one party, political extremist NLD members and supporters, NUG, CRPH and PDF committed arson attacks at the schools using mines, homemade bombs and grenades to fail the teaching processes, and threatened the teachers in addition to the incitements, social punishment and threats against education staff to join CDM while the officials made preparations for the reopening of schools and during the current teaching period. Their doings left some causalities, and the State Administration Council has expressed its deepest condolences and sympathy to the victims' families.

The SAC also appreciates the concerted efforts of teachers, who understand two virtues, Hiri — shame at doing evil —and Otappa—fear of the results of doing evil —for teaching the new generations of the country amid such difficulties and challenges.

The security forces will take extraordinary measures to ensure the safety of teachers who are making efforts in the academic sector for the next generations in order to promote the education qualification. The people should keep security awareness and cooperate with the security members in community peace and peaceful learning of children.

Information Team
State Administration Council

12th Press Conference of SAC Information Team to be held

THE Information Team of the State Administration Council will hold the 12th Press Conference at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 1:00 pm on 24 March. Local and foreign media personnel are invited to the press conference. — MNA

12th Press Conference of Information Team to be broadcast live on 24 March

THE 12th Press Conference of the Information Team of the State Administration Council will be broadcast live on MRTV, MRTV News Channel, MWD Channel, MWD Variety Channel, MITV, MOI Website, MOI Youtube, MRTV Website and aired live on Radio Myanmar, Thazin FM, Mandalay FM, Pyinsawady FM, Shwe FM, Padamyar FM, Cherry FM and FM Bagan starting from 1:00 pm on 24 March, at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information. — MNA

To build strength within the country!

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

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

Final rites held for State Ovadacariya Chairman of Shwegyin Nikaya Dhipati Maha Nayaka Dhamma Senapati 15th Shwegyin Sangharaja Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijjota of Vijjotayon Monastery

THE final rites of late State Ovadacariya Chairman of Shwegyin Nikaya Dhipati Maha Nayaka Dhamma Senapati 15th Shwegyin Sangharaja Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Presiding Nayaka Bhaddanta Vijjota of Vijjotayon Monastery in Mayangon Township of Yangon Region took place at Silavisodhani Dhamma Singi Buddhist Ordination Hall of the monastery yesterday.

The event was attended by members of the Sangha led by Shwegyin Nikaya Upa Ukkatha Maha Nayaka Joint Shwegyin Sangharaja Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academies Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Sitagu Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nyanissara, State Administration Council Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Lt-Gen Thet Pon from the office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe, Deputy Minister U Aye Tun and officials.

First, the Sayadaw recited Sabbe Sankhara Aniccati Gatha to start the occasion.

Then, the attendees took Five Precepts from Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Jotika of Sasana Alinnyaung Monastery of Dawbon Township.

SAC Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe and congregation covered the remains of the Sayadaw by diamond velvet.

They then donated alms to the Sayadaws.

Afterwards, Yangon Region Sangha Nayaka (Shwegyin) Committe Member Presiding Sayadaw Maha Ganthavasaka Pandita Bhaddanta Candasiri of Sasana Wunsaung Monastery read out the biography of Vijjotayon Sayadaw.

Similarly, State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee member Presiding Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Visuddhasara Bhivamsa of Sasana Zawtayon Monastery read the Maha Theragurupuja Sanvejaniya and Uyojana Gatha of Shwegyin Nikaya Upa Ukkatha Maha Nayaka Joint Shwegyin Sangharaja Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Rector Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nandamala Bhivamsa.

Vice-President of State Sangha Maha Nayaka committee Agga Maha Pandita Presiding Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Candanasara of Ceylon Buddhist Learning Centre in Kyaukme Township of Shan State (North) the message of repentance sent by State Sangha Maha Nayaka committee while Shwegyin Nikaya Secretary Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Odatasiri Bhivamsa of Aweiya Yama Yankin Monastery of Mandalay read the one sent by Shwegyin Nikaya centre.

The final rites of late State Ovadacariya Chairman of Shwegyin Nikaya Dhipati Presiding Sayadaw in progress.

Then, Nayaka of Tipitaka Maha Gandhayon Monastery Shwe Nantha Tipitakadhara Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vasettha Lankara of Mingaladon Township read the Sanvegagitika Gatha of Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sasanavara (Dhammacariya, M.A) of Sein Yadana Dhammacariya Monastery of Dagon Township.

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko read out his message of repentance dedicated to the demise of the Sayadaw.

The SAC Secretary and the congregation listened to the sermon on remorse delivered by Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academies Dr Bhaddanta Nyanissara and the assembly shared merits gained.

The remains of the late Sayadaw were conveyed onto the Karaweik decorated float and then to Thuwunna Bhumi Even Park in Thingangyun Township, where the crematorium was built.

Then, the Sangha and congregation paid homage to the remains of Sayadaw going around the crematorium anticlockwise three times. Next, the remains of the Sayadaw were incinerated. The officials conveyed the ashes of the late Sayadaw to the monastery. — MNA

MoIC Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing receives Mr Stephan Sakalian, Resident Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Myanmar

U Ko Ko Hlaing, Union Minister for International Cooperation received Mr Stephan Sakalian, Resident Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Myanmar on 22 March 2022 at noon at the meeting room of the Union Minister at the Ministry of International Cooperation.

At the meeting, they exchanged views on the progress of ongoing humanitarian assistance provided by the ICRC and potential areas of further cooperation between Myanmar and the ICRC.—MNA

The MoIC Union Minister receives the ICRC Resident Representative in Myanmar yesterday.

Coord meeting discusses Myanmar-China trucking services

A working committee on Myanmar-China trade resumption held a coordinating meeting at 9:30 am on 22 March 2022 in the Kachin State government office, highlighting improving the trucking services through the Kampaiti border post and the systematic trucking.

A working committee on Myanmar-China trade resumption held a coordinating meeting at 9:30 am on 22 March 2022 in the Kachin State government office, highlighting improving the trucking services through the Kampaiti border post and the systematic trucking.

At the meeting, Kachin State Minister U Myo Swe for Economy, in his capacity as chairman of the committee, stated that cross-border trade between Myanmar and China resumed on account of the sustained efforts. Next, he urged the state committee members to monitor the truckers to ensure compliance with the COVID health protocols.

Later, committee vice-chair State Minister U Kyaw Mies Khaing for Ethnic Affairs, officials concerned from the committee, border checkpoints, State Freight Forwarders' Association and Crop Producers Association discussed matters regarding freight hauling conditions, COVID-19 testing and surveillance for truck drivers and preventive measures for cross border movements of goods as per the bilateral agreement, the exportation of agricultural products including tissue-culture banana, and increasing the number of trucks, and monitoring plans for trucking services.

The related ministers directed them to fulfil the needs. — State IPRD/GNLM

360 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 22 March, total figure rises to 609,648

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 609,648 after 360 new cases were reported on 22 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 565,813 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,427 after 2 died. —MNA

Official signs book of condolences over demise of Pakistani ex-president

ACTING Director-General of the Strategic Studies and Training Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Zaw Phyo Win signed the book of condolences for demise of Mr Muhammad Rafiq Tarar, former President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, at the Pakistani Embassy in Yangon.

Former President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mr Muhammad Rafiq Tarar, the ninth president of Pakistan from 1998 to 2001, passed away at the age of 92 on 7 March 2022. —MNA

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

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

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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.

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

THE Ministry of Commerce is overseeing the importation of essential medical supplies plus anti-COVID devices that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, through trading posts, international airports and seaports.

A total of 0.36 tonne of masks were imported via international seaports yesterday.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures for the import process.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments and treatment of COVID-19 as well as contact persons for inquires can be reached through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA

Two-mile paving work completed in Zadetgyi island coastal road

THE two miles paving work has been completed out of 66 miles of the Zadetgyi island coastal road in Kawthoung township, Kawthoung district of Taninthayi Region.

The process of paving work is conducted by the Progress of Border Areas and National Races Department of the Ministry of Border Affairs with K285.841 million of the Union fund during the six-month mini-budget period (October 2021-March 2022) for the development of border areas, according to the Taninthayi Region Development Supervisory Office.

Upgrading of the Zadetgyi Island coastal road is underway.

The coastal road is upgraded to benefit 187 homes of 754 residents on Zadetgyi Island and enhance socio-economy, health, education, living standards and job opportunities. – MNA

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions

Inoculation continues in states/regions.

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

COVID-19 vaccine is administered 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 groups, people with chronic diseases, people in IDP camps and over 12-year-old students, respectively.

Yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 132 people from Monghkat Town, Shan State(East), 6,433 people in Mon and Kayin States, 700 people from Myeik Township in Taninthayi Region, 660 people from Tamway Township in Yangon Region, 12,454 people from twenty-six townships in Ayeyawady Region, 8,490 from six townships in Rakhine State, 853 people from Khamti Township in Sagaing Region, 42,977 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region and 930 people from three townships in Bago Region respectively.

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

CRIME NEWS

Authorities take action against illegal trades

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

On 19 March, a combined inspection team led by the Yangon Region Department of Forest seized 0.4966 tonne of illegal teak and the carrier vehicle (total estimated value of K15,148,980) under the Forest Law during inspections near mile post (0/7) tollgate on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway in Hlegu, Yangon.

On 21 March, a Customs team on-duty conducted inspections at the Mayanchaung Permanent Checkpoint in Mon State and seized a vehicle carrying instant noodle packs which were more than in the import declaration (ID) (estimated value of K3,556,000) under the Customs Law.

Similarly, while inspecting the vehicle driven from Myawady to Toungoo at the Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) Combined Checkpoint, three vehicles carrying illegal food items and PSI satellites (estimated value of K85,130,000) were seized under the Customs Law.

In addition, consumer goods that were not declared in the import declaration (ID) (estimated value of K30,585,000) were seized at the Myanmar Industrial Port Container Checkpoint in Yangon, and action is taken under the Customs Law.

Officials seize illegal timbers.

On 22 March, 0.5766 tonne of illegal teak (estimated value of K172,980) was seized during the inspection led by the Bago Region Department of Forest near mile post (120/5) on the Ottwin-Paukkhoung Road in Toungoo District, and action is taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, a total of 12 arrests (estimated value of K134,592,960) was made on 19, 21 and 22 March, the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee stated. — MNA

Two jailed for sending man to fishing bamboo raft business, exploiting wages

TWO men were sentenced to five years in prison with labour under Sections 25/32 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law on 18 March.

Hein Zaw Tun and Zaw Htike were found guilty for sending a man, who lived in Kawhmu, Yangon Region, to fishing bamboo raft business in Pyapon, Ayeyawady Region, and exploiting his wages.

They lured him into working in the business by saying that it paid well and that he could have K400,000 in advance, as well as he could be sent free of charge. It is reported that a case was filed against them under Sections 25/32 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law at the Dala Myoma Police Station and the South District Court passed the judgement. — MNA

Sale of toddy-palm chairs in Kyaukpadaung drops

The toddy-palm chairs from Intawkyel village are displayed beside the road. The chairs are bought by the domestic travellers visiting the Bagan-NyaungU archaeological site, stopping their car.

THE people from Intawkyel village, Kyaukpadaung Township of Mandalay Region are manufacturing a lot of toddy-palm chairs and selling them in bulk, it is learnt.

But this is a year with less demand for the toddy-palm chair, said U Win Naing, a toddy-palm chair maker. The Intawkyel village, manufacturing toddy-palm chairs, palm tables and palm boxes, is located on Kyaukpadaung-Meiktila Road, and it is only five miles away from Kyaukpadaung town.

Yearly, they collect the toddy-palm and are making a large volume of palm chairs which can generate family income from selling them, he added.

The toddy-palm chairs from Intawkyel village are displayed beside the road. The chairs are bought by the domestic travellers visiting the Bagan-NyaungU archaeological site, stopping their car. Last year, the toddy-palm chairs sold well. However, the sale of the toddy-palm chairs has dropped significantly this year.

The palm chair makers are buying the branches of toddy palm for K50 per one to make the toddy-palm chairs. Other materials such as hammers and nails are needed to make the toddy-palm chairs. They sell a chair for K4,500 for a normal chair and K6,000 for a reclining one.

This year, the sales of palm chairs dropped sharply. Every year, we have sold a lot of chairs. This year, we could sell only a few toddy-palm chairs, U Ohn Nyo said, making a deep sigh. — Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM

Foodpanda apologizes for system error, controversial rider fees restored

THE online food delivery platform Foodpanda apologized for a system error that occurred between 7:00 am and 7:30 am on 16 March, resulting in a miscalculation of rider fees and causing controversy. The rider fees were restored to the normal rates, according to the Foodpanda statement dated 19 March.

This error reflects a K200 fee during the 30-minute glitch, while a rider normally earns between K550 and K750 for a one kilometre delivery distance. The foodpanda has assured that any deduction as a result of this incident will be corrected and reimbursed and apologized for any inconvenience in the recent days.

Foodpanda responded to the controversial issue. Some riders have recently raised concerns about their pay, rising fuel cost pressure, and a few other issues.

As independent freelancers, the riders earn an income based on a fair and transparent fee structure that comprises variables such as the number of shifts they take, the distance they have to deliver, and their performance levels over time. The majority of the riders receive K300,000 on average in delivery pay per month while some top riders could earn up to K600,000 per month.

The base delivery payment has been adjusted downwards over the past months in line with the current market rate. Having heard rider feedback and complaints, Foodpanda is looking at urgent ways to supplement or increase rider pay as much as possible. But service disruptions ultimately hurt the business and rider income.

The riders are experiencing financial hardships due to the increase in commodity prices. In line with foodpanda's goal towards uplifting the community, they are working on increasing the delivery pay as soon as possible for a certain period to help alleviate the current plight of Foodpanda riders. City managers in the respective cities will soon be notified of this increase. Additionally, they have immediately secured extra funding to roll out fuel price subsidies. It will be notified later, as per the statement.

In the last two years, amidst a challenging environment, foodpanda remains strongly committed to the Myanmar community so that restaurants can continue to use the platform to keep their businesses running, riders continue to have income and customers can rely on food delivered to them safely. — GNLM

Depression Warning No 20, 2022

Issued at 10:30 pm on 22-3-2022

ACCORDING to the observations at 9:30 pm yesterday the deep depression is moving to Ayeyawady Region, near Pathein has weakened into a depression and it is moving North-Northeastwards.

It is continuous to moving Ayeyawady Region, near Pathein (Myanmar), the present stage of the depression is coded brown stage.

During next (24) hrs forecast

The depression is likely continuous to move North-Northeastwards and it is forecast to weaken gradually into a well marked low pressure area in the morning at (23.3.2022) and reach-near southern Rakhine Coast.

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, Taninthayi Regions and Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin, Mon States with regionally and isolated heavy falls in some Regions and States during 22-3-2022 to 24.3.2022.

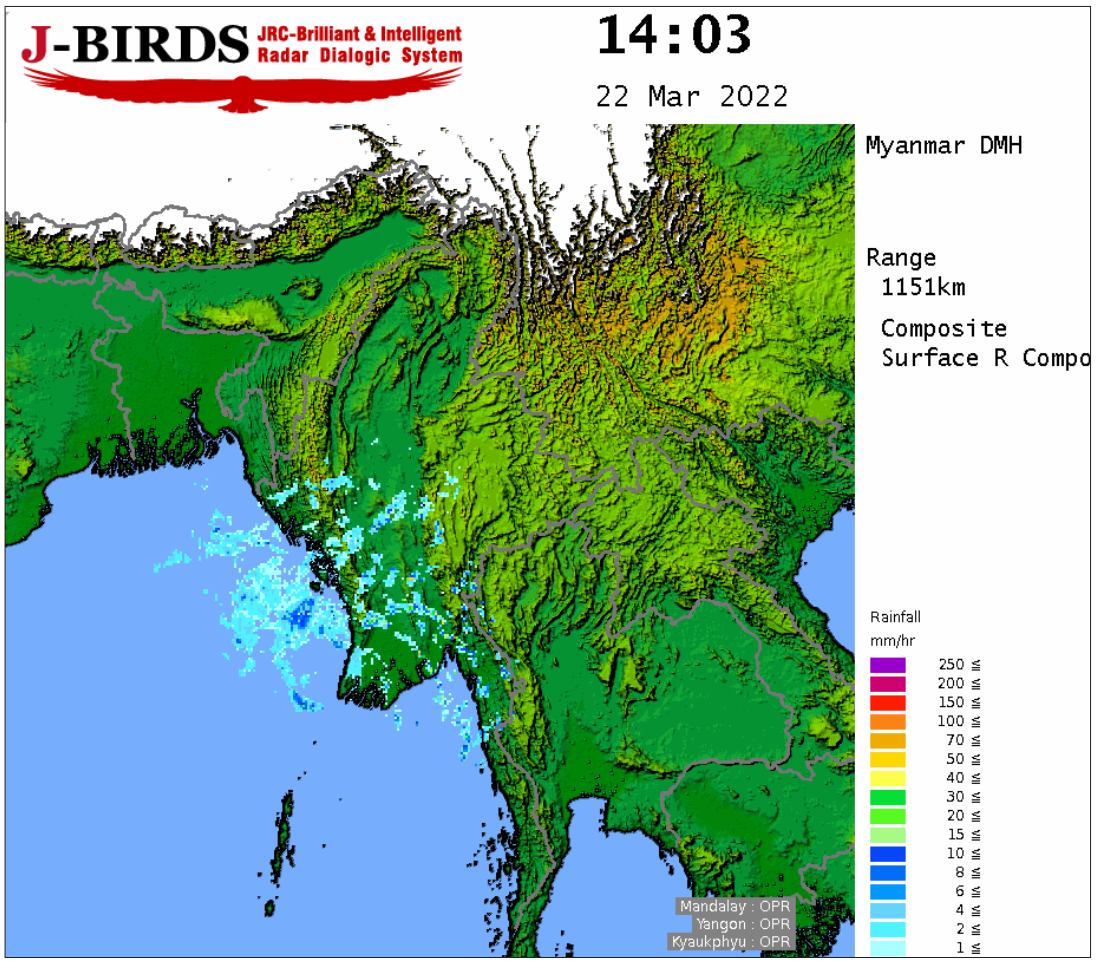
Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) mph Wave height will be about (8-12) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

