

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 347, 1st Waxing of Tagu 1383 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Friday, 1 April 2022

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Announcement of Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

15th Waning of Taboung 1383 ME
31 March 2022

IT is necessary to control Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) infection continuously. So it is now announced that public requests, orders, notifications and directives (except for easing the restrictions) released by the Union-level organizations and Union ministries up to 31 March 2022 have been extended until 30 April 2022 for prevention, control and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

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.

Retirement age for civil servants set at 62

CONSERVING the human resources of the State, supporting the development of the country based on the work experience and expertise of senior civil

servants and promoting skilled civil servants, Rule 230 of the Civil Service Rules has been amended to include the date of retirement of an employee on

the occasion of the 62nd birthday of the employee, with the Civil Service Rules being amended for the fourth time.

Under the guidance of the

Chairman of the State Administration Council and with the approval of the Union Government, the Union Civil Service Board has exercised authority

conferred under Sub-section (a) of Section 76 of the Civil Service Law and amended the Civil Service Rules, it is reported.
— MNA

2021-2022 matriculation examination begins

THE matriculation examination for the 2021-2022 academic year began yesterday, and the basic education high school students across the nation sat the exam.

Before the exam, the teachers systematically checked the wearing of masks, body temperatures and exam admission cards following the COVID-19 health rules.

In Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, a total of 87 students out of 89 from No (6) BEHS in Zabuthiri Township took the exam, while there were 496 students out of 541 from No (7) BEHS, 1,847 students out of 1,964 registered students at nine exam centres in Zeyathiri Township, 2,000 students out of 2,120 registered students at five centres in Pobbathiri Township and 999 students out of 1,069 registered students at six exam centres of Ottarathiri Township.

Similarly, the students sat the exam at two exam centres in Putao Township of Kachin State and the respective high schools in Kayah State, Taninthayi Region, Magway Region, Yangon Region, Shan State (South) and Ayeyawady Region, in addition



Students are seen joyfully coming out after sitting for the first day of Matriculation Exam yesterday.

to other townships.

The security personnel, health workers, Fire Brigade members and ward/village administrators systematically provide security measures in and out of school areas for the students to take the exam peacefully.

The students sat Myanmar Language yesterday. Today will be English while the mathemat-

ics will be on 2 April, and 3 April (Sunday) will be an off day.

They have to take Chemistry on 4 April, Physics on 5 April, Biology/Economy on 6 April, Geography on 7 April, History on 8 April and optional Myanmar subject on 9 April.

A total of 312,299 students — 200,768 freshers and 111,531 repeaters — registered for the

exam at 1,256 exam centres in 321 townships of 71 districts in respective regions/states/districts/townships until 9 March, according to the Ministry of Education.

Union Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe, the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Region/State Chief Ministers and relevant officials inspected the examination.—MNA

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiate Committee meets Shan State Progressive Party

PAGE-3

NATIONAL

MoE Union Minister inspects first day of 2022 matriculation exam

PAGE-4

NATIONAL

Over 280,000 students sit 2021-2022 Matriculation Exam

PAGE-5

NATIONAL

Over 1,000 pilgrims visit Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival within day

PAGE-6

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.

Daily newspapers in
circulation on New Year
holidays alternatively

DAILY newspapers of the News and Periodicals Enterprise under the Ministry of Information will be in circulation in rotation during the official holidays of the Myanmar New Year.

The Myanma Alinn Daily will be published from 9 to 12 April whereas the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar dailies will take holidays.

The Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar dailies will be in circulation from 13 to 17 April, while the Myanma Alinn daily will take a break.

Likewise, the Shwepyi Rakhine Image supplement published every Wednesday by the Sub-Printing House (Sittway) will take a holiday on 13 April, the Ethnic Sector supplement in the Shan Language published every Thursday by the Sub-Printing House (Taunggyi) on 14 April, the Ethnic Sector supplement in Mon, Sakaw Kayin, Poe Kayin and Pa-O Languages published every Sunday by the Sub-Printing House (Mawlamyine) on 10 and 17 April. After the Thingyan holidays, all dailies will be published regularly.

Advertisements will be accepted without any holiday during alternative holidays of daily newspapers. As of 18 April, all newspapers will be in circulation as usual.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Notice to industrialists and importers of food
and industrial inputs such as plastic, iron/
steel, paper and chemicals

Nay Pyi Taw, 31 March 2022

FACILITATING the importation and procurement process of food and industrial inputs such as plastic, iron/steel, paper and chemicals in coordination with relevant departments, industrialists and importers of such products are encouraged to register at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon and the Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MRCCI) from 1-4-2022 to 8-4-2022.

Contact numbers

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI)
Phone : 09776999940
Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MRCCI)
Phone: 09767333710, 09799462196

Department of Trade

139 new cases of COVID-19 reported on
31 March, total figure rises to 611,587

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 611,587 after 139 new cases were reported on 31 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 589,312 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at 19,430 without casualties . —MNA

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

THE Ministry of Commerce oversees the importation of crucial medical supplies plus anti-COVID devices 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 6.38 tonnes of masks was imported via international airports yesterday.

Officials from the relevant departments cooperate 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 treating COVID-19. The public can reach contact persons for enquiries through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA



The military members discharge defence duties for the sakes of people with our own wishes

THE defence services of the country mean to protect the public at the lowest level and three-main national causes at the highest level. We, the military members, discharge defence duties for the sakes of people with our own wishes but not for private intentions.

(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)

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin leaves for the People’s Republic of China for working visit



ACCORDING to the invitation of Mr Wang Yi, State Councilor of the People’s Republic of China and Minister for Foreign Affairs, U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, left for China from Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by the special flight for a working visit yesterday morning. — MNA

Mr Wang Yi (left) and U Wunna Maung Lwin (right).

Closing ceremony of Puppet Festival of Lancang-Mekong held

THE second day of the Puppet Festival of Lancang-Mekong, a Mekong-Lancang co-operation project, was held yesterday morning by the virtual system in Mandalay.

At the festival, Lancang-Mekong countries: Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam demonstrated their puppetries, followed by a friendly discussion on traditional puppetry in the region.

In the afternoon, respective traditional puppet shows were performed,

and Myanmar performed the Thu-Nge-Taw dance, tripartite dual dance and U Shwe Yoe-Daw Moe dance. The closing ceremony was successfully held with a Mekong-Lancang tribute song featuring traditional puppet dances from six member countries.

Due to the Lancang-Mekong Puppet Festival, puppeteers could cooperate with admiration to exchange new ideas, which has been very helpful for identifying and enhancing traditional heritage. — MNA

National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiate Committee meets Shan State Progressive Party

THE National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiate Committee held a discussion with the Shan State Progressive Party-SSPP representatives at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The event was attended by State Administration Council member Union Minister at the Union Government Office (1) Chairman of National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiate Committee Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Vice-Chairman (2) Sao Khun Seng of SSPP, Secretary (2) Sao Sai Su, Central Committee member Sao Naw Leik and Sao Than Aung.

During the meeting, Committee Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae explained the ongoing

peace processes, holding of talks with ethnic armed organizations without any restrictions recognizing 2022 as a peace year, ceasefire, regional development programmes, reduction of conflicts, fulfilling the needs of residents, cooperation works to ensure successful holding of a free and fair multiparty democracy general election and measures of State peace and stability.

Then, SSPP Vice-Chairman (2) discussed establishing a community ensuring peace and stability and prevalence of law and order, trust-building measures for regional stability and security on both sides, and overcoming obstacles by holding several dialogues.

They also focused on the



The National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiate Committee meets the Shan State Progressive Party-SSPP representatives at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

current situations of ethnic armed groups in Shan State, other peace processes and regional development sectors. After the meeting, the officials gave presents. — MNA

MoE Union Minister inspects first day of 2022 matriculation exam



The MoE Union Minister and party inspects one of the matriculation exam room in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

UNION Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe, together with Deputy Ministers Dr Zaw Myint and U Zaw Win, Permanent Secretary Dr Soe Win, and Director-General of the Department of Basic Education U Kyaw Swa Thwin visited the Matriculation Examination Centre at No (6) Basic Education High School (Nay Pyi Taw) yesterday. They inspected students sitting the first-day Matriculation Examination in Myanmar Subject.

