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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win opens water-throwing pavilion for families of Office of Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air)

MAHA Thingyan festival is held across the nation with the aim of ensuring peaceful minds in dousing each other to wash their souls while mitigating the hotness of summer for the people.

Families of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) inaugurated the water-throwing pavilion of the 1383 ME Myanmar Traditional Maha Thingyan Festival on the lawns of Nay Pyi Taw Zeyathiri Golf Course yesterday afternoon in accord with the Myanmar traditions.

They garlanded the attendees at the pavilion.

On behalf of Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, SAC members General Mya Tun Oo, Admiral Tin Aung San, Lt-Gen Soe Htut and Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Council Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe,

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SAC Vice-Chair Deputy Prime Minister Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win takes part in the water-splashing festival for families of the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) in Nay Pyi Taw on 13 April 2022.

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Myanmar rejects US State Department's Human Rights Report

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has learnt that the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2021, which covers 190 countries and territories, including Myanmar, was issued by the State Department of the United States of America on 12 April 2022. There is no reason for such a unilateral report on Myanmar and other countries by the United States other than a politically motivated agenda to interfere in the domestic affairs of the countries concerned under the pretext of human rights.

Indeed, the said Report by the State Department contains allegations and distorted information which came from anti-government groups and media outlets. It is not surprising to see repeated reference to these sources, which receive support from the United States, and the aim of the report is to discredit the Government of Myanmar. The Report intentionally omits the root cause of declaring the State of Emergency on 1 February 2021, following massive voting fraud of over 11.3 million, which is equivalent to 29.54 per cent of total voters. The negligence by the then NLD Government to settle the voting fraud through proper means and their choice to confrontation led to violence, killings and unlawful acts committed by the terrorist organizations such as the so-called CRPH, the so-called NUG and the so-called PDF. The Report mentioned several topics along with sweeping allegations but failed to reflect the efforts made by the Government to uphold public safety and stability. Therefore, the US should take an objective and balanced approach in preparing such a report.

The Report on Myanmar is merely a propaganda tool to mislead the viewers with one-sided accusations from unreliable sources and defame the Government on political grounds as well as to instigate terrorism. The malicious intent of the Report is obvious, along with distorted elements; therefore, Myanmar categorically rejects the bias Report. In this connection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also lodged its objection with the Embassy of the United States in Yangon on 13 April 2022.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Nay Pyi Taw,
13 April 2022.

SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win ...

The Vice-Senior General, his wife and families of the office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) view the dance performance at the event.

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Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and their wives, Tatmadaw members and their families, and guests.

First, Vice-Senior General Soe Win and the party cut the ribbon to open the pavilion.

Belles from the choral dance troupes performed dances with the song "the auspicious Thingyan" and sprayed the guests with Eugenia sprigs.

The guests were served the Maha Thingyan festival refreshments and entertained with the songs and choral dances by renowned artistes and choral dance troupes.

This evening, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) enjoyed the water-throwing festivals at Seinpan, Magyiyeik and Nay Pyi Taw pavilions near the housings of the Tatmadaw members in the compound of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army).

It was reported that choral dance troupes and vocalists would present dances at the pavilions from the Akyo Day to Atet Day of the festival. — MNA

To build the Union based on Democracy and Federal System

TO build the Union based on Democracy and Federal System, furthermore, the EAOs need to cultivate an attitude in which a Union Spirit regarding the entire Union as one family as well as one home without doing unilateral propositions, and need to partake in the peace process as soon as possible.

(Excerpt from Speech Delivered by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing at the Parade of the 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day on 27th March 2022.)

Rakhine State launches 1383 ME Central Myanmar Thingyan Pandal

RAKHINE State government launched 1383 ME Central Myanmar Thingyan Pandal in front of the U Ottama Park in Sittway Township yesterday evening.

The ceremony was attended by State Administration Council member Daw Aye Nu Sein, Rakhine State Chief Minister Dr Aung Kaw Min, Commander of Western Command Maj-Gen Htin Latt Oo, departmental officials and dance troupes.

The 1383 ME Myanmar Thingyan Festival opens in Rakhine State.

First, the Rakhine State Chief Minister delivered the greeting speech. Then, SAC member Daw Aye Nu Sein and officials cut the ribbon to launch the Central Maha Thingyan Pandal.