During the depressionis continuous moving to Ayeyawady Region near Pathein, maximum wind speed may reach (40) mph in Ayeyawady Region and (25-30) mph in Yangon Region and southern Rakhine Coast.

When the depression is crossing, storm surge height will be (6) ft to (8) ft in Estuary and Tributaries at Pathein District, Labutta District, Myaungmya District, Maubin District and Pyapon District in Ayeyawady Region.

Advisory

Due to the depression, people should be aware rain or thundershowers with strong wind, lightning, flash floods in small streams and mountain streams and landslides in the mountainous areas and domestic flight, trawlers, vessels and ships in off and along Myanmar Coasts.—



Department of Meteorology and Hydrology

Palm oil price slides to K7,000 per viss tracking import prices

THE drop in imported palm oil prices causes price retreat in the domestic market, Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association.

At present, the imported palm oil price stands at US$1,792 per tonne. The palm oil price falls again to K7,000 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) in the domestic market accordingly.

In early March 2022, the imported palm oil price climbed up to $1,881 per tonne. Consequently, the domestic palm oil price bounced to approximately K8,000 per viss.

Starting from 15 September 2021, the Central Bank of Myanmar has sold the foreign currencies multiple times for the palm oil importing companies at the minimum exchange rate of K1,753 and the maximum rate of K1,820 per dollar as of 4 February so that the palm oil can be distributed at the fairer price.

Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association sells those palm oil with the mobile market trucks at the subsidized rate of K6,700 per viss at the moment.

Over 6,000 tonnes of palm oil which is equivalent to $79 million are being sold at the subsidized price. Of them, 195.41 tonnes of palm oil are left for sales, said an official of the Consumer Affairs Department.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the self-sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported. — NN/GNLM

Cooking oil is measured at one of the local outlets.

Dollar worth over K2,000 at exchanges despite CBM reference rate at K1,778

The CBM sold US$95 million at its auction market within three months for edible oil, fuel oil and pharmaceutical sectors, to govern the market volatility.

THE majority of the exchanges are found trading a dollar at unofficial rates of over K2,000 although the Central Bank of Myanmar set the reference exchange rate at K1,778, according to local forex traders.

To strengthen the Kyat value in the local forex market, the CBM set the exchange rate margin within 0.5 per cent of the reference rate for the transaction, selling or buying, according to a notification issued by the CBM on 9 November.

Consequently, financial institutions, including the banks and informal money exchanges, set a dollar value at K1,781 for buying and K1,786 for selling.

Nevertheless, the dollar was traded only between K2,030 and K2,040 on 21 March in the informal financial market.

The CBM sold US$95 million at its auction market within three months for edible oil, fuel oil and pharmaceutical sectors, to govern the market volatility. A total of $443.8 million were sold at an auction rate in 2021 as well.

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

Under the guidance of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market was formed on 17 December 2021 as gold and currency market stability play a crucial role in trade facilitation.

The objectives of the committee are inspecting and prosecuting market manipulation, checking if there is compliance to payment rules or not in the domestic market, proceeding against those unscrupulous traders who intend to interfere with the free and fair operation in the market under the existing laws, bylaws and regulations in line with the official directives, illegal procurement of foreign currency, illegal trade and taking legal actions against price manipulators.

Furthermore, the officials concerned will crack down on those people involved in charging a percentage for money withdrawals at banks as shadow money. — NN/GNLM

Daily newspapers available online

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

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Black gram, pigeon pea prices gain on low supply

THE prices of black gram (urad called in India) and pigeon pea are expected to remain upward trend amid the low supply.

At present, the exchange rate of a US dollar stands at around K2,000 in the informal financial market and the prices of black gram soared to over K1.435 million accordingly. Similarly, the pigeon pea prices rose to K1.415 million, as per the data of the Yangon Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre).

Myanmar can export 250,000 tonnes of black gram (urad) and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon pea under the G-to-G pact during the April-March period. So far, the export volume has surpassed the set quota. Additionally, India extended relaxations of conditions regarding clearance consignment until 31 March 2022.

Myanmar is the top producing country of black gram that India demands, with a yearly production of approximately 400,000 tonnes.

The price of black gram hit an all-time high of K2 million per tonne on 29 September tracking the Kyat devaluation (K3,000) on the US dollar.

Myanmar's pigeon pea is primarily shipped to India and also exported to Singapore, the US, Canada, Pakistan, the UK, and Malaysia. But, the export volume to other countries rather than to India is extremely small.

The domestic bean market is positively related to the law of supply and demand, said an official of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

Myanmar has generated US$251 million from exports of over 320,000 metric tons of black gram and $68.48 million from over 103,000 metric tons of pigeon pea as of 11 March in the current mini-budget period since October 2021, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated. — KK/GNLM

Myanmar has generated US$251 million from exports of over 320,000 metric tons of black gram and $68.48 million from over 103,000 metric tons of pigeon pea as of 11 March in the current mini-budget period since October 2021.

23 MARCH 2022
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Recognize prevention of recruitment of child soldiers in Myanmar

THE Myanmar government signed an action plan on the prevention of recruitment of child soldiers with the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting-CTFMR on 27 June 2012.

As the work process of the action did not complete, the action plan which turned 18 months on 27 December 2013 was extended two six-month times for its term. After 27 December 2014 when the second term of the six-month extended period had finished, the plan of action was not extended more. But the work processes are underway in accord with the indicator 21 points.

> Tatmadaw informs Ms Virginia Gamba, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, of the regular work process and accomplishment of the meeting decisions via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As such, UN bodies should recognize the efforts and cooperation of the Myanmar Tatmadaw and must join hands between them in future processes to seek the correct solutions without fail.

According to the decision adopted by the meeting between the CTFMR and the Myanmar government on 26 July 2018, 21 points of the indicator were reduced to 11 points.

From then onward from the time of implementing the action plan to date, Myanmar in cooperation with the CTFMR has been complying with the action plan in allowing 1,029 child soldiers wrongly recruited to withdraw from the Tatmadaw and has handed them over to their parents.

Furthermore, the measures of scrutiny for 28 more child soldiers are being taken to hand them over to their parents and guardians. The action was taken against the officers and other ranks responsible for wrongly recruiting underage children and those without the willingness to join the armed forces.

Thanks to cooperation between the CTFMR and the Tatmadaw, the Myanmar Tatmadaw was removed from the list of recruiting child soldiers and deployment mentioned in the children and armed conflict annual report for 2019 of the UN Secretary-General issued on 15 June 2020, and then, one surveillance year was set for final revocation for the Myanmar Tatmadaw from the list.

The Myanmar Tatmadaw is complying with the laws, rules and regulations for recruitment during the surveillance period. Although the Myanmar Tatmadaw cooperates with the CTFMR, the children and armed conflict annual report of the UNSG issued on 21 June 2021 one-sidedly enlisted Myanmar on the list again without negotiation in advance.

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services gave a remark to carry out the tasks which can be done systematically and inform CTFMR about completion of the work process. The Myanmar Tatmadaw informs Ms Virginia Gamba, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, of the regular work process and accomplishment of the meeting decisions via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As such, UN bodies should recognize the efforts and cooperation of the Myanmar Tatmadaw and must join hands between them in future processes to seek the correct solutions without fail.