The Union minister instructed relevant officials that students who take the matriculation exam are encouraged to abide by with discipline and peace of mind.

He also instructed the Supervisions to fulfil their duties and assist them in completing the matriculation examination.

On the first day of the matriculation examination, students took the Myanmar Subject Exam at 1,238 internal examination centres throughout Myanmar and 20 foreign examination centres. A total of 312,420 students registered to take the exam in 1,258 examination centres, and 281,741 students took the exam. — MNA

MoHT Union Minister conducts fieldwork on tourism development in Yangon

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung went to the Yangon International Airport to inspect tourist information counters opened by the ministry in the international and domestic arrival buildings.

The director-general of the Yangon Region Hotels and Tourism Directorate explained the opening of tourist information counters and preparations for the arrival of foreign tourists. The Union minister instructed

officials to take special care to provide the necessary information to the tourists and provide good services as the international airlines will resume from 17 April.

Afterwards, the Union Minister cordially met responsible persons from the immigration counter, the Customs Department, and the Department of Public Health at the airport and urged them to work together to facilitate international tourists' arrival. — MNA



The MoHT Union Minister views inside the Yangon International Airport.

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions



A woman gets jabbed against COVID-19.

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 12,083 people from fifteen townships in Shan State(North),

Altogether 6,678 people from twelve townships in Mon and Kayin States, 495 people from Tamway Township in Yangon Region, 14,904 people from twenty-six townships in Ayeyawady Region and 8,255 from seven townships in Rakhine State, 31,500 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region and 100 people from Toungoo Township in Bago Region, respectively.

Similarly, healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 70 students from Namhkam township in Shan State (North) on 30 March.

It is reported that officials from the respective military commands visited the sites and coordinated the necessary work. — MNA

Over 280,000 students sit 2021-2022 Matriculation Exam

THE first day of the 2022 Matriculation Exam was held yesterday morning, with a total of 281,741 students sitting the exam for the Myanmar Subject. This year, the Ministry of Education opened 20 foreign exam centres and 1,238

local exam centres. A total of 281,741 students out of 312,424 students registered to take the first day of the exam took the Myanmar language exam, accounting for 90.18 per cent, according to the Ministry of Education. —MNA



Gyobingauk Township, Bago Region.



Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region.



Thaton Township, Mon State.



Bokpyin Township, Taninthayi Region.



Ponnagyun Township, Rakhine State.



Kyaukdaga Township, Bago Region.



Myawady Township, Kayin State.



Sittway Township, Rakhine State.



Hsenwi Township, Shan State (North).



Mawlamyine Township, Mon State.

Announcement of Online e-Visa Reopening

1. The Ministry of Immigration and Population launched the e-Visa Website (evisa.moip.gov.mm) on 1 September 2014. In light of the evolving COVID-19 situation and rapid increase of COVID-19 cases around the globe, there has been a temporary suspension for all new e-Visa applications since 20 March 2020, 23:59 Myanmar Standard Time (GMT + 6:30).
2. At present, the COVID-19 diagnosis confirmed rate and infection rate have dropped. In support of the economic development of the State, the Online e-Visa system will reopen on 1 April 2022 for business visa applications in accordance with the **COVID-19 rules and regulations of the Ministry of Health**.
3. Requirements for the application for Online e-Visa (Business) will be available at the Ministry's website <https://evisa.moip.gov.mm>.

Ministry of Immigration and Population

Over 1,000 pilgrims visit Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival within day

OVER 1,000 pilgrims across Myanmar visited Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival in Sagu Township in Minbu District of Magway Region on a daily basis, according to the Shwesettaw Pagoda Board of Trustees.

There were tens of thousands of pilgrims in previous years of the festival period in Taboung and Tagu. But this year, the number of pilgrims has declined due to the COVID-19 and Omicron outbreak.

"Over 1,000 pilgrims enter the Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival in a day although they are allowed to enter after checking their vaccinated certificates,"



Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda.

said U Tun Wai, vice-chairman of the Shwesettaw Pagoda Board of Trustees.

Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda is opened this year from the 5th Waxing of Tabodwe up to the

first day of the Myanmar New Year. Visitors are allowed only with vaccinated certificates, household lists and COVID-19 tests. — Zeya Htet (Minbu)/GNLM

ASEAN Tourism Committee Meetings held

BRUNEI hosted the 13th ASEAN Tourism Resourcing, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Meeting via videoconferencing yesterday.

The Philippines served as Chair at the meeting, while Director-General U Maung Maung Kyaw of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism was the Vice-Chair. It was also attended by the ASEAN Tourism Association leaders, ASEAN member countries, and

the ASEAN Secretariat.

The meeting discussed the drafting of a monitoring and evaluation system on ASEAN tourism cooperation according to the workshop on monitoring and evaluation system under ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (2016-2025), budget status in 2022, the fund to be received by partner organizations for ASEAN tourism cooperation works and other matters.

The ASEAN Tourism Committee meetings and its associate meetings such as 13th ASEAN Competitiveness Committee meeting was held on 29 March while 27th ASEAN Tourism Professional Monitoring Committee Meeting on 30 March and 13th ASEAN Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Development Committee Meeting on 31 March and discussed the implementations under the ASEAN Tourism



Strategic Plan (2016-2025), ASEAN Tourism market promotion, mutual recognition of ASEAN

tourism professionals and resumption of tourism in ASEAN member countries. — MNA

Chin State sets six national parks for nature-based tourism



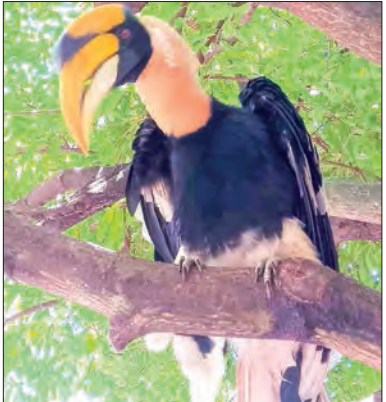
National parks are considered according to the ecosystems based on the enjoyment of birds and mammals. **PHOTOS: KANU**

CHIN State is home to the largest number of national parks in Myanmar, with its six national parks including Natma Hill (Khawnusom) National Park for nature-based tourism.

Myanmar designates various types of nature reserves in the country such as Science Circle, National Park, Marine National Park, Nature Reserve, Wildlife Sanctuary, Geograph-

ically Unique Area, and Local Community Nature Reserve.

Until 28 March 2022, 57 nature reserves, 6.43 per cent of the total country area, have been established, which include 11 national parks, two marine national parks, four nature reserves, 37 wildlife sanctuaries and three geographically unique areas. Out of them, Mount Khakaborazi, Natma



In the Natma Hill National Park, work is underway for the conservation of the rare and endangered species of mammals such as gibbon, pangolin, clouded leopard, sambar deer, wild dog, hog-badger, bear, goral, and bird species such as hornbill, Zarmani and Burmese Tit.

Hill, Htamathi, Alaungdaw Kathapha, Indawgyi Lake, Inlay Lake, Mainmahla Island, and Lampi Island have been regarded as the ASEAN Heritage Sites in Myanmar. It is an honour among the ASEAN countries and is also beneficial to Myanmar's tourism industry.

National parks are considered according to the ecosystems based on the enjoyment of birds and mammals. In the Natma Hill National Park, work is underway for the conservation of the rare and endangered species of mammals such as gibbon, pangolin, clouded leopard, sambar deer, wild dog, hog-badger, bear, goral, and bird species such as hornbill, Zarmani and Burmese Tit.

"If there are pheasant, Zarmani and hornbills in the forest, it has good natural basics, and, therefore, the level of con-

servation can be said a success. The enjoyment of rare mammals on Natma Hill shows that the forest is rich in natural resources, as it reflects the existence of ecosystems and species in the national park," said Warden of the Natma Hill National Park U Sein Tun.