Then, the singers and dance groups performed, and the SAC members and officials threw water on them. Afterwards, the state cultural troupes, departmental and military dance troupes entertained the public peacefully during the Maha Thingyan Festival. —Tin Tun (IPRD)/GNLM

Ministry of Border Affairs holds water festival ceremony

THE Ministry of Border Affairs held the opening ceremony of the water splashing festival to celebrate the Maha Thingyan, which falls yesterday morning, 1383 ME, at the Thingyan pandal of the ministry. The ceremony was held under the COVID-19 preventive measures and was attended by Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung and his wife, the deputy ministers and wives, officials and staff family.

The Union minister and the deputy ministers opened the ceremony by cutting the ribbon and welcoming this year's Myanmar Traditional Maha Thingyan with the performance of the ministry's dance troupes.

Afterwards, the Union minister and party happily participated in the festival and awarded the performers cash prizes. The ministry will celebrate the festival with singings and dances from 13 to 16 April, and the departments will serve a variety of food and snacks. — MNA

MoFA, MoIC celebrate Thingyan festival in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of International Cooperation celebrated the Maha Thingyan Festival (Akyo Day-the first day of Thingyan festival) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The festival was attended by the MoIC Union minister and wife, the MoFA deputy minister and wife, the permanent secretary, directors-general and departmental staff.

The Union minister and the deputy minister first made opening speeches and extended best wishes. Then, the dance troupes of two ministries performed Thingyan choral dances. The participants also enjoyed Myanmar traditional food such as vermicelli soup, Mote Latt Saung and Shwe Yin Aye. —MNA

Rakhine traditional Thanaka grinding festival, sacred bathing of Buddha images held

The SAC member and party offers the sacred bathing of Buddha Images in Sittway, Rakhine State, yesterday.

THE Rakhine traditional Thanaka grinding festival and ceremony of sacred bathing of Buddha images were organized by the Rakhine State Government yesterday morning in Sittway through the COVID-19 preventive measures set by the Ministry of Health.

The ceremonies were attended by Member of the State Administration Council Daw Aye Nu Sein, Rakhine State Chief Minister Dr Aung Kyaw Min, Commander of the Western Command Maj-Gen Htin Latt Oo, state cabinet ministers, Tatmadaw senior officers from the Sittway Station, departmental officials, town's elders, Thanaka grinding groups and dance groups.

At the Thanaka grinding festival, the dance groups performed traditional dances. The SAC member, the chief minister, and the commander awarded the Thanaka grinding groups and the dance groups cash awards.

Afterwards, the sacred bathing of Buddha images ceremony was held at the Atula Marazein Pyilonchantha Pagoda in Sittway and was opened by chanting Namo Tassa three times. At the ceremony, the Rakhine State Government donated K10 million for the renovation work of the pagoda. The Thanaka paste gained from the ceremony were offered to the Buddha Images. — Tin Tun (IPRD)/GNLM

Nay Pyi Taw Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal opens

THE opening ceremony of Nay Pyi Taw Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal was held in front of the Nay Pyi Taw City Hall yesterday evening.

State Administration Council members Saw Daniel and his wife, and Dr Banyar Aung Moe, the Union ministers and their wives, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Maung Maung Naing, the deputy ministers, departmental officials, invited dance troupes and artistes attended the ceremony.

During the event, Assistant Director U Nyan Win of the Fine Arts Department read out the praise poem on the 1383 ME Nay Pyi Taw Mayor Maha Thingyan Festival.

Then, Nay Pyi Taw Mayor Dr Maung Maung Naing said that the Thingyan Festival is a unique event among the 12 festivals around the year. It is full of national essence for the entire national people. The ministries will also celebrate the festival in Nay Pyi Taw as the government offices are concentrated in Nay Pyi Taw. All should participate in the festival by preserving the traditional cultures and national characteristics of Myanmar.

He also talked about the traditions of the Thingyan Festival and urged the attendees to move to the new year by leaving the sins and harmful elements of the previous year.

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko and Mayor Dr Maung Maung Naing cut the ribbon to inaugurate the Nay Pyi Taw Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal.

Afterwards, SAC members Saw Daniel and his wife, and Dr Banyar Aung Moe, and officials sprinkled Thingyan water on the members of the dance troupes.

Dignitaries cut the ribbon to launch the Nay Pyi Taw Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal yesterday.

Groups of people enjoy Thingyan festival in Nay Pyi Taw.

The dance troupes and artistes presented their performances with the MRTV modern band.