■ ■ ■

Experts warn another uptick in COVID-19 cases due to new variant

Experts warned that the United States may see another rise in COVID-19 cases in the next few weeks as the new Omicron subvariant continues to spread across the country.

A demonstrator holds a sign reading during a rally with truckers at the start of "The Peoples Convoy" protest against COVID-19 vaccine and mask mandates in Adelanto, California, on 23 February. **PHOTO: PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP**

INFECTIONS of the the highly transmissible variant, known as BA.2, have been doubling each week, according to data of the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

As of the week ending 12 March, BA.2 makes up 23.1 per cent of all COVID-19 cases in the country, compared to 1 per cent of new cases in the week ending 5 February, and 7.1 per cent in the week ending 26 February, CDC data showed.

Although the original Omicron variant still makes up the majority of COVID-19 infections in the country, its prevalence has dropped to 66.1 per cent in the week ending 12 March.

Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said he expects "an uptick in cases" due to BA.2, but not necessarily a massive surge like other variants have caused.

Fauci told ABC on Sunday the new strain is about 50 to 60 per cent more transmissible than the first Omicron strain, adding that it could take over as the dominant strain in the United States.

However, he noted that the strain does not appear to cause more severe illness or evade immune responses from vaccination or prior infection.

US Surgeon-General Vivek Murthy also said the variant could cause a new spike in cases, but adding that the country is in a better position now than it was in the previous two years.

Several European countries, such as Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, have reported a spike in COVID-19 cases over the last couple of weeks.

Health officials continue to stress COVID-19 vaccines and boosters remain the best ways to prevent serious illness from the virus.

According to CDC data, 76.7 per cent of the total US population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and 65.3 per cent has completed their primary series as of 16 March. However, only about half of the booster-eligible population has received a booster dose.

SOURCE: Xinhua

■ ■ ■

'Perfect storm': Europe Covid rise due to fewer curbs, subvariant

COVID-19 is again surging in Western Europe due to a "perfect storm" of governments lifting restrictions, waning immunity and the more contagious BA.2 Omicron subvariant, experts said Monday.

After more than a month of falling cases across much of the continent, countries such as Britain, France, Germany and Italy have all seen a dramatic resurgence of infections in recent days.

In France, cases have risen by more than a third in the week since the government ended most Covid restrictions last Monday.

In Germany, despite a new daily record of nearly 300,000 infections on Friday, the government let national legislation enabling coronavirus restrictions expire over the weekend. Most German states, which have considerable leeway on applying measures, have however maintained the restrictions.

In Italy, the government announced on Thursday it would phase out almost all restrictions by 1 May despite rising cases.

And in Britain, where one in 20 people are currently infected, the government removed the last of its international travel restrictions on Friday.

Faced with its own surging cases, Austria announced on the weekend it would reimpose rules requiring FFP2 face masks — just weeks after lifting the measure.

'Stealth Omicron'

While some have blamed governments for relaxing restrictions too quickly, epidemiologists also pointed the finger at the BA.2 sub-lineage of the Omicron variant which has become dominant in many countries.

Sometimes called "stealth Omicron" because it is more difficult to detect, BA.2 is estimated to be about 30 per cent more contagious than its predecessor BA.1.

Lawrence Young, a virologist at Britain's University of Warwick, said the rising cases in Europe were due to a combination — "a perfect storm" — of three factors: the lifting of restrictions, waning immunity after vaccination and BA.2.

"Removing restrictions has fuelled the spread of BA.2 and could also lead to the generation of other variants," he told AFP.

Antoine Flahault, director of the Institute of Global Health at the University of Geneva said there were "a couple of hypotheses on the table, which are not mutually exclusive".

He told AFP that BA.2 was "clearly a relevant suspect in explaining the current rebound", also mentioning waning immunity and the easing of measures.

He also pointed to air pollution in Western Europe during the infection resurgence, referring to research that showed "strong correlation" between Covid outbreaks and high levels of fine particulate matter in the air.

Simon Clarke, cellular microbiology professor at the University of Reading, said that despite soaring cases in Britain, "concern about the virus among the public seems to be at an all-time low since the start of the pandemic.

"The BA.2 version of Omicron seems to be behind this uptick in infections, which again shows how quickly the situation can change as the virus evolves into new forms," he told the Science Media Centre.

Customers sit on a terrace alongside a canal in Amsterdam, on 28 April 2021, as the Dutch government eased the restrictions put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19. **PHOTO: FRANCOIS WALSCHAERTS / AFP**

New variant threat

In a bid to bolster waning immunity, some nations such as France have started rolling out fourth vaccine doses.

In England, a fourth booster shot will be made available to care home residents, people aged over 75 and the immunosuppressed this week, the National Health Service said Sunday.

However the World Health Organization has warned that new variants were more likely to continue emerging if wealthy nations continue to boost their own citizens ahead of sharing vaccines with countries where many have not received their first dose.

Jean-Francois Delfraissy, president of the French government's scientific advisory board, has already warned of potential variants. "We are at the mercy of a new variant which, if we ask the scientist community, could be expected in the autumn… it could happen before then," he said last week. "Will it be a more transmissible variant? Will it be more severe? Will it escape the vaccine? Nobody knows."

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 22 March 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the deep depression is moving to Ayeyawady Region, near Pathein and it is moving North-Northeast wards. Weather is partly cloudy over the North Bay and West central Bay of Bengal and cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 23 March 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady Regions and (Southern and Eastern)Shan, Rakhine States, fairly widespread in Taninthayi Regions and Kayah, Kayin, Mon States, scattered in Lower Sagaing Region and isolated in the remaining Regions and States with regionally heavy falls in Magway Region and Rakhine State and isolated heavy falls in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Frequently squalls with rough seas will be off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (45) m.p.h. Wave height will be about (9-13) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

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, Taninthayi Regions and Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 March 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 March 2022: some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 March 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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Quick evacuation could cut quake fatalities by 80% in northern Japan

FATALITIES caused by tsunami generated from a massive quake off Japan's north and northeastern Pacific coast could be reduced by 80 per cent if people evacuate quickly, a government task force on disaster management said Tuesday.

The report followed the prediction last year by the Central Disaster Management Council that up to 199,000 people in seven prefectures, including Hokkaido and Iwate, could be killed if a magnitude 9-level quake strikes along the Japan and Chishima trenches.

People pray in Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture, at 2:46 pm on 11 March 2022, exactly 11 years after a massive earthquake struck northeastern Japan, triggering a killer tsunami. **PHOTO: KYODO**

The task force also called for measures to address issues unique to regions that see extreme cold, such as ways to address evacuation hold-ups due to snow and how to avoid the impact of injuries being exacerbated by extended exposure to low temperatures.

It also studied the possibility of implementing a system in which an evacuation is called for when a possible foreshock of a massive quake is felt, but decided that it would be more appropriate to simply alert residents of an impending threat.

The Japan Trench stretches off Hokkaido to east of the Boso Peninsula near Tokyo, while the Chishima Trench lies off the country's main northern island of Hokkaido to the Chishima Islands, also known as the Kuril Islands.

The Japanese government, which has been undertaking a review of disaster management processes following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that devastated northeastern Japan, will update its basic plan based on the latest proposal.

To shorten evacuation times, the report called for evacuation routes to be established with roofs and walls to avoid snow and ice accumulation on roads that could slow people's movement.

It also proposed the construction of facilities like evacuation towers with heating and winter clothing available to prevent evacuees from developing hypothermia.— Kyodo ■

New US rule requires publicly-listed firms to disclose emissions

Coal piles outside of PacifiCorp's Hunter power plant in Castle Dale, Utah. **PHOTO: GEORGE FREY/AFP**

PUBLICLY-TRADED US companies would be required to disclose their greenhouse gas emissions and their approach to managing climate change risks under a proposed rule approved by Washington Monday. The measure, which now goes for public comment following a vote by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), follows similar steps by regulators in Japan and Europe, and aims to standardize emissions reporting. "Climate risks can pose significant financial risks to companies," said SEC Chair Gary Gensler, an appointee of President Joe Biden. Gensler argued the measure would provide "reliable information about climate risks to make informed investment decisions."