Due to the decline in the COVID-19 infection rate in Myanmar, the resumption of international flights from 17 April will remedy the tourism. Indawgyi Lake and Inlay Lake which have been listed as the ASEAN Heritage Sites, Ramsar Sites, and the Biosphere Reserves; Mainmahla Island, Mount Khakaborazi and Natma Hill National Park which have been regarded as the Ramsar Sites and the ASEAN Heritage Sites will be some of the places of special interests to local and foreign tourists. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

India extends import deadline for black gram, pigeon peas by 31 March 2023

INDIA extended relaxations of conditions regarding clearance consignment for black gram (urad called in India) and pigeon peas until 31 March 2023, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade under India’s Ministry of Commerce & Industry released a notification on 29 March.

Earlier, the import deadline for black gram and pigeon peas with the relaxation of conditions is to expire on 31 March 2022.

India’s extension of import deadline is to govern their bean prices. The traders from India can freely import the beans with relaxations of quota.

This policy can have an impact on the domestic bean market which is likely to see flat prices, Aya Trade Centre guessed.

Next, the price of black gram is estimated at around K50,000 per basket depending on the local currency value against the US dollar exchange rate and gold price. A drastic drop of these



Earlier, the import deadline for black gram and pigeon peas with the relaxation of conditions is to expire on 31 March 2022.

beans is not expected.

The prices of black gram stand at K1.5 million per tonne, according to the Yangon Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre).

The price of black gram hit an all-time high of K2 million per tonne on 29 September 2021 tracking the Kyat devaluation K3,000 on the US dollar.

Myanmar conveyed US\$728.718 million worth of over 950,490 tonnes of various beans and pulses to foreign trade partners between 1 October 2021 and 18 March 2022 in the mini-budget period. The country shipped \$682.708 million valued in 394,352 tonnes of pulses and beans to

foreign markets through sea route, and \$46.01 million valued in 56,138 tonnes were sent to the neighbouring countries through land borders.

Myanmar exported US\$1.57 billion worth of over two million tonnes of various pulses to foreign trade partners last financial year 2020-2021. The country shipped \$966.4 million valued at 1.24 million tonnes of pulses and beans to foreign markets through the sea route, and \$604.3 million worth of 786,920 tonnes were sent to the neighbouring countries through the land border.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes of black gram and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas. Myanmar is the top producer of the black gram, which is primarily demanded by India, while pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are also cultivated in Australia and African countries besides Myanmar. — NN/GNLM

ChaungU supplies 100,000 more wheat straw hats than last year



The prices moved in the range of K1,600 and K2,500 per wheat straw hat last year. The prices have risen to K2,200 and K3,000 per hat depending on the size.

OVER 100,000 more wheat straw hats from ChaungU Township, Monywa District, Sagaing Region are supplied to the market as against the year-ago period.

Makers sent over 100,000 wheat straw hats to other regions last year, whereas the volume has increased to over 200,000 this year.

“The price of wheat straw is K5,500 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes). The wheat straw hats are distributed across the

stalled at a hat. The finished hats are sundried in the last stage before being placed in the market.

The prices moved in the range of K1,600 and K2,500 per wheat straw hat last year. The prices have risen to K2,200 and K3,000 per hat depending on the size. The hats were primarily delivered to Yangon, Myitkyina, Pakokku and Myingyan cities in previous years. This year, they are increasingly supplied to the Homalin, Mawlaik, Phaungpyin, Phakant and border towns between Myanmar and China.

ChaungU’s wheat straw hats are of good quality. It can withstand up to three to five years without fading colour.

The number of wheat farms dropped in the previous years as the growers chose watermelon and muskmelon over wheat. This year, the wheat farming activities improved depending on market situations. There are over 200 makers in Ngalontin, Mahtitha and Sinmyay villages in ChaungU Township. — Lu Lay/GNLM

Unseasonal rain hikes salt prices

FOLLOWING the unseasonal rain, the price of salt hit a peak of K300 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) at the depot in Mawlamyine, Mon State.

The erratic weather wreaked havoc on salt farms and harmed production last year.

Nevertheless, the corn traders face low inventory despite the high price in the late production season.

Additionally, the fuel oil price is exorbitantly high amid the political changes, causing the transportation cost to rise significantly.

Mon State, the second-largest producer in Myanmar, yearly produces 40,000 tonnes of sun-dried salt, beyond magnesium chloride (MgCl₂), iodized salt (I₂) and table salt (NaCl).

The 2019-2020 statistics of Mon State salt production businesses showed 14 iodine salt processing plants and one factory each for magnesium chloride (MgCl₂) and table salt (NaCl) production. Their production capacity is 60 tonnes of magnesium chloride, 204 tonnes of table salt, and 12,132 tonnes of iodized salt. — NN/GNLM

From 23 March, the price of salt has risen above K300 per viss. The prices of raw salt stood at K314-K320 per viss, while the refined salt was at K340 per viss.

The unseasonal rain recently affected by the storm ruined the salt farms in Mon State, resulting in the price rise, said the salt farmers.

Last December 2021 and February 2022, unseasonal rain damaged salt farms.

The price is expected to remain high due to the decrease in raw salt production, high production cost and demand from the salt mills, salt farmers said. In January this year, salt fetched only K80-K100 per viss.

The price increased by K60-K80 per viss in winter 2021 compared to the same corresponding period last year.

Keep patient as overload electricity consumption is under control

CURRENTLY, electricity is of great usefulness in operating the daily routine of people and running the production process. Moreover, the regular electrification process contributes to the prevalence of law and order in order to protect the life and property of the people.

Most of the Yangonites require electricity at full capacity. Meanwhile, the government is making utmost efforts in operating power stations to generate electricity for the people through national grids by spending a large amount of the budget.

People need to change their behaviours in consuming electricity. They should efficiently use the electricity in minimizing waste and

As the government cannot supply electricity to the people at full capacity depending on the budget allotment, people need to keep patient in consuming the electricity with understanding the financial situation of the country and supporting the work process of the government.

loss. They have to switch off the lighting and machinery run by electricity if necessary. They have to understand that if they use the least load of electricity, the surplus electricity will be useful for others. If so, efficient consumption of electricity will contribute to the public electrification process.

At present, people are consuming electricity in the rotation due to unbalance of overload and generating capacity. Consumption of electricity in the patience of the people will reflect the smooth process of electrification. It will be a win-win situation for current electrification.

For the time being, the government is striving for generating electricity as much as possible by seeking the proper water sources where hydropower can be generated.

As such, strenuous efforts are being made to generate electricity from State-owned power plants — 280 megawatts from Upper Yey-

wa Hydropower Project, 51 megawatts from Upper Kengtawng Hydropower Project, 111 megawatts from Thahtay Hydropower Project and 152 megawatts from Middle Paunglaung Hydropower Project, totalling 594 megawatts — as scheduled.

It is difficult to control the electrification process between the overload of users and generating capacity of power plants. Sometimes, the supply of electricity on schedule is cut so as to reduce the overload of electricity consumption. Moreover, electricity cannot be supplied to people in time because of the lesser load of electricity.

Implementation of power plant projects depends on the allotment of the State budget. The government is seeking ways and means for generating electricity through hydropower, wind power, solar energy and other sources in order to electrify the people as much as possible. As the government cannot supply electricity to the people at full capacity depending on the budget allotment, people need to keep patient in consuming the electricity with understanding the financial situation of the country and supporting the work process of the government.

■ ■ ■

Dedication, team work boost China's COVID-19 research

MANY clinicians have referred to a COVID-19 drug developed by Zhang Linqi as a “miracle medicine” after seeing their patients’ lasting fever symptoms diminish quickly following an injection of the drug.

A virologist at China’s Tsinghua University, Zhang led his team to create a cocktail therapy of monoclonal antibodies BRII-196 and BRII-198, which cut hospitalizations and deaths by 80 per cent in human trials and appears to work well against all existing variants.

It took just 18 months for the Chinese drug to be developed and receive regulatory approval.

“In less than two years, we finished a job that would otherwise take at least 10 years,” Zhang said.

His latest research uses a deep learning approach to help his team obtain antibodies that can neutralize the coronavirus and its variants at a faster pace.