During Thingyan festival, the artistes, singers and dancers will entertain the public at the Nay Pyi Taw Mayor's Thingyan Pandal. The revellers can also enjoy Satuditha (free distribution of food and snacks to everyone) there. — MNA

Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal launched

The ceremonial opening event of the Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal is in progress with dignitaries delivering opening speeches.

Revellers are seen having joy in water splashing festival in front of Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal.

YANGON Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal was opened at the pavilion in front of the City Hall of the Yangon City Development Committee yesterday morning.

The ceremony was attended by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe, Region Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Win Tint, Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay, and governmental officials, municipal staff, family members and artistes.

First, the Yangon Region chief minister made a speech saying the opening ceremony is intended to bring a special moment by sprinkling water following Myanmar traditions at the end of the old year.

The Thingyan Festival is a special event and full of essence to make good friendships among the people. He also extended wishes to the people after describing the significant points of the Thingyan Festival. He then cut the ceremonial ribbon together with the Yangon command commander and the mayor to launch the 1383 ME Yangon Maha Thingyan Festival.

The artistes of the Myanmar Music Association and dance troupes entertained the public during the morning and evening sessions of the Thingyan Festival.

The entertainment programmes will go as planned on Akya, Akyat and Atet days of Thingyan.

On the first day of Thingyan, the Yangon residents participated in walking Thingyan at the Maha Bandoola Park and playing water at the pandals of the People's Square, the Inya Lake, district and townships, respectively. — MNA

Walking Thingyan in Yangon.

Kayin State holds opening ceremony of Myanmar traditional water festival

THE opening ceremony of the Kayin State Myanmar Traditional Water Festival was held yesterday morning at the Central Pandal in Thiri Stadium in Hpa-an, Kayin State.

The ceremony was opened by Kayin State Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo, Kayin State Chief Justice Daw Khin Swe Tun and the state cabinet ministers.

Kayin traditional dance groups performed with Done dance and the officials and the people happily participated in the splashing of water with Eugenia sprigs.

In addition, respective Kayin State government officials also opened the pandals of the Ministry of Security and Border Affairs, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Social Affairs, built along the strand road in Hpa-an.

The Chief Minister and party also awarded the dance groups and singers with cash awards at the Zwekabin Park Pavilion and the Barme Hill Natural Park. — Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)/GNLM

Ngapali Beach packed with visitors on first day of Thingyan Festival

THE beach visitors thronged Ngapali beach in Thandwe District, Rakhine State, on the eve of Thingyan (the Akyo day of the Thingyan Festival).

Beach is a popular spot for vacations, and Ngapali is the most popular choice among beach lovers with the white sand and crystal-clear water. The domestic visitors flocked to Ngapali beach during the Thingyan holidays and enjoyed beach sports activities. They took memories of the breathtaking view of the beach. Thanks to the high number of visitors, the sale volume of the vendors along the beach increased these days.

The Akyat day of the market fair at Myolinthar Ward in Ngapali was also crowded with visitors.

Township administrator, the officials of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, city development committee, Information and Public Relations Department, police force, firefighters and inspection team ensure the safe and sound vacation for the visitors. They make sure the vendors dispose of the trash systematically at the designated places. — Than Nu (Ngapali IPRD)/GNLM

Caption

Visitors revel on the Ngapali Beach on Thingyan eve in Rakhine State.

Pilgrims throng Mandalay famous pagodas on Thingyan eve

Pilgrims are seen at one of the famous pagodas in Mandalay.

ON the Myanmar Traditional Thingyan eve day, Mandalay pagodas are crowded with pilgrims and meditators.

On the morning of Maha Thingyan eve day, locals started donating alms, water and gold foils at Mandalay famous pagodas such as Maha Muni Buddha Image, Kyauktawgyi, Kuthodaw and Aungtawmu and then some observe meditation at religious resorts.

In the evening, the municipal Thingyan choral group, film stars and dance troupes of ministries and arts departments performed Thingyan songs and choral dances. — Maung Aye Chan/GNLM

Palin Kanthaya elephant resort crowded with visitors during water festival

PALIN Kanthaya elephant resort opened on the bank of the Ayeyawady River near Palin (West) village, on the Myingyan-Pakokku Road in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, was crowded with visitors and elephant lovers during the water festival period, according to the officials of the elephant resort.

The Palin Kanthaya elephant resort was opened by the Myanmar Timber Enterprise of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation and is a tourist destination for pilgrims to Bagan.