Companies would be required to report emissions from their own activities, known as Scope 1, and indirect emissions from purchased energy, known as Scope 2. Firms would also need to disclose Scope 3 emissions, which are indirectly incurred in the value chain. These include energy sold to another company if these emissions are consequential to its finances or if they have set targets for these emissions.—AFP ■

Plastic pollution cuts power in DR Congo

AMONG rolling hills around the southern tip of majestic Lake Kivu, huge layers of plastic waste ride the water and block the turbines of the largest hydroelectric plant in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Ruzizi dam is polluted by thousands of bottles, cans and other objects thrown into the lake, which stretches 90 kilometres (56 miles) along the border between DR Congo and Rwanda.

"Since the lake flows towards the Ruzizi River, all the waste thrown into it comes here little by little," Lievin Chizungu, production manager at the dam's power station, told AFP.

The mountainous terrain and rainy climate around lakeside Bukavu, capital of South Kivu province, do not help.

"The rainwater carries the waste into the lake and then into the river," Jovy Mulemangabo, an engineer for the national electricity company (SNEL) in south Kivu, told AFP.

Chizungu says piles of waste can "reach a depth of 14 metres" (almost 46 feet). Divers clean the river bed to keep debris from clogging the turbines. If waste gets trapped, towns in the area are deprived of power.

Other employees clean the surface, using barges. "I have been doing this job for 13 years," Byunanine Mubalama told AFP. "Every day there is garbage I have to clean up." —AFP ■

Int'l meeting kicks off amid increase in illegal mercury trade

DELEGATES from almost 140 countries kicked off a meeting on mercury pollution Monday during which host Indonesia proposed regulating global illegal trade of mercury.

In her opening remarks during the fourth Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, Indonesian Environment and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar warned of an "alarming increase of mercury's global illegal trade".

"Indonesia, being one of the affected countries, finds it necessary to work together to combat the illegal trade of mercury, given among others, the transboundary nature of its activities and the obvious negative impacts of mercury use, both to humans and the environment," Bakar added.

The so-called, nonbinding Bali Declaration on Combatting Illegal trade of Mercury was later proposed by Indonesia to complement the work of parties to the Minamata treaty. It is expected to be endorsed by the parties during the conference.

The Minamata treaty, which takes its name from the southwestern Japanese city of Minamata where industrial emissions of mercury caused a poisoning disease affecting thousands of people, has not regulated mercury's illegal trade.According to a 2020 report from the UN Environment Programme, the illegal trade of mercury has increased as a result of countries' attempts to restrict the metal's supply and use, with the value of the trade reaching up to $215 million annually.—Kyodo ■

Illegal miners in Peru left a huge desert of sand in the middle of the lush jungle due to mercury contamination produced by their activities. **PHOTO: AFP/GUADALUPE PARDO/FILE**

Japan ends emergency virus measures in all 18 prefectures covered

JAPAN on Tuesday ended a COVID-19 quasi-state of emergency that was in place for 18 of the country's 47 prefectures, including Tokyo and Osaka, owing to a downtrend in the number of new daily infections.

Tuesday marks the first time since 8 January that no emergency COVID-19 measures have been in place in the Asian country.

But concerns are rife that as both the business and academic year draw to a close and owing to Japan's eased border controls, there could be yet another resurgence of the coronavirus due to the highly contagious Omicron subvariant BA.2 of the virus.

On Thursday, the government decided to officially lift the emergency measures in place taking into account the burden on the healthcare system.

Photo shows a support centre set up by the Tokyo metropolitan government for coronavirus patients recovering at home. **PHOTO: KYODO**

But notably, some regions that were under emergency virus measures had the occupancy rate of designated hospital beds for COVID-19 patients above the boom-or-bust threshold of 50 per cent as recently as Friday.

Meanwhile, new infection levels have remained at a relatively high level in some regions, despite the COVID-19 quasi-state of emergency measures.

Since the beginning of the year, the measures had been in place in as many as 36 of the nation's 47 prefectures, although some virologists informing the government believe the antiviral measures do not go far enough in tackling the virus. The lifting of the measures come, however, as the government and local governors are keen for people to return to their normal lives. According to Japan's public broadcaster NHK, officials are planning henceforth to "encourage the use of vaccination passports at eateries and event venues and for travelling."—Xinhua ■

WHO sounds alarm on TB fight funds

THE world is spending nowhere near enough to revive the fight against tuberculosis after the Covid-19 crisis wiped out years of progress, the WHO said Monday.

Ahead of World Tuberculosis Day on Thursday, the World Health Organization said global spending on TB diagnostics, treatments and prevention in 2020 was less than half of the global target of $13 billion annually by 2022.

"TB remains one of the world's deadliest infectious killers. Each day, over 4,100 people lose their lives to TB and close to 30,000 people fall ill with this preventable and curable disease," the WHO said. The coronavirus pandemic disrupted access to TB services, the WHO said, as it called for countries to restore pre-pandemic services, especially for children and adolescents.— AFP ■

This file photo shows inmates from the Quezon City jail being processed during a mass screening for tuberculosis (TB) in suburban Manila. **PHOTO: AFP**

China locks down city of 9 million as virus ripples across country

CHINA locked down an industrial city of nine million people overnight and reported more than 4,000 virus cases on Tuesday, as the nation's "zero-Covid" strategy is confronted by an Omicron wave.

Health authorities reported 4,770 new infections across the country, the bulk in the northeastern province of Jilin, as the city of Shenyang in neighbouring Liaoning province was ordered to lock down late Monday.

China has moved fast in recent weeks to snuff out virus clusters with a pick-and-mix of hyper-local lockdowns, mass testing and citywide closures. It reported two Covid-19 deaths on Saturday, the first in over a year.

Authorities have warned of the risk posed to growth by persistent lockdowns as the country strives to balance the health crisis with the needs of the world's second biggest economy. Shenyang, an industrial base home to factories including carmaker BMW, reported 47 new cases Tuesday as authorities put all housing compounds under "closed management" and barred residents from leaving without a 48-hour negative test result. Last week Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed the need to "minimize the impact" of the pandemic on China's economy, but also urged officials to "stick to" the current zero-Covid approach.

The city of Shenyang in northeastern Liaoning province was ordered to lock down late Monday. **PHOTO: AFP**

But Beijing's virus playbook has been stretched to the limit by the latest Omicron surge, which has forced authorities to free up hospital beds from mild-symptom patients. Some cities such as Shanghai have avoided a full lockdown and instead imposed a web of individual building lockdowns, even as new daily asymptomatic infections there spiral into the hundreds. Jilin provincial officials announced Monday that the first 10,000 doses of Pfizer's oral Covid drug arrived on Sunday, marking the first time Paxlovid has been used in China.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Alcohol-related deaths soar in first year of pandemic, study shows

ALCOHOL-related deaths soared during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, a recent study has revealed.

Alcohol-related deaths spiked between 2019 and 2020 from 78,927 to 99,017, while deaths from other causes had smaller increases, according to the research published on Friday in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The research found that alcohol-related deaths accounted for 2.8 per cent of all deaths in 2019 and 3.0 per cent in 2020.—Xinhua ■

German man on trial for murdering cashier in mask row

A 50-year-old man went on trial in Germany on Monday accused of shooting dead a petrol station cashier last year because he was angry about being told to wear a face mask while buying beer.

The murder last September in the western town of Idar-Oberstein shocked Germany, which has seen a vocal anti-mask and anti-vaccine movement emerge in response to the government's coronavirus restrictions.

The row started when 20-year-old student worker Alex W. asked the accused to put on a mask inside the shop, as required in all German stores at the time. After a brief argument, the accused left.—AFP ■

EMS industry on verge of collapse in US: report

A lack of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) trucks is hitting communities across the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic as states and cities are struggling to keep the services running, Jalopnick, a local news and opinion website has reported.

Long hours, low pay and the stress of handling life-or-death situations during the pandemic has driven many certified EMTs from the career, said the report.—Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Brazil unveils incentives to spur biomethane output

Brazil's government on Monday unveiled a series of incentives to spur the production and sustainable use of biomethane, a fuel that can be obtained from recycling urban and rural waste, and that can replace natural gas, diesel and gasoline.

The plan earmarks over 7 billion reals (1.4 billion US dollars) to spur biomethane output, and is expected to generate at least 6,500 jobs in building and operating 25 new plants in six Brazilian states.

Minister of Environment Joaquim Leite signed the decree creating the National Methane Emissions Reduction Programme, also known as the "Zero Methane" plan.

"The 'Zero Methane' programme treats waste from cities and rural areas, such as waste from poultry farms, pig farms, sugarcane, dairy and landfills," said Leite.—Xinhua ■

Egypt's currency plunges almost 17% against greenback

THE Egyptian pound plunged nearly 17 per cent in value against the US dollar on Monday, following a rise in inflation and amid mounting economic hardships.