International academic journals

Anti-COVID-19 research results from Chinese institutes, universities and enterprises have been published in international academic journals every two or three days since January. Chinese scientists are contributing their wisdom, experience and painstaking efforts to enhance the human capacity to cope with the deadly virus.

While the Academy of Military

Medical Sciences presented an mRNA COVID-19 antibody that provided lasting immunity in mice, Fudan University created an adenovirus vaccine candidate designed to give dual protection against both COVID-19 and influenza viruses.

Researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), China’s top academic institute, are working on an inhalable antibody with low cost and large-scale production advantages, while pharmaceutical companies in Shanghai and Suzhou have commenced global trials of a co-developed oral drug for moderate and severe COVID-19 cases.

Speaking to press at the fifth session of the 13th National People’s Congress earlier in March, Minister of Science and Technology Wang Zhigang said that China has had fruitful beginning to its development of COVID-19 vaccines and drugs, with several candidates being granted market approval or undergoing clinical trials.

“The more tools to tackle COVID-19 that science and technology can provide, the better our anti-pandemic measures can become,” the minister said.

None of this progress has come easily. China’s impressive pace of medical research is the result of the long-term hard work of Chinese scientists.

Wang Qihui is a CAS virologist. Since January 2020, when Wang first volunteered to work on COVID-19, she has been racing



Nucleic acid test kits are developed in a workshop in Chengdu, Sichuan Province in southwest China, on 24 February. PHOTO: XINHUA

against the clock to find ways to defeat the virus.

Tasked with finding effective antibodies in a short time, Wang led her team to conduct experiments day and night. She once stayed in her laboratory for two weeks, sometimes forgetting food and sleep.

JS016, a COVID-19-neutralizing antibody

Five months after the initial outbreak of the novel coronavirus, her team announced that JS016, a COVID-19-neutralizing antibody that they had developed, could be administered to healthy

people in clinical trials. In November last year, the antibody was granted emergency-use authorization in 15 countries, including the United States and several European countries.

Lots of sacrifices were made in this process. Right before the results of the COVID-19 antibody study came out, Wang Qihui experienced neurological deafness because of high stress, which led to temporary hearing loss in her left ear.

She was hospitalized for five days after a doctor warned her that, in the absence of timely treatment, she could develop

permanently impaired hearing.

The scientist has since recovered and is determined to make greater contribution to the fight against the pandemic. She has resumed her COVID-19 research, working to develop a nasal spray antibody drug and an mRNA vaccine.

Wang Qihui attributes her achievements largely to her previous experience in the field of viral infectious diseases, such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and the Zika virus.

Zhang Linqi and his team, like Wang, have used their de-

termination and wealth of experience in responding to new pathogens to deal with the pandemic.

Zhang has devoted 30 years to the study of HIV-1 pathogenesis and vaccine development, and to emerging and re-emerging human viral pathogens such as MERS, Ebola and the Zika virus.

“The development of a treatment drug and a vaccine sounded lighting fast, even to me, but it benefited from years of research on antibody drugs and HIV vaccine development,” Zhang said when asked how the COVID-19 antibody drug he developed was created so quickly.

“AIDS cocktail,” a combination treatment

Inspired by the “AIDS cocktail,” a combination treatment of three or four different medicines for people with HIV/AIDS, Zhang and his team selected 206 monoclonal antibodies and whittled the number down to two, creating their COVID-19 cocktail therapy.

It has demonstrated an improved performance in resisting virus mutations and maintained longer activity in the human body compared to similar therapies consisting of only one antibody.

Xiamen University, which has also accumulated significant experience in vaccine development, is a major research force in the fight against COVID-19. It was also one of the first institutions to receive global virus research donations.

SOURCE: XINHUA

Japanese students studying abroad down 98% in FY 2020 due to COVID

THE number of Japanese students studying abroad in fiscal 2020 dived 98.6 per cent from a year earlier to 1,487, a survey showed Wednesday, as strict border controls amid the coronavirus pandemic forced many students to cancel or postpone their study plans.

The survey also showed the number of foreign students enrolling at universities, Japanese language schools and other educational institutions in Japan as of May 2021 fell 13.3 per cent from a year earlier to 242,444. Of the total, 9.1 per cent or 21,945 students could not come to Japan and had to study online.

The survey conducted by the Japan Student Services Organization found the number of Japanese studying abroad hit a record low in fiscal 2020 and logged

the largest drop since comparable data became available in fiscal 2009.

Students belonging to Japanese universities

It covered students belonging to Japanese universities and other institutions. Those who entered universities overseas directly after graduating from high schools in Japan and students taking online classes at schools abroad were excluded.

As for destinations, South Korea ranked top with 265 Japanese students, down 6,970 from the previous year, followed by the United States at 240, down 17,898, and Canada at 189, down 9,135.

Among foreign students studying in Japan, Chinese made up the largest

group at 114,255, down 7,590 from the previous year, followed by Vietnam at 49,469, down 12,764, according to the data.

The number of international students at higher education such as universities in Japan fell 16,906 to 201,877, while the figure at Japanese language schools was down 20,247 to 40,567, the survey showed.

“We expect the (coronavirus) infection situation to improve and international travel to resume. We will work to provide information and other support to students,” an education ministry official said.

The government also intends to further ease border control measures to increase the number of international students.

SOURCE: KYODO



The survey also showed the number of foreign students enrolling at universities, Japanese language schools and other educational institutions in Japan. Members of a university student group advocating free tuition at Japanese colleges hold a press conference in Tokyo on 22 April 2020, to call for a cut in tuition for students losing revenues from part-time working amid the coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO: KYODO/FILE

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Heads of Service Organizations transferred and appointed

1. The State Administration Council has transferred and appointed the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(a) Dr Swe Swe Aung Director-General Legislative Vetting Department, Ministry of Legal Affairs	Director-General Prosecution Department Ministry of Legal Affairs
(b) U Kyaw Win Director-General Union Minister's Office Ministry of Education	Director-General Department of Alternative Education Ministry of Education

2. The State Administration Council has appointed U Soe Myint, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Union Minister's Office of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, as Director-General of the Union Minister's Office of the same ministry on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 31 March 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 1 April 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Kachin State, scattered in Taninthayi Region and eastern Shan State, isolated in upper Sagaing, Mandalay Regions and (northern and southern) Shan, Chin, Mon, Kayin States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of scattered rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region and Kachin, (northern and eastern) Shan States and isolated in upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady Regions and southern Shan, Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 April 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 April 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 April 2022: Partly cloudy.

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Mezali diversion weir starts irrigation to summer crops in Pwintbyu Tsp



The department annually delivers irrigation water efficiently to farms in the township through the Mezali diversion weir, ensuring an adequate water supply.

MEZALI diversion weir helps meet the summer crop target in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region, with the irrigation water network, according to the Pwintbyu Township Department of Ir-

rigation and Water Utilization Management.
The department annually delivers irrigation water efficiently to farms in the township through the Mezali diversion weir, ensuring an adequate water supply. The weir starts distributing irrigation to grow the summer crops in the township from 1 March.
“Mezali diversion weir earlier covered the summer paddy, sesame and other crops. This year, irrigation storage is short of supply, so the weir cannot provide sufficient irrigation to the summer paddy. It will irrigate only summer sesame and other crops. Our township relies on an irrigation network for cultivation in summer. Primarily, the region cultivates paddy, sesame, chick-pea, sunflower, peanut, butter bean and baby corn. Thanks to the efficient irrigation system, the township sees a successful yield,” said a resident from Pwintbyu Township.
It is projected to fulfil irrigation needs in 60,428 acres of summer sesame through the Mezali diversion weir and 500 acres through the Aingma weir, totalling 60,928 acres of summer sesame seeds, according to the data of the Pwintbyu Agriculture Department. Both mechanized farming and traditional farming with draught cattle are witnessed in the township. — Hlaing Win Lay (Pwintbyumyay)/GNLM

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, foodstuffs, utensils, handsets, construction tools and unregistered vehicles seized