The elephant resort also offers an elephant museum, a playground for children, an elephant bathing place, a view bridge, a treehouse, and long-legged tents set up along the riverbank to relax and enjoy the beauty of the river with an elephant ride, as well as the visitors can feed the elephants. — Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM

Visitors are feeding the elephants in the Palin Kanthaya elephant resort.

Chaungtha Beach bustling with visitors on Thingyan eve

Beachgoers are pictured on the beach of Chaungtha.

CHAUNGTHA beach in Pathein District of Ayeyawady Region is bustling with visitors on the morning of the Maha Thingyan eve day, the New Year holiday.

During the pre-Maha Thingyan period, the number of visitors increases at Chaungtha day by day, with vehicles up to 400 daily, according to the checkpoint officials.

"In previous days, we hired much, but it wasn't regularly. We rent a little more when more visitors arrive.

"This morning, as the number of swimmers is increased, I rent the rubber tube much. Thingyan holiday is a public holiday. I think people come from across Myanmar.

"It's more crowded since this morning," said a rubber tube rental operator at the beach. Officials of the Beach Disciplinary Enforcement Committee, led by Head of Township Administration Body U Thiha Aung, are conducting field inspections to ensure that vendors on the beach follow disciplines in order to make visitors enjoy and relax at Chaungtha Beach. — Kyaw Kyaw (IPRD)/GNLM

Myanmar records trade surplus in mini-budget period

ACCORDING to the data provided by the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar's lower imports and higher exports in the past six-month mini-budget period (Oct 2021-Mar 2022) resulted in a positive trade balance of US$169 million.

Myanmar's exports exceeded imports in international trade. Moreover, overall trade value rose compared to the same corresponding period of the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

Between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022, the country's exports were estimated at $8.123 billion, and imports were valued at $7.95 billion this FY. The external trade remarkably soared to $16.079 billion from $15.97 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

Myanmar's exports exceeded imports in international trade. Moreover, overall trade value rose compared to the same corresponding period of the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

Myanmar's maritime trade climbed up, yet the country witnessed a drop in border trade following the closure of some border posts by China, the leading trade partner.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods. Moreover, import fall led to the largest trade surplus of $677 million in the last FY 2020-2021, with $15.36 billion worth of exports outperforming $14.69 billion worth of imports.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Ministry of Commerce is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. The country mainly imports essential goods, construction materials, capital goods, hygienic materials and supporting products for export promotion and import substitution. — KK/GNLM

Myanmar ships over 1 mln tonnes of various pulses in past mini-budget period

ACCORDING to statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar conveyed US$830.6 million worth of over 1.09 million tonnes of pulses and beans to foreign trade partners in the past six-month mini-budget period (October 2021-March 2022).

Between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022, the country shipped over $780 million worth 1.08 million tonnes of pulses and beans to foreign markets through the sea route, and $50.46 million valued at 61,895 tonnes were sent to the neighbouring countries through the land border.

India is the leading buyer of Myanmar beans, especially black beans, green grams and pigeon peas. Besides India, Myanmar's beans are purchased by Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, UAE, Malaysia, Indonesia, China (Taipei), Japan, and European countries. But, the volume of demand by those countries is small, according to the domestic beans market.

India extended relaxations of conditions regarding clearance consignment for black gram (urad called in India) and pigeon peas until 31 March 2023.

Additionally, all the foreign currency earned by locals has to be exchanged for local currency at the Central Bank of Myanmar's reference rate of K1,850 by opening the accounts at the authorized dealers in the country within one working day, stated the CBM in its notification released on 3 April.

Following the policy changes, the prices dip in the pre-Thingyan period. At present, despite the Thingyan holidays, the demand is more robust, and the price regained from K1,450,000 to K1,510,000 per tonne of black gram and from K1,370,000 to K1,410,000 per tonne of pigeon peas.

The prices of beans are positively related to the exchange rate. In September 2021, the bean price reached an exorbitant high, tracking the Kyat weakening in the local forex market. The price of black gram hit an all-time high of K2 million per tonne on 29 September 2021, following Kyat weakening against the US dollar (K3,000) in the local forex market.

More than two million tonnes of various pulses and beans were delivered to foreign markets in the previous financial year 2020-2021 (October-September), with an estimated value of US$1.57 billion, the Commerce Ministry's data indicated.