The local currency in the Arab world's most populous country already saw a sharp devaluation in 2016 when it lost nearly half its value against the dollar overnight.

The pound was floated at the time as part of a package of reforms in exchange for a $12-billion bailout from the International Monetary Fund.—AFP ■

Railway giant Canadian Pacific's network crosses much of southern Canada and extends as far as Kansas City, Missouri, in the central United States. An eastbound CP freight train at Stoney Creek Bridge descending from Rogers Pass. **PHOTO: WIKI/AFP/FILE**

Canadian Pacific trains at standstill in labour dispute

CANADIAN authorities Monday called on railway giant Canadian Pacific to put an end to a labour dispute that has put all the firm's trains out of action, snarling supply chains and worrying the agricultural sector.

After months of negotiations over salaries, benefits and pensions, Canadian Pacific (CP) management and the Teamsters union have failed to reach an agreement.

Canadian Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan in a tweet Monday expressed "faith in their ability to reach an agreement" in ongoing negotiations, but added that "Canadians expect them to do that ASAP."—AFP ■

Japan's Diet enacts record 107.60 tril. yen budget for FY 2022

Japan's Diet enacted Tuesday a record 107.60 trillion yen ($900 billion) budget for fiscal 2022 to finance measures against the coronavirus as well as rising social security and national defense costs. **PHOTO: KYODO**

JAPAN'S Diet enacted Tuesday a record 107.60 trillion yen ($900 billion) budget for fiscal 2022 to finance measures against the coronavirus as well as rising social security and national defence costs.

The House of Councillors passed the budget for the year starting on 1 April, following its approval by the House of Representatives in late February.

After securing the support of one of Japan's minor opposition parties, a rare occurrence, it is the third-earliest enactment of an initial budget under Japan's postwar Constitution.

The general-account budget for the upcoming fiscal year is at a record level for the 10th straight year. In the largest-ever spend on social security, 36.27 trillion yen will serve Japan's rapidly aging population. The sum is up from 35.83 trillion yen in the previous year, accounting for over a third of total expenditure.

Spending on defense totalled 5.40 trillion yen, also a record, as Japan aims to develop new technologies in response to China's military expansion and to counter North Korea's nuclear and missile threat.—Kyodo ■

Italy's energy giants calculate new tax on profits

ITALIAN energy giant Enel estimated Monday that Italy's recently announced measure to tax windfall profits of energy companies would be negligible, amounting to upwards of 10 million euros.

Prime Minister Mario Draghi said Friday the new 10 per cent levy would target "the extraordinary profits" of energy producers, with the funds redistributed to "businesses and families who are in great difficulty".

"The impact for us is zero. It's something between 7 to 10 million euros," Enel CEO Francesco Starace told Bloomberg TV Monday.

Forward contracts that guarantee fixed prices for two years means that Enel is protected from price fluctuations, he said, "so we don't have benefits or extra benefits out of this volatility".

Italian hydrocarbon group Eni, meanwhile, told AFP it was premature to estimate any new tax, but a spokesman said provisionally it could be at most "a few hundred million euros".

Italy's new energy tax will help finance a 4.4 billion euro package of measures designed to alleviate soaring energy prices for households and businesses.

The 10 per cent tax will be levied on extraordinary pre-tax profits made between October 2021 and March 2022, comparing them to profits in the same year-ago period.

In 2021, Enel posted a net profit of 3.19 billion euros, while Eni reported net profit of 5.82 billion euros.

The Spanish government attempted to tax profits of major energy companies in September, before it backtracked months later in the face of opposition by the sector, which warned the measure would jeopardize future investment.— AFP ■

Italy's new energy tax will help finance a 4.4 billion euro package of measures designed to alleviate soaring energy prices for households and businesses. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ENEL/AFP/FILE**

Philippines allows foreigners to have full ownership of telcos, airlines

PHILIPPINE President Rodrigo Duterte has signed a law that allows foreigners to possess full ownership of telecommunications, airlines, mass communications, expressways, tollways, among others. On Monday night, Duterte signed into law Republic Act 11659 amending the decades-old Public Service Act (PSA) that reclassifies these economic sectors as public services, exempting them from the 40 percent ownership limit under the Constitution. Duterte said the amended PSA "will aid the Philippines in leading the path towards economic recovery amid the COVID-19 pandemic." "I believe that through this law, the easing out of foreign equity restrictions will attract more global investors, modernize several sectors of public service and improve the delivery of essential services," Duterte said in a speech during the signing ceremony.—Xinhua ■

US drought pushes cotton prices to ten-year high

COTTON prices rose to their highest level in more than a decade on Monday, due to a prolonged droug ht in parts of the central United States. The plant fibre-reached $1.3171 per pound (about 453 grammes) on the key US futures contract, the highest since July 2011.

Rainfall has been exceptionally low since early January in the northwest part of Texas – which produces about 40 per cent of all US cotton production. Depending on the region in the United States, cotton is planted from March to June, so there is uncertainty in the market about size of this year's crop, according to John Robinson, a professor at Texas A&M University and cotton specialist. Many are already comparing the current weather conditions to 2011, when US cotton producers experienced their worst drought ever and prices rose as high as $2.27 per pound.—AFP ■

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICTY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (1/2022-2023)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(1)	DMP/L-001(22-23)	Assorted Sizes of Casing (3) Items	Ks
(2)	DMP/L-002(22-23)	Casing Head Housing and Accessories (1) Lot	Ks
(3)	DMP/L-003(22-23)	Spares for Drawwork and Rotary Table Drive Group Of ZJ 70L & ZJ 50D Drilling Rig (8) Groups	Ks
(4)	DMP/L-004(22-23)	Assorted Sizes of TRI Cone Rock Bit and PDC Bit (8) Items	Ks
(5)	DMP/L-005(22-23)	Spares for L-Type CNG Compressor (33) Items	Ks
(6)	DMP/L-006(22-23)	Spares for ZW Type CNG Compressor (38) Items	Ks
(7)	DMP/L-007(22-23)	Spares for 4th Stage SAFE CNG Compressor (LP) (21) Items	Ks
(8)	DMP/L-008(22-23)	Spares for ASPRO CNG Compressor (18) Items	Ks
(9)	DMP/L-009(22-23)	Spares for Intermech CNG Compressor (HP) (31)Items	Ks
(10)	DMP/L-010(22-23)	Spares for Water Pump and Crude Pump (4) Groups	Ks
(11)	DMP/L-011(22-23)	Assorted Sizes of ERW API 5L Steel Line Pipe (4) Items	Ks
(12)	DMP/L-012(22-23)	Assorted Kinds of Shaker Screen for ZJ 70L Drilling Rigs (4) Groups	Ks
(13)	DMP/L-013(22-23)	Spares For SJS Serva Cementing Unit and Other Accessories (4) Groups	Ks
(14)	DMP/L-014(22-23)	Spares for ZJ 70L and ZJ 50D Drilling Rigs (2) Groups	Ks
(15)	DMP/L-015(22-23)	Spares for AB-100 Well Servicing Truck (30) Items	Ks
(16)	DMP/L-016(22-23)	Spares for Well Servicing Truck (KB-150 & AB-100) (2) Items	Ks
(17)	DMP/L-017(22-23)	Spares for Drive Group Ex-ZJ 70L SR-1 & SR-2 (2) Groups	Ks
(18)	DMP/L-018(22-23)	Spares for Kenworth Truck (13) Items	Ks
(19)	DMP/L-019(22-23)	Spares for Reintjes Gear Box (WAF 542 L) Ex-Mann (4) River Craft (92) Items	Ks
(20)	DMP/L-020(22-23)	Spares for CAT-G -3516 C Generating Set Gas Engine (4) Items	Ks
(21)	DMP/L-021(22-23)	Spares for GM 8V-71 Engine Ex-BJ Cementing Unit (23) Items	Ks
(22)	DMP/L-022(22-23)	10" HFERW API 5L Grade X-42 3 LPE Coated Steel Line Pipe (17,700) MTR	Ks
(23)	DMP/L-023(22-23)	Assorted Sizes of Steel Ball Valve (2) Items	Ks
(24)	DMP/L-024(22-23)	Assorted Sizes of Pipe Fitting (29) Items	Ks
(25)	DMP/L-025(22-23)	2 7/8" & 2 3/8" Seamless EU Tubing (2) Items	Ks
(26)	DMP/L-026(22-23)	Maintenance, Inspection and Spare Requirement for Engine and Compressor for (Ywataw (Pyawbwe)/ PyiNyaung) (1) Lot	Ks
(27)	DMP/L-027(22-23)	2" ERW Steel Line Pipe (20,000) MTR	Ks
(28)	DMP/L-028(22-23)	Pipe Fitting and Accessories (1) Lot	Ks
(29)	DMP/L-029(22-23)	Accessories for Gas Metering (1) Lot	Ks
(30)	DMP/L-030(22-23)	Rubber Hose Pipe (3) Items	Ks
(31)	DMP/L-031(22-23)	Mud Chemical (9) Items	Ks
(32)	DMP/L-032(22-23)	Copier & Printer Cartridge (36) Items	Ks
(33)	DMP/L-033(22-23)	Stationery Materials (20) Items	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qtty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from **March 2022** at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **12:00 pm** on **22, April 2022**.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time – **22-4-2022, 12:00 pm**