MANAGED by the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, action is being taken against illegal trades under the law.
On 29 March, the port duty inspection team led by the Department of Customs carried out inspections at Asia World Port Terminal and construction tools (estimated at K31,599,000), imported in violation of import licences, were seized, and action was taken under the Customs Law.
Similarly, the port duty inspection team led by the Department of Customs carried out inspections at the Myanmar Industrial Port Container Inspection Station, and household appliances (estimated at K63,950,000) imported in violation of import licences were seized and action was taken under the Customs Law.
The port duty inspection team led by the Department of Customs carried out inspections at the Yangon International Airport cargo warehouse, and medicines and cosmetics (estimated at K4,442,160), imported in violation of import licences, were seized, and action was taken under the Customs Law.
In addition, a combined inspection team under the management of the Mandalay Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force carried out inspections in the markets. It seized various smartphones (estimated at K48,418,500) that did not

show any official documents, and action was taken in accordance with the Customs Law.
On 31 March, a combined inspection team led by the Forest Department under the management of the Bago Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force carried out inspections, and illegal timbers of 41.5162 tonnes (estimated at K4,732,926) in Bago, Toungoo, Pyay and Thayawady District Forest Reserves were seized, and action was taken under the Forest Law.
A combined inspection team under the management of the Sagaing Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force carried out inspections and seized foodstuffs and utensils (estimated at K5,688,000)



Officials confiscate illegal timbers.

that had no official documents in a vehicle and prosecuted them under the Import and Export Law.
Similarly, a combined inspection team under the management of the Magway Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force carried out inspections. An unregistered vehicle (estimated at K2,000,000) in Magway District and six trucks with illegally diesel barrels (estimated at K90,000,000) in Minbu and Pakokku Districts, a total of K92,000,000, were seized. Action is taken under the Petroleum Products Law.
Therefore, 18 arrests (estimated value of K250,830,586) were made on 29, 30 and 31 March, according to Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA

Stimulant tablets seized in some townships

A combined team consisting of security personnel searched the house of Aung Soe in Kangang ward, Myeik Township, on the evening of 29 March and seized 11,000 stimulant tablets. On 30 March, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force arrested three men with 5,000 stimulant tablets in Pyigyidagun Township and Chanmyathazi Township.
Similarly, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force seized 6,200 stimulant tablets and 0.5 kilogramme of marijuana during an inspection of the vehicle on Kyatchan road, Dagon Myothit (South) Township, on the same day.



Aung Kyaw Zaw, Ma Tin Aye Eikam, Naing Lin and Ma Than Than (aka) Win Maw Than are seen along with seized heroin.

On 29 March, 3.3 kilogrammes of heroin were seized during an inspection of a vehicle on the Mandalay-Lashio Road, near Oriental tollgate, Nawnghkio Township. According to the investigation, related suspects were arrested in Mansi Town and Shwegu Town.
It is reported that action is being taken against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to the Myanmar Police Force. — MNA

Shanghai announces measures to help businesses affected by COVID-19

CHINA'S economic hub Shanghai on Tuesday announced 21 measures to help enterprises affected by COVID-19 emerge from the pandemic gloom.

Preliminary estimates show that tax-related measures alone can reduce the burden on related industries and enterprises in Shanghai by about 140 billion yuan (about 22 billion US dollars) in 2022.

"The introduction of the measures aims to fully implement China's relevant policies to assist pandemic-hit companies. The measures also aim to provide stronger support for those affected by Shanghai's latest virus resurgence," said Ruan Qing, deputy director of the Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission.

The measures concerning tax rebates target businesses with operating fund shortages.



Shoppers among empty shelves in a supermarket before lockdown in Shanghai. PHOTO: AFP

"Last year, more than 3,000 enterprises in Shanghai enjoyed tax rebates, and that number is expected to reach 250,000 this year," said Pang Wei, deputy head of the Shanghai municipal tax service.

Thanks to these measures, small and micro enterprises and

self-employment businesses in all sectors could be exempted from part of their rents in 2022.

In rendering the support, priority has been given to retail, catering and other industries that were hit hard by the latest resurgence.—Xinhua ■

Japan's unemployment rate drops in February as job seekers stay put due to COVID-19

JAPAN'S unemployment rate slipped to 2.7 per cent in February as would-be new job seekers opted to stay in their existing jobs owing to uncertainty caused by a resurgence in COVID-19 infections, the government said in a report on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said the seasonally adjusted jobless rate fell 0.1 percentage points from January.

This was the period a COVID-19 quasi-state of emergency

was declared by the government which saw bars and restaurants in the affected regions asked to close their doors earlier as the highly contagious Omicron variant of the coronavirus was spreading rapidly.

The government's anti-coronavirus measures eventually ended up covering the majority of Japan's 47 prefectures in the reporting period, including Tokyo and Osaka, owing to the rampant spread of the virus, with the ministry saying that retail

and wholesale sectors were severely affected.

Unemployed people in February declined 30,000 from the previous month to a total of 1.88 million, with the figure coming on the heels of a rise of 40,000 booked in January, the ministry said.

New job seekers comprised 450,000 of the total, which was 40,000 less than the previous month, with those leaving the jobs of their own volition totaling 740,000 people, rising 30,000, while 600,000 were made redundant, up 10,000, the data showed.

Even though there was a drop in the unemployment rate, a ministry official was quoted as saying the overall job market was still being largely influenced by the pandemic, as evidenced by the large number of people who are still furloughed.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare said the job availability ratio in February inched up to 1.21 from 1.20 in January, marking the second straight month of improvement.

The job availability ratio equates to there being 121 available jobs for every 100 people seeking them. — ANI ■



Japan's unemployment rate slipped to 2.7 per cent in February as would-be new job seekers opted to stay in their existing jobs owing to uncertainty caused by a resurgence in COVID-19 infections. PHOTO: KYODO

NEWS IN BRIEF

Next US booster rollout faces delays, lack of funds: The Guardian

Existing delays with vaccination and a lack of federal funding could slow the next booster rollout across the United States, The Guardian has reported.

The rollout of the first round of boosters, authorized in the United States last fall, "just fell off the cliff", with many Americans still not realizing they are eligible or that the booster is recommended, said the British newspaper on Sunday.

With a potential second booster on the horizon for vulnerable groups, the US government is still struggling to drum up American public interest in additional shots and funding from Congress to pay for COVID-19 initiatives, said the report.

The United States is likely to see another wave of COVID-19 infections and vaccines can take weeks to become fully effective, making vaccination campaigns urgent now, experts said.—Xinhua ■

India logs 1,233 COVID cases, active infections fall below 15k

India has logged 1,233 new COVID cases in the last 24 hours, Union Health Ministry informed on Wednesday.

With this, the active infections have dropped below 15,000. The active caseload of COVID in India now stands at 14,704, contributing to 0.03 per cent of cumulative positive cases.

In the last 24 hours, as per the Ministry, 1,876 recoveries were also reported. With total recoveries since the beginning of the COVID pandemic at 4,24,87,410, the recovery rate of India presently stands at 98.75 per cent.—ANI ■

US authorizes fourth COVID shot for over 50s



United States health officials have given the green light for Pfizer's COVID-19 booster shot to be administered to children as young as 12. PHOTO: FREDERIC J. /AFP

THE United States on Tuesday authorized a fourth dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for people 50 and older, as authorities warn of a possible new wave driven by the BA.2 variant.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said in a statement it had based its decision on emerging evidence that an additional booster, given four months after the last, improved protection against severe COVID and was not associated with new safety concerns.

Additionally, people with immune compromising condi-

tions who have already received four shots, with their latest at least four months ago, are now eligible for a fifth dose.

That includes people living with certain organ transplants.

The Pfizer vaccine will be available to immune-compromised people aged 12 and over, while the Moderna vaccine will be available to those 18 and up.

"Current evidence suggests some waning of protection over time against serious outcomes from COVID-19 in older and immunocompromised individuals," senior FDA scientist Peter Marks said, explaining the decision.—AFP ■

NEWS
IN BRIEFWar to hammer
Russia, Ukraine
economies this year:
EBRD

THE economies of Russia and Ukraine will contract by 10 per cent and 20 per cent respectively this year as the war between the two countries causes “the greatest supply shock” for 50 years, the European development bank, EBRD, said on Thursday.