Currently, the demand for green gram slips due to border trade restrictions amid the COVID-19, with an estimated value of around K125,000 per three-basket bag.

Myanmar's agriculture sector is the backbone of the country's economy, and it contributes to over 30 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. The country primarily cultivates paddy, corn, cotton, sugarcane, various pulses and beans. Its second-largest production is the pulses and beans, counting for 33 per cent of agro products and covering 20 per cent of growing acres.

Among them, black beans, pigeon peas and green grams constitute 72 per cent of bean acreage. Other beans, including peanut, chickpea, soybean, black-eyed beans, butter bean and rice beans, are also grown in the country. — KK/GNLM

Market of sun-dried rubber sheets likely to remain inactive in post-Thingyan period

THE observers analyzed that the market for sun-dried rubber sheets, which Thailand mainly demands, is expected to remain sluggish in the post Thingyan period.

The market of rubbers produced in Mon and Kayin states was earlier bustling on the back of solid demand by Thailand. It has come to a temporary halt during the Thingyan holidays. The market is likely to remain slow-moving in the post-Thingyan period as well.

It is uncertain that Thailand will offer the high price in the post-Thingyan period as before, said rubber entrepreneurs.

In early February 2022, the sun-dried rubber sheet fetched up to K1,230 per pound on account of the buyers involved in the Mae Sot-Myawady trade channel.

The price was bullish in early March, touching a high of K1,320-K1,400 per pound. The prices of rubber are relatively high in the Thailand market, while Thailand highly demands Myanmar's rubber. The rise in price is attributed to the heavy rain during the third week of March, which affected rubber production in some of Thailand's provinces. The rubber requirements have grown due to the yield drop in Thailand, rubber traders shared their opinions.

Nevertheless, Thailand will purchase Myanmar's rubber depending on the shortage of raw materials. Therefore, we must closely observe the market condition and Thailand's raw material requirements in the post-Thingyan period. The price is likely to go flat and fluctuate after that, the traders guessed. — NN/GNLM

The market of rubbers produced in Mon and Kayin states was earlier bustling on the back of solid demand by Thailand.

14 APRIL 2022
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Systematically hold CSCs, household registrations without fail

IMPLEMENTATION of the Pankhinn project, which lasts for 18 months from 3 May 2021 to 3 November 2022, has completed a cent per cent in some regions and states in the issuance of citizenship scrutiny cards to the people.

The project is based on taking a lesson from the past event that more than 4.6 million people were involved on the voter list without holding any identity cards to cast votes in the 2020 multiparty democracy general election. The Pankhinn project was initiated to identify millions of people who missed chances to keep their citizenship identity.

> It is essential that every voter have citizenship scrutiny cards for casting votes in the free and fair multiparty democracy general elections and systematically keep the immigration form-66/6 for household registration. So, the persons who do not have the citizenship cards and household registrations yet need to apply for them at relevant departments.

Hence, the project has covered the issuance of citizenship scrutiny cards and household registration to the people and their families in some regions and states. That is why all the people are responsible for showing citizenship scrutiny cards to the authorities in their travels as of the morning of 1 April 2022. The authorities concerned have issued an announcement through the media, saying that they would check the citizenship scrutiny cards if necessary and not allow temporary endorsements for travelling.

As such, the traveller people are urged to promptly draw the CSCs from the relevant departments as toll gates in some townships check the travellers whether they hold the CSCs or not and urge those who do not make the ID cards to draw the cards from the relevant department as quickly as possible.

The project aims to enable the people without ID to hold the CSC cards. Those who lost the cards or had torn cards may apply for new ones. They all have to understand the important role of the CSC card and systematically hold it. When officials check the CSC cards at the designated sites, people need to cooperate with them to have the correct working procedures.

It is essential that every voter have citizenship scrutiny cards for casting votes in the free and fair multiparty democracy general elections and systematically keep the immigration form-66/6 for household registration. So, the persons who do not have the citizenship cards and household registrations yet need to apply for them at relevant departments.

Actually, the citizens of Myanmar, including all ethnicities, must have the chance to hold citizenship scrutiny cards and household registrations throughout their lives. They have to take pride in showing their citizenship ID to authorities whenever the authorities check them if necessary. It is a right of Myanmar citizens.

■ ■ ■

Can There Be An Unexpected Matter At Any Time?