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67 – 411206

TRADEMARK CAUTION

KALBE INTERNATIONAL PTE. LTD, a company incorporated in Singapore, and having its registered office at 21 Bukit Batok Crescent #27-79, WCEGA Tower, Singapore 658065 is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademark:

CAR-Q

Reg. No. 4/5127/2021 (27.12.2021)

In respect of "Pharmaceutical preparations, Medicine" included in **International Class 05.**

Fraudulent or unauthorised use or actual or colourable imitation of the Mark shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw Htoo Htoo, *H.G.P*
For **KALBE INTERNATIONAL PTE. LTD,**
C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,**
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon.
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Dated **23 March 2022** hh@kcyangon.com

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V NEGAR VOY.NO. (SCY1122)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NEGAR VOY. NO. (SCY1122)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-3-2022** 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 LAND AND SEA INTERMODAL LOGISTICS SDN BHD LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V IAL 001 VOY.NO. (123N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (123N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-3-2022** 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 INTERASIA LINES

သတင်းစာ မှာယူရိုက် ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါတယ်
09 454 237 515

သတင်းစာ ဂျာနယ် စာစောင်များကို နိုင်ငံတကာစံချိန်မီ ပုံနှိပ်ရိုက် ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါတယ်
01 860 4530

Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, who met Balakrishnan on Monday, said Singapore's decision to open an embassy highlighted "the good and special relations between our two countries", which were established in 1965. **PHOTO: ISRAELINSG TWITTER/AFP**

Singapore to open first embassy in Israel

SINGAPORE will open its first embassy in Israel, nearly six decades after establishing ties with the Jewish state, Israel's foreign ministry said on Monday.

The announcement came after Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said the city-state would also open a "representative office" in the Israeli-occupied West Bank to boost relations with the Palestinian Authority.

Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, who met Balakrishnan on Monday, said Singapore's decision to open an embassy highlighted "the good and special relations between our two countries", which were established in 1965.

Balakrishnan had also met several Palestinian officials in Ramallah, including prime minister Mohammed Shtayyeh.

He tweeted that the West Bank office would aim to "coordinate our technical assistance & facilitate engagement" with the PA. Several states have in recent years stepped up their diplomatic engagement with Israel, which remains a controversial partner for some governments due to the decades-long conflict with the Palestinians. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ramos-Horta leads E. Timor presidential race, heading for runoff

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Jose Ramos-Horta came out on top in the first round of the East Timor presidential election, garnering 46.58 per cent of the vote according to the final count late Monday. A runoff election is scheduled for 19 April between the 72-year-old Ramos-Horta and the second-place candidate, incumbent President Francisco Guterres Lu Olo, 67, who took 22.16 per cent of the vote in the first round. The runoff is necessary because neither of the top two candidates crossed the 50 per cent threshold to win outright.

Sixteen candidates competed in the presidential election, which was held Saturday and saw voter turnout of about 77 per cent among 859,613 total registered voters.—Kyodo ■

Sri Lanka deploys troops as fuel shortage sparks protests

Sri Lanka ordered troops to petrol stations Tuesday as sporadic protests erupted among the thousands of motorists queueing up daily for scarce fuel.

The South Asian island nation is grappling with its worst economic meltdown since independence in 1948, with rolling electricity blackouts and essential goods such as food and cooking gas also in short supply. Authorities said soldiers were deployed after angry crowds blocked a busy street in Colombo and held up traffic for hours because they were unable to buy kerosene oil on Monday.—AFP ■

Duterte's party backs Philippine presidential bid of Marcos Jr.

PHILIPPINE President Rodrigo Duterte's political party on Tuesday backed the presidential bid of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., a move seen as a boost to the son and namesake of the former Philippine dictator ahead of the May election.

The endorsement by the ruling PDP-Laban party came two days after a huge crowd of over 100,000 people turned up at a campaign rally for his rival, opposition icon and Vice-President Leni Robredo, in Metro Manila.

The latest Pulse Asia survey in February, though, showed Robredo still trailed frontrunner Marcos Jr. by a 45-point gap.

Energy Secretary and party president Alfonso Cusi said Marcos Jr. offers a set of policies that is "most aligned" with that of Duterte, who is barred by the Constitution from seeking a second term.

Cusi was referring to the party's 11-point programme, which includes the campaign against illegal drugs that left thousands of people dead under Duterte's government.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's party on Tuesday threw its support behind presidential election favourite Ferdinand Marcos Junior, as his main rival appears to gain momentum in the race for the top job. **PHOTO: AFP**

The party in December first endorsed Duterte's daughter, Sara Duterte-Carpio, who is running as Marcos Jr.'s vice-president, although candidates are elected separately in the Philippines.

Duterte, who in November called Marcos Jr. a "weak leader," has yet to declare his preferred candidate, but allies are hoping he will eventually do so in the coming weeks.

Salvador Panelo, a Duterte ally and senatorial candidate, says he believes Duterte is the "most effective endorser", having maintained a high approval rating throughout his six-year term.— Kyodo ■

Chinese recovery teams comb debris of crashed passenger jet

Recovery teams clambered over a scene of upturned earth, blasted trees and scattered debris, including a section of plane bearing the carrier's blue and red livery. **PHOTO: AFP**

CHINESE recovery teams on Tuesday picked through the debris of a crashed China Eastern jet after it inexplicably plummeted from the sky into a mountainside with 132 people on board.

Hopes of finding any survivors had all but vanished nearly a day after the Boeing 737-800 passenger jet nosedived into the mountain — likely making it China's deadliest air crash in nearly three decades.

Questions mounted over the cause of the crash, which saw the stricken jet drop 20,000 feet (6096 metres) in just over a minute before ploughing into rugged terrain in southern China on Monday afternoon.

The airline has acknowledged that some aboard the jet, which was travelling from the city of Kunming to the southern hub of Guangzhou, had died, but is yet to offer more details.

President Xi Jinping quickly called for a full probe following the crash as search teams, firefighters and other personnel descended upon the site in a rural area of Guangxi province.

On Tuesday scorch marks were visible from the crash and resulting fire, rescue workers told AFP, with one speculating that passengers and their belongings had been "totally incinerated" from the intensity of the blaze.

A villager near the sprawling crash site, giving his surname only as Ou, recounted hearing a "sound like thunder" on Monday afternoon followed by a blaze blistering the surrounding hills.—AFP ■

Zelensky says Ukraine's compromises with Russia to be put to referendum

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Kyiv's compromises at peace talks with Russia would be put to a nationwide referendum in Ukraine, the government-run Ukrinform news agency reported Monday.

"I explained to all negotiating groups: when you talk about all these changes, and they can be historic, there is nowhere to go -- we will have a referendum," Zelensky was quoted as saying in an interview with the Ukrainian public broadcaster Suspilne.

Zelensky emphasized that he stands ready for any compromises if they are supported by the Ukrainian people.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky renewed an offer of direct peace talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin late Monday, declaring the status of disputed territories could be up for debate and a possible referendum. Zelensky told local media that he was ready to meet Putin "in any format" to discuss ending the almost one-month-old war that has shattered several Ukrainian cities. Zelensky said even the status of Russian-occupied Crimea and Russian-backed statelets in Donbas was up for debate. "At the first meeting with the president of Russia, I am ready to raise these issues," he said.

People line up to get plastic covers to mend broken windows on 17 March, 2022 in Kyiv, Ukraine. **PHOTO: DIEGO HERRERA/XINHUA**

"There will be no appeals or historical speeches. I would discuss all issues with him in great detail" Zelensky said.