Before Russia invaded its pro-Western neighbour on 24 February, the London-based European Bank for Reconstruction and Development had been pencilling in growth of 3.5 per cent for Ukraine and 3.0 per cent for Russia.

The EBRD, issuing emergency forecasts, said it was the first international financial institution to update its guidance since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine last month.

The latest prognoses “assume that a ceasefire is brokered within a couple of months, followed soon after by the start of a major reconstruction effort in Ukraine,” it said. —AFP ■

Spain permits
supermarket
rationing to avoid
shortages

SPANISH supermarkets can legally ration consumer purchases of certain products under a new provision published Wednesday in the state’s official bulletin.

The text, which provides legal cover, says the restrictions can be applied “exceptionally and when there are extraordinary circumstances or force majeure that justify it”.

The move came as empty shelves appeared in many supermarkets due to the combined effect of a truck drivers’ strike and the Ukraine war.

Most of the empty shelves have been due to an ongoing lorry drivers’ strike over soaring diesel prices, which began on 14 March and has curbed supplies of milk, flour, rice and other basic goods. Three weeks ago, Spanish supermarkets began rationing the sale of sunflower oil to stop customers from stockpiling over shortage fears due to Russia’s invasion of key supplier Ukraine. —AFP ■

Indo-Pacific framework can be
“meaningful” without tariff talks: USTR

THE United States’ proposed economic engagement initiative for the Indo-Pacific is expected to bring “meaningful” benefits despite the absence of talks on cutting tariffs, US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said Wednesday.

“It is true that we are not talking about tariff reductions in the context of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework,” Tai said during a congressional hearing on the trade policy agenda of the administration of President Joe Biden.

But “economically meaningful outcomes” are “absolutely a part of what we intend to build out with our Indo-Pacific partners,” she said.

The Biden administration has vowed to launch the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework early this year, which it defines as a “new partnership” that will promote high-stand-



The Indo-Pacific region has become the world’s hotbed of economic activity and integration. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

ards trade, govern the digital economy, improve supply-chain resiliency and catalyze investment in infrastructure, among other issues.

It is widely seen as a potential fix for the US absence from major free-trade agreements in the region, where China is increasing its economic clout. But

questions remain as to whether the framework can be attractive to countries in the region amid US reluctance to further open up its markets. —Kyodo ■

Japan’s industrial production
edges up in February, car
output rebounds

Japan employs over a quarter of a million industrial robot workers. PHOTO: KYODO

JAPAN’S industrial output edged slightly higher in February from a month earlier, inching up 0.1 per cent to mark the first rise in three months, the government said in a report on Thursday. According to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), production at factories and mines stood at 95.8 against the 2015 base of 100, on a seasonally adjusted basis, following an upwardly revised 0.8 per cent decline in January.

The ministry maintained its basic assessment from the previous month that industrial production is “showing signs of picking up,” and noted that production of automobiles

had bounced back from a virus-linked supply chain disruption. The ministry said in its preliminary report that production in the auto industry climbed 10.9 per cent from a month earlier, following a 17.3 per cent plunge, as the rampant spread in nationwide infections of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 pandemic forced some plants and parts factories to temporarily shutter operations.

Output of transport equipment including railway cars and aircraft engine parts jumped 7.9 per cent, while that of chemical products slumped 9.6 per cent in the reporting period, the ministry said. —Xinhua ■

Global Entrepreneurship
Congress in Saudi Arabia
attracts 13.8-bln-USD
investments

INVESTMENTS of more than 13.8 US billion dollars were attracted through the Global Entrepreneurship Congress (GEC) that concluded on Wednesday in Riyadh, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported.

The four-day event, organized by Saudi Arabia’s Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority in coordination with the Global Entrepreneurship Network, aimed to promote the kingdom as an attractive environment for pioneers and innovators.

The Social Development Bank announced the launch of new products and initiatives worth almost 3 billion dollars to support and empower entrepreneurs.

The Ministry of Investment of Saudi Arabia announced investments of more than 936 million US dollars to facilitate the access of international companies into the Saudi Arabian markets.

The GEC, which opened on 27 March, attracted entrepreneurs from more than 180 countries and hosted over 145 sessions with the participation of 293 speakers. —Xinhua ■



Investments of more than 936 million U.S. dollars will facilitate the access of international companies into the Saudi Arabian markets. PHOTO: SPA/XINHUA

Japan to see higher prices for food, daily goods from April



East Japan Railway Co. will effectively raise ticket prices of shinkansen bullet trains during the high season, and Kyushu Railway Co. will lift the prices of some coupon tickets for the bullet trains. PHOTO: KYODO

JAPANESE consumers are expected to face more challenges amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, as a wave of price hikes will hit essential items such as food and daily goods in the new fiscal year beginning

Friday due to the rising cost of raw materials. Since there will be changes in fiscal 2022 in some social systems closely related to people's day-to-day living, such as the lowering of the amount of

public pension benefits, the rising prices are likely to squeeze socially vulnerable people like pensioners particularly hard.

For example, Megmilk Snow Brand Co., Meiji Co. and Morinaga Milk Industry Co. will raise their prices for cheese, while The Nisshin OilliO Group Ltd. and J-Oil Mills Inc. said they will increase their prices of cooking oil for household use.

Other food items subject to the upcoming price hikes include Kagome Co.'s tomato ketchup and Yaokin Co.'s "Umaibo", a popular snack meaning "delicious stick" that has been sold at 10 yen (\$0.08) without tax for more than

40 years. The new price of "Umaibo" is set at 12 yen, according to the snack maker based in Tokyo.

Regarding daily goods, factory prices of Nippon Paper Crexia Co.'s tissue and toilet paper, as well as those of some diaper products of Kao Corp. will go up.

The major transportation system in the country is no exception either.

East Japan Railway Co. will effectively raise ticket prices of shinkansen bullet trains during the high season, and Kyushu Railway Co. will lift the prices of some coupon tickets for the bullet trains.—Kyodo ■

China's Geely starts test runs of e-methanol vehicles in Denmark

CHINESE company Geely began test runs of green e-methanol vehicles in the Danish port of Aalborg on Monday.

The two sedans and heavy truck run on e-methanol produced by Power to X (PtX) solution, a sustainable, carbon neutral, renewable fuel.

Denmark wants to promote this type of fuel as it provides a solution for storing excess renewable power and stabilizing the country's power grid.

Danish Minister for Transport Trine Bramsen, who took part in the test runs of the vehicles on Monday, called for more support for these technologies.

"This is not about one single country, it is about the future of the whole world," Bramsen told Xinhua.

"So I think it's important that we have strong cooperation and share

knowledge in this field. This is not about ourselves, it's about our children and our grandchildren."

Meanwhile, Geely said that the aim of its collaboration with Denmark is the promotion of green e-methanol and green mobility in Europe.

The port of Aalborg is set to invest 2 billion Danish kroner (300 million US dollars) in green transportation, the port's chairman Lasse Frimand Jensen told Xinhua.

Recently, the Danish government announced a broad agreement on Power-to-X energy production that includes a government tender of 1.25 billion Danish kroner (184 million US dollars).

Denmark is leading in wind and solar renewable energy production. However, the challenge of such energies is that they are weather-dependent.—Xinhua ■



The world's first M100 heavy truck fueled by e-methanol started trial runs in Port of Aalborg, northwest of Denmark on 28 March 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/ LIN JING

Russia-Ukraine conflict deals blow to economic sentiment in Cyprus

THE Russia-Ukraine conflict has dealt a blow to the economic sentiment in Cyprus, causing a steep drop in the Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI-CypERC), the Economic Research Centre of the University of Cyprus (ERC), said on Wednesday.

It said the ESI-CypERC dropped by 9.4 points to 102.1 in March from 115.1 of the previous month.

The Economic Research Indicator is an important economic index

which helps government and private economists analyze economic performance, make predictions of future performance and study business cycles.