By Yin Nwe Ko

ON THAT day, the weather was fine. It was on 17th February 2022. In the late afternoon, Ko Kyaw Kha took notice that it was rather warm. He could not take his jacket off on such afternoons on the other days. However, he could take his jacket off and stay only in a T-Shirt. At about 6, his son and he went to a nearby grocery shop to buy some eggs. After getting back home, he had dinner with his family. Everything was OK until he went to bed. At 8:30 pm, he was in bed and fell asleep as usual.

He woke up at 1:30 am as he wanted to urinate for his midnight activity. At that moment, Ko Kyaw Kha had some difficulties getting up from bed. His whole body got aches. He tried to get up again and thought for a while. He was not caught cold yesterday. His time for having a bath was not early or late, nor did he wrong anything. There was only one thing to be told he went to the grocery shop late afternoon without wearing a jacket.

At 4 am, he got up from the bed as usual to do his daily routine. But he could not do his daily activities very well. He could not even say his prayers. He realized that he had gotten sick. During COVID 19 period, the family members of his family did not get sick. He regularly recited the Paritta viz. "Yadana Sutta" every morning or every evening. He quite believed it could be free from a variety of harm especially associated with health. During the first wave, the second wave, and the third wave, his family members, including himself, did not get sick.

Why did he get sick only on that day? Omicron? Omicron is a kind of disease that started spreading in Myanmar as the fourth wave of COVID 19 in February. He could not seek the main cause of his sickness. The higher the sun, the worse his sickness. At about 2:30 pm, his temperature turned to 102 F. There was no ease in moving about in the house. He decided to go to the nearest clinic in the afternoon. It was not far. It was within a 3-minute walk from his house. What was more, he could not go there on foot. Therefore, his original decision had to be changed again.

He made a call to a midwife who had a duty of common health of the people who were in his same quarter. The nurse inquired about his health conditions and told him she would come to his house at about 5. The nurse came and made him the necessary examinations and gave him two injections at the appointed time. After returning of the nurse, he fell asleep for about 40 minutes. While sleeping, some sweat came out of his body, and when he woke up again, the fever and aches got somewhat less. He had a bowl of boiled rice. It was delicious indeed. The nurse gave him Cevit, Paracetamol, and Amoxicillin for oral doses. He could sleep well that night.

The following day, he ached again in his whole body. The fever did not reach 100 F of temperature, but he did not feel well enough to do his regular routine. One was strange because he did not have a single cough yesterday, but in the morning, he started to have some coughs, and he had pain whenever he swallowed something. It got worse as the sun became higher. He made warm water with salt and frequently rinsed out his mouth in order to reduce the pain from his soft palate. It was in vain.

When he woke up again on the third morning, he found that he could not swallow even water. He tried to do so again and could not stand the pain from his soft palate. It was a difficult situation that Ko Kyaw Kha had not met in his illness many times. Therefore, he decided to make a call to the nurse. When she came, she examined the blood pressure and oxygen level of Ko Kyaw Kha. After other necessary instructions, she gave him two injections again. In his life, Ko Kyaw Kha had taken notice that he was not injected not more than once for a normal fever. This time, he was injected four times for his new fever, the Omicron. Fortunately, after being injected, the pain in his soft palate disappeared strangely. He was amazed for a while. The injection was very good, he thought. But he could not be rest assured as he knew the power of an injection could last five or six hours in the body. Ko Kyaw Kha was waiting for reappearing his pain in his soft palate again. However, it did not reappear again. He knew that he would recover sooner or later.

On the morning of the next day, he found himself that he felt much better than the previous days. Just for five days of his sickness, he thought that he had not been wrong in his every lifestyle, but the disease infected him unexpectedly. It was like being unseen beyond the corner of a road. The power of thinking and that of seeing of a person was quite limited, he thought. Beyond those limitations, no one knew what would happen to him. It might be called 'Luck' which no one could see. No matter what a person stays to be good, the unlucky and unexpected things could be happening in his or her life at any time.

■ ■ ■

Scientists, politicians part company in COVID-19 battle, says top British expert

SCIENTISTS across Europe "feel politicians have headed in a separate direction" in the quest to defeat COVID-19, a leading British immunologist told Xinhua.

"The interface between science, data, and policy has become strained," Professor Danny Altmann, from the Faculty of Medicine in the Department of Immunology and Inflammation at Imperial College, said in a recent email interview.

The weekly infection survey, published on Friday by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), estimated that 4.88 million people in Britain had the coronavirus in the week ending 2 April.