Russia has declared Crimea part of Russia and recognized the independence of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic in eastern Ukraine. All three areas were part of Ukraine following the collapse of the Soviet Union and are at the centre of a decade-old crisis that on February 24 spilt into invasion and full-scale war.— Xinhua/AFP ■

Russia halts peace treaty talks with Japan

Moscow will also cancel visa-free travel for Japanese citizens to the four disputed Pacific islands, which are known as the Southern Kurils in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan. Visitors from Japan arrive at Russian-held Kunashiri Island on 30 Oct 2019 : it was the first ever by Japanese tourists to the disputed islands. **PHOTO: KYODO /FILE**

THE Russian Foreign Ministry said Monday that it will no longer continue peace treaty negotiations with Japan in response to Tokyo's sanctions against Russia over the situation in Ukraine.

Moscow will also cancel visa-free travel for Japanese citizens to the four disputed Pacific islands, which are known as the Southern Kurils in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan. The Russian side is withdrawing from the dialogue with Japan on establishing joint economic activities in these islands, the ministry said in a statement. Russia will block the extension of Japan's status as a sectoral dialogue partner of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, it added. Along with Western countries, Japan has imposed economic sanctions on Russia for its special military operation in Ukraine. — Xinhua /Kyodo ■

UN General Assembly to vote again on Ukraine: spokesperson

THE UN General Assembly (UNGA) will vote Wednesday on a draft resolution on Ukraine, the second such resolution since the start of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, a spokesperson said Monday.

The 11th Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly will be held after a letter requesting the resumption was received by UNGA President Abdulla Shahid, his spokesperson Paulina Kubiak told reporters in an email.

"A draft resolution sponsored by Ukraine and other member states has been submitted and is being processed," she said.

According to diplomatic sources, the new UNGA draft resolution focuses on the humanitarian situation, calling for the protection of civilians, medical personnel, aid workers, journalists, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure.— Xinhua ■

NEWS DIGEST

Following are the latest developments of the situation:

Ukraine urges China to play 'important role' in conflict resolution

UKRAINIAN Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba called on China Monday to play an "important role" in efforts to resolve Kyiv's conflict with Moscow.

"We share Beijing's position on the need to find a political solution to the war against Ukraine and call on China as a global power to play an important role in this effort," Kuleba said on Twitter. The call came after Kyiv last week urged Beijing to condemn President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

China, which shares Russia's hostilities towards the United States, has stayed silent on Putin's actions in Ukraine. Last week, US President Joe Biden warned his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping that there would be "consequences" if Beijing provided material support to Moscow.

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Ukraine swapped nine Russian soldiers to free detained mayor

A total of nine captured Russian servicemen has been exchanged for Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fyodorov, marking the first of such swap between Russia and Ukraine, said Kremlin's human rights commissioner Tatyana Moskalkova on Monday.

"The first exchange has taken place -- nine people, some of them from the list that I have been compiling based on reports. I very much hope that we will avoid any delays with these lists, cards, procedures," Moskalkova told the reporters.

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Russia protests Biden's remarks about Putin

RUSSIA on Monday protested US President Joe Biden's recent "unacceptable remarks" regarding Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it summoned US Ambassador to Russia John Sullivan on Monday and handed to him a demarche and a note of protest.

Biden's harsh remarks on Putin have "put Russian-US relations on the verge of breaking," it said, warning that hostile actions against Russia will receive "a decisive and firm rebuff."

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New satellite images show damage from Russian military air strikes across Irpin, Kyiv in Ukraine

IN its fourth week of the Russia-Ukraine war, new satellite images from Maxar Technologies shows damage from Moscow military strikes across Irpin, northwest of Kyiv in Ukraine.

Two distinct fires are seen in central Irpin near a complex of city government and apartment buildings. The images show fires from military strikes and growing flooding from the Irpin River, CNN reported.

The images, taken on Monday, also show Russian artillery positions west of the Russian-held Antonov Air Base northwest of the capital, Kyiv. Two other fires can also be seen in another satellite image among a group of buildings near a school in the city and a residential area near a lake.

An additional satellite image shows growing floodwaters from the Irpin River. It's unclear how the dam began flooding the Irpin River basin, whether the gates were opened on purpose by the Ukrainians to flood the area, or it was hit by a military strike.

According to CNN, a dam along the Dnieper River was flooding the Irpin River basin and its tributaries. The Irpin River is critical to the Russian advance toward Kyiv; if the Russians cannot cross it, they can't take Kyiv from the west.

SOURCE: XINHUA/ANI

Myanmar football teams to play int'l friendlies in April

THE Myanmar U-22 national team and the Myanmar women's national football team, which are under training ahead of the 31st SEA Games, are set to play international matches in April.

Both teams are preparing for international tournaments earlier this year, Myanmar Football Federation officials said.

The Myanmar U-22 national team competed in the 2022 ASEAN U-23 Championship in Cambodia from 14 to 26 February but withdrew from the competition on the first day of the group match as some players were infected with the COVID-19 virus.

The Myanmar U-22 squad resumed training in early March and is headed by Bulgarian Popov.

The Myanmar women's team has been taking training with 30 preliminary players since the last week of February after the 2022 AFC Women's Cup in India in January.

Head Coach U Tin Myint Aung is in charge of the women's squad.

The Myanmar U-22 team and the Myanmar women's team are set to travel to an international tournament or training trip in April. The SEA Games will be held in Viet Nam in May. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

UK and Ireland 'set to host Euro 2028'

Wembley hosted the Euro 2020 final between England and Italy. **PHOTO: PAUL ELLIS POOL/AFP/FILE**

THE UK and Ireland look set to be named as joint hosts of the European Championship in 2028 with no rival bids looking likely before this week's deadline, the Times reported on Monday.

The football associations of England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland abandoned plans to bid for the 2030 World Cup last month in favour of going for Euro 2028.

The Times said no fresh bids were expected before Wednesday's deadline and European football's governing body UEFA is expected to make a formal decision on 7 April.

UEFA could expand the tournament from 24 teams at Euro 2024 in Germany to 32 teams four years later but it is unlikely that the five host nations would qualify automatically even in an expanded tournament.

The 2030 World Cup bid was previously criticised as an "expensive vanity project" by Julian Knight, the lawmaker who chairs the UK parliament's Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, after the failed solo attempts by England to stage the 2006 and 2018 World Cups. —AFP ■

Half of 2024 Paris Olympics tickets at 50 euros or less

THE organizers of the 2024 Paris Olympics promised Monday that half of the tickets would be priced at 50 euros ($55) or less.

A total of 10 million tickets will be available for the Olympics and 3.4 million for the Paralympics, organizers said as they set out their ticketing policy.

One millon tickets for the Olympics, covering all sports including athletics and swimming, will be priced at 24 euros in order to make the Games as "accessible" as possible. The ticketing process will be launched in December this year. Applicants have to register for a ballot in the hope of being awarded a time session, first for tickets grouped into packs and then for individual tickets. At the end of 2023, any unsold tickets will go on sale. Eighty per cent of the tickets will be sold to the public while 20 per cent are reserved for corporate clients.

Tony Estanguet, the president of the Paris organizing committee, said in a statement: "We wanted a Games that are open to the widest number of people and that bring people together. —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.

Medvedev, Sabalenka top seeds at ATP and WTA Miami Open

Daniil Medvedev needs to reach his first Miami Open semi-final to reclaim the world number one ranking at the ATP and WTA hardcourt event.
PHOTO: AFP/FILE

DANIIL Medvedev will try to reclaim the world number one ranking and top seed Aryna Sabalenka chases her first final in 10 months at the ATP and WTA Miami Open.

Men's play starts Wednesday and women's play begins Tuesday in the hardcourt tournament at Hard Rock Stadium, where highest seeds receive first-round byes.

Serbia's Novak Djokovic moved into the top spot of the rankings this week, bumping out reigning US Open champion Medvedev after a three-week stay following his third-round exit at Indian Wells.

The 26-year-old Russian, runner-up at the past two Australian Opens, would return to the top spot with a semi-final run at Miami.

Medvedev only reached his first Miami quarter-final last year, when he lost to Roberto Bautista Agut, so a last-four spot would mark a best-ever run in Miami. And Medvedev has a potential second-round match-up with former world number one Andy Murray, provided the Briton gets past Argentina's Federico Delbonis.

Murray, a 34-year-old Scotsman and three-time Grand Slam champion, won the Miami crown in 2009 and 2013 but lost his only meeting with Medvedev in Brisbane in 2019.—AFP ■