ERC said that the deterioration of economic sentiment and the rise in uncertainty among firms and consumers were driven by external developments, namely the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the sanctions imposed on Russia and the rising international commodity prices.—Xinhua ■

Hackers steal over \$600 mn in major crypto heist

HACKERS stole cryptocurrency worth over \$600 million from a digital ledger used by players of the popular online game Axie Infinity, in a major digital cash heist revealed Tuesday.

Interest in cyptocurrency has boomed, along with its values, but the money has also become an attractive target for tech savvy thieves. Ronin Network said the attack targeting its blockchain netted 173,600 ether and \$25.5 million worth of stablecoin, a digital asset pegged to the US dollar.

The haul was valued at \$545 million when it was stolen on 23 March, but was worth about \$615 million based on prices Tuesday, making it one of largest thefts ever in the crypto world.

"Most of the hacked funds are still in the hacker's wallet," Ronin said in a post revealing the theft.

The team at Sky Mavis, maker of battle and trading game Axie Infinity, discovered the security breach on Tuesday after a user was unable to withdraw ether, according to the company.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NORESUNG VOY.NO. (211W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NORESUNG VOY.NO. (211W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-4-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

Notice for Change of Distributor

We, **Pilarquim (Shanghai) CO., Ltd** would like to change the Distributor of the following products, which registered under Pesticide Registration Board, Myanmar, From **MARGA MIN Co.,Ltd** to **SEINN LAETHWIN CO., LTD**. If any objection or enquiry, please contact to Co-secretary Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon From here to next (2) weeks.

No.	The Old Distributor	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registartion Type	Registration no.	The New Distributor
1	MARGA MIN Co., Ltd	PILARIMA	Imazethapyr 10% SL	Provisional	P2020-4819	SEINN LAE THWIN Co., Ltd

Address : SEINN LAE THWIN CO.,LTD,Corner Of Merchant Street & 38th Street, No.(525), First Floor, Ward No.(6), Kyauktada T/S, Yangon

Tel : 09-894089996,09-894089996

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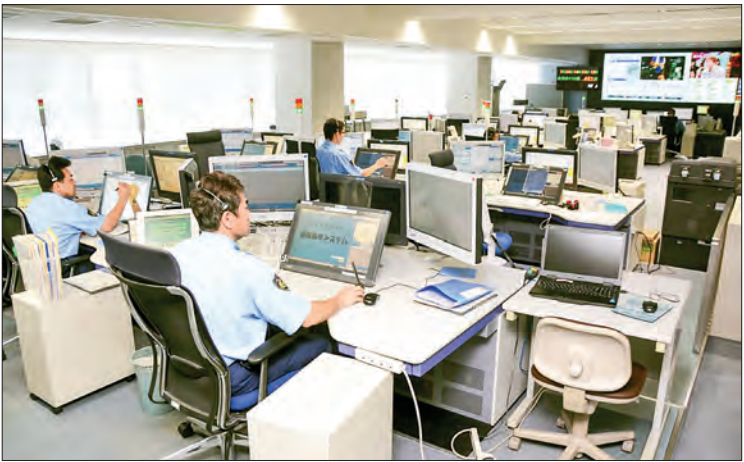
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Law enacted to create cybercrime bureau at police agency

JAPAN enacted on Wednesday legislation establishing a new bureau and a special investigative team at the National Police Agency tasked with tackling serious cybercrime cases.

With jurisdiction over the entire country and a 1 April start date, the 200-strong cybercrime investigation team will deal with serious cases such as attacks on national and local governments as well as critical infrastructure. It will monitor cyberattacks from both within Japan and overseas.

It is the first time the police agency will be directly involved in investigating crimes, although the affiliated Imperial Guard



Police officers in Kanagawa Prefecture, near Tokyo, use predictive policing, a method of anticipating the occurrence of crimes and accidents using artificial intelligence, as the first force in Japan to do so. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Headquarters, which is tasked with protecting the royal family, has done so previously. In postwar Japan, local

police in each of the nation's 47 prefectures have, in principle, conducted investigations and made arrests or searches.

The agency's newly created cyber police bureau will consist of about 240 officials and will centralize cybercrime-related work that has so far been conducted at different bureaus.

The special investigative team will work out of the Kanto Regional Police Bureau in Saitama north of Tokyo.

As it is common overseas for national agencies to deal with cybercrime, the agency plans to send its investigators to Europe and elsewhere to participate in

joint operations.

The bill revising the police law passed the House of Councillors at a plenary session on Wednesday.

In 2021, the number of cybercrimes topped 10,000 for the first time in Japan, with a sharp increase in reports of ransomware cases. Concerns are also growing about alleged state-sponsored attacks from China, North Korea and Russia. A domestic supplier of Toyota Motor Corp. was targeted in a cyberattack in February, prompting the automaker to halt domestic plants for part of a day and causing the production loss of some 13,000 vehicles.—Kyodo ■

Trench proves ultimate barrier to Venezuelans arriving in Chile

EXHAUSTED and afraid, Venezuelan Soreimi Moran breathes in deeply and fights back tears.

She has already travelled 5,000 kilometers (3,100 miles) over the last week and knows that her goal is finally within reach.

Tomorrow, a smuggler will try to sneak her family over the heavily guarded trench that separates Bolivia from Chile.

"It's too cold," said the 24-year-old, who is travelling with her two daughters aged one and 10; two younger siblings aged seven and 14; her grand-

mother and a 25-year-old uncle.

The 3,700 metres (yards) of altitude brings not only cold that few Venezuelans are used to, but also fatigue. "We want to go to Chile to give the kids a better future," said Moran, whose group has already passed through Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

More than six million people have left crisis-racked Venezuela in recent years, according to the United Nations, with more than half a million now in Chile.

The mass exodus of people, often on foot, from a country suffering years of political and eco-

nomic trouble has created one of the greatest migration crises in history.

At least 20 people died in 2021 trying to cross the Pisiga-Colchane border, which lies 460 kilometres from La Paz and 2,000 kilometres from Santiago.

Five people have died this year alone, including a child and an elderly person whose bodies were found on the Chilean side of the border last weekend, local authorities say.

The trench, at around one and a half meters wide, has been guarded by Chilean soldiers



Migrants cross the the border trench near Pisiga from Bolivia into Chile. **PHOTO: AFP**

since mid-February when former president Sebastian Pinera declared a state of exception in the north of the country to allow military support for the police

patrolling the frontier.

Even the arrival of millennial President Gabriel Boric on 11 March has not led to a change in that policy.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Allies desert Pakistan's beleaguered PM ahead of no-confidence vote

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday looked increasingly beleaguered as more allies deserted his government to join ranks with the opposition that is seeking to oust him through a vote of no confidence in parliament.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement, a political party having roots in the port city of Karachi that has seven seats in the National Assembly, and Balochistan Awami Party, which has five seats, left the ruling coalition.

The two parties were key allies in the coalition government. The number of Khan's opponents in the assembly now increased to 175 from 163.

The ruling alliance, meanwhile, is left with 164 votes. A prime minister needs 172 votes in the 342-seat assembly to stay in office.

The defections came as opposition parties are stepping up criticism against the prime minister, saying his government has mismanaged the economy and failed to combat inflation as prices of gasoline and daily necessities continue to rise.

Voting on the no-confidence motion is expected to take place on Sunday.—Kyodo ■

China Eastern plane's two black boxes being decoded: official

BOTH flight recorders, or black boxes, of the China Eastern Airlines passenger plane that crashed in south China on 21 March are being decoded, an aviation official said Thursday.



Both flight recorders, or black boxes, of the China Eastern Airlines passenger plane that crashed in south China on 21 March are being decoded. **PHOTO: XINHUA NEWS/WEIBO**

Preliminary analysis is being carried out after the site environment, debris distribution and impact marks have been located and photographed, said Zhu Tao, head of the aviation safety office of the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

Aviation experts are also studying and judging the possible trajectory, posture and impact force of the aircraft when hitting the ground, Zhu told a press briefing. "By analyzing the data of air traffic control's radar automation system, we're trying to restore the real flight process before the crash," he said, adding that information on the flight's passengers, luggage, cargo and mail are also being examined.—Xinhua ■

Japan mulls delaying or sending proxy for minister’s Poland visit



Poland has become by far the largest recipient of refugees. Volunteers provide help for Ukrainian refugees as they arrive with buses from the Medyka pedestrian border crossing, in Przemsyl, eastern Poland on 26 February 2022. PHOTO: WOJTEK RADWANSKI / AFP

JAPAN is considering either postponing the justice minister’s trip to Poland from Friday or sending a substitute as a special envoy ahead of accepting more Ukrainian refugees following the Russian invasion, the government said Thursday.