"The UK currently faces a difficult situation through the triology of a major surge of massively transmissible BA.2, being three months out from an only moderately successful booster campaign, with levels now waning badly," said the professor.

"Policy change has left people confused, being told the pandemic is 'over', yet hospitals, schools and businesses are finding it really hard to function with 1-in-10 off sick," he said.

According to the British government's plan "Living with COVID-19", from the start of April, all COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted in England, with people advised to take precautions in crowded spaces. Free lateral flow testing also came to an end on 1 April.

"Living with COVID feels to me like a PR jargon from a policy office, and out of place in modern medicine. We never tell people they simply have to learn to live with HIV, TB or malaria," said Altmann.

People pass by the Royal Liverpool University Hospital in Liverpool, Britain, 1 April 2022. **PHOTO: JON SUPER/ XINHUA**

Altmann said with current levels of COVID-19 infection and with high levels of sick leave among health staff, the situation in National Health Service (NHS) hospitals is unworkable, both in terms of COVID-19 care and in terms of recovering from the backlog of the past two years.

"There are actually many pragmatic mitigations that fall short of lockdowns, from a strong testing and isolation policy to legislation on ventilation in schools and workplaces."

According to the most recent analysis of the UK Health Security Agency, Omicron BA.2 continues to demonstrate a substantial growth advantage in Britain. The Omicron subvariant is now estimated to account for approximately 93.7 per cent of cases in England.

"The COVID landscape has effectively changed with changing properties, transmissibility, immune evasion and pathobiology of each successive variant," said Altmann.

"BA.2 is absurdly infectious, the XE variant (a recombinant of Omicron BA.1 and BA.2.) even more so. While the vaccinated are relatively protected from severe disease and death, the current wave comes close to making our past vaccination programme obsolete and no longer fit for purpose."

On the question that many people, including politicians, view the current wave of coronavirus as no more than a flu-like illness, Altmann told Xinhua: "The debate needs to move along and is different to the stakes as they were two years ago … yet it's still untenable to have a rampant virus that infects over and over, putting 1-in-10 out of school or work, and perhaps leaving a UK excess-death toll of 50,000 per year."

"It would be good to see flexibility for a return to a more pragmatic, data-led approach. You can't just bluff a virus away by choosing to ignore it," concluded Altmann.

SOURCE: Xinhua

■ ■ ■

54 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 13 April, total figure rises to 612,460

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 612,460 after 54 new cases were reported on 13 April 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 591,139 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,434 without casualties.

COVID-19 vaccines is being administered to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 12-4-2022, a total of 28,522,949 people has been vaccinated. Of them, 6,185,610 received the first doses, 22,337,339 have been fully vaccinated and 1,170,978 have received booster jabs.—MNA

MYANMAR Daily Weather Report

(ISSUED at 7:00 pm Wednesday 13 April, 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the south Bay and west central Bay and a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 14 April, 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Kachin State, scattered in upper Sagaing Region and isolated in Mandalay, Bago, Taninthayi Regions and Shan, Chin, Kayah and Mon 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 to fairly widespread rain or thundershowers in upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 April, 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 April, 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 April, 2022: Partly cloudy.

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Taninthayi Township celebrates traditional tiger dance in Thingyan festival

TANINTHAYI residents celebrated tiger dance (locally called Karakya dance) in downtown areas of Taninthayi Township on the morning of 10 April.

The tiger dance troupe consisting of U Kyaw Yi, U Aye Lwin (aka) Pyan Hlwa, four dancers, one hunter, ten tiger handlers, three drum players and four tray holders performed with the drumming rhythms at Chaungnge and Chaunggyi wards, including the villages of Taninthayi township, to collect cash contribution from the locals for the renovation of pagodas.

The Karakya dance (tiger dance) is annually held during the Thingyan period, and it was suspended in 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Taninthayi residents donate cash by watching the tiger dance.

There are four or five tiger dancers in the Chaungnge ward while six in the Chaunggyi ward. When the tiger spirit inspires the tiger dancer's mind, he is tied with a chain or tight rope around his waist, and another man carefully holds the string.

If the handler is weak, the dancer may be injured.

The dancer is also painted with a variety of colours on his body, and the hunter performs with the beat of drums to make the dancer feel like a tiger.

The Chaungnge tiger dance group received a K370,000 cash contribution and will donate it to the Arthawka Yama