Justice Minister Yoshihisa Furukawa has been determined to be a close contact to a family member infected with the novel coronavirus, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiji Kihara told a meeting

of the House of Representatives steering committee that the government is considering various options including a postponement of the visit or sending senior vice justice minister Jun Tsushima.

Furukawa was originally expected to meet with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and high-ranking officials during his stay in the European country, which shares a long border with Ukraine. The Japanese government was also considering transporting evacuees and Japanese nationals from Ukraine on Fu-

rukawa’s plane back to Japan.

Poland has become by far the largest recipient of refugees following Russia’s invasion more than a month ago, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told Morawiecki last week in Belgium his country will speed up the pace of accepting people fleeing Ukraine.

Since 2 March, when Kishida announced the policy of Japan accepting evacuees from Ukraine as a humanitarian response, more than 200 have been granted entry.—Kyodo ■

Ukraine confirms partial withdrawal of Russian troops from Kyiv, Chernihiv directions

UKRAINIAN Defence Ministry’s spokesman Olexandr Motuzyanyk on Wednesday confirmed that Russia has been withdrawing some troops from Kyiv and Chernihiv directions, in central and northern Ukraine respectively, the Interfax-Ukraine news agency reported.

“The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine notes a certain partial relocation of individual units from the Kyiv direction, as well as from the Chernihiv direction,” Motuzyanyk told a media briefing.

However, there was no mass withdrawal of Russian troops from those areas, he added.

Motuzyanyk suggested that Russian forces may renew



Russian army military vehicles are seen in Armyansk, Crimea, on 25 February 2022. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

their offensive against Kyiv and Chernihiv after replenishing the units that suffered the biggest losses in the battles.

On Tuesday, Russia’s Defence Ministry announced that Russia has decided to significantly reduce military activity in the Kyiv and Chernihiv directions.—Xinhua ■

NEWS DIGEST

Here are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine:

Ukraine may hold a referendum

Ukraine may hold a referendum on a new international treaty on security guarantees only after the withdrawal of Russian troops, said Ukrainian presidential adviser and negotiator Mykhailo Podolyak.

Following the negotiations on Tuesday, David Arakhamia, a member of the Ukrainian delegation, said Kyiv has proposed signing the security guarantees treaty in an attempt to end the conflict in Ukraine. “We will enter the procedure for launching a referendum only after the Russian troops leave the territory of Ukraine,” Podolyak was quoted as saying by Interfax-Ukraine news agency.—Xinhua ■

European partners paying for Russian gas in euros

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday told German Chancellor Olaf Scholz that European partners can continue paying for Russian gas in euros, according to a statement of the German government.

During a phone conversation, Putin said payments will continue to be made in euros and will be transferred as usual to Gazprombank and converted to roubles.

Scholz did not agree to the procedure proposed by Putin during the conversation but asked for written information in order to understand the procedure more precisely, according to the statement of the German side.—Xinhua ■

QUICK SUMMARY

Moscow announces Mariupol ceasefire
RUSSIA’S defence ministry announces a local ceasefire Thursday to allow civilians to be evacuated from Ukraine’s besieged port city of Mariupol.

It says a humanitarian corridor will be opened to Zaporizhzhia with cooperation from the UN refugee agency and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

But previous attempts to allow civilians out of the devastated town have failed, and Ukraine’s deputy prime minister describes the proposal as “another manipulation”.

Peace talks downplayed
THE Kremlin plays down hopes of a breakthrough following Tuesday’s peace talks in Istanbul, saying there was nothing “too promising” from the discussions.

France too says there was “no breakthrough or anything new” after the talks, despite Russia’s main negotiator having cited progress on Russia’s demand for Ukrainian neutrality.

Kyiv suburb ‘half destroyed’
THE mayor of Irpin says at least 200 people have been killed and more than half of the town destroyed in the fierce battle to control the western gateway to the capital.

He says that the town, which was retaken by Ukraine from Russian forces this week, is still being shelled.

Biden, Zelensky talks
US President Joe Biden and President Volodymyr Zelensky discuss “additional capabilities” to help the Ukrainian military, during a telephone call, the White House says.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar U-22 team prepares for Viet Nam SEA Games

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Football Federation, the Myanmar U-22 men's national football team is taking training ahead of the 31st Viet Nam SEA Games, which will be held in May.

Bulgarian Velizar Popov still heads the Myanmar youth squad, and 31 preliminary players have been selected.

Officials have selected senior players in the preliminary list as it will allow three

senior players to play in the SEA Games National Football Tournament.

Myanmar U-22 head coach Popov has selected 23 players in the preliminary list. Among the 23, eight senior players are involved, and the eight are short-listed for the three Myanmar senior players. The latter players are playing for foreign clubs or locals.

According to the rules of the SEA Games, only 20 players can

be selected per team, so the Myanmar U-22 team must reduce to 11 players.

Except for Brunei Darussalam, ten other teams from 11 Southeast Asian nations will compete in the SEA Games.

The Myanmar U-22 team is trying to play international matches before the SEA Games.

Team Myanmar won the bronze medal in the last 2019 SEA Games. — Ko Nyi Lay/ GNLM

Liverpool, Man Utd to clash in Bangkok as Premier League clubs resume tours



Manchester United's English midfielder Ashley Young (L) vies with Chelsea's French midfielder N'Golo Kante (2L) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Chelsea at Old Trafford. **PHOTO: AFP**

LIVERPOOL and Manchester United will meet in a high-profile friendly in Bangkok in July, the clubs said on Thursday, as Premier League teams resume lucrative pre-season tours which stopped when Covid hit.

After the 12 July clash in the Thai capital, Cristiano Ronaldo and his United team-mates will fly to Australia for two more friendlies, including a clash with Crystal Palace, at the 100,000-capacity Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Before the pandemic shut down overseas tours, usually to Asia and the United States, they were a regular money-spinner

for Premier League sides — even if managers don't like the travel, hot weather and sometimes questionable pitches.

"It will be the same players as you see now with a few additions if transfer deals happen," said legendary United striker Andy Cole, predicting the two sides' historic rivalry would continue in Bangkok.

"I'm not sure it will be played like a pre-season friendly," he said. The clash between United and Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool, currently nipping at the heels of Manchester City at the top of the Premier League, at the Rajaman-

gala National Stadium has been dubbed the "Red War" by Thai media and fans.

Both clubs have a strong following in Thailand, with Liverpool shirts and logos especially visible — the Anfield outfit's official Thai language Facebook page has more than 38 million followers.

Former Liverpool defender Phil Babb said he expected Klopp to bring a full-strength squad.

But with tickets ranging from 5,000 to 25,000 baht (\$150 to \$750) many ordinary Thai fans have complained of being priced out of seeing their heroes play in the flesh. — 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.

Mexico, USA clinch World Cup berths

THE United States and Mexico booked their tickets to the World Cup finals in Qatar on Wednesday after securing the results needed to claim the last two automatic qualifying places from the CONCACAF region.

The USA were beaten 2-0 by Costa Rica in San Jose to finish third in the standings while Mexico eased past El Salvador 2-0 in Mexico City to finish second overall.

Costa Rica finished qualifying in fourth place and will

face New Zealand in a playoff for a World Cup berth.

Canada, who completed their successful qualifying campaign with a 1-0 defeat in Panama on Wednesday, had already qualified for the World Cup on Sunday.

Both the US and Mexico had all-but sealed qualification after wins on Sunday meant only a freak set of results in Wednesday's final round would see either side relegated to a playoff place. — AFP ■



Costa Rica's Carlos Martinez (left) tackles the USA's Antonee Robinson during Wednesday's qualifier in San Jose. **PHOTO: EZEQUIEL BECERRA/ AFP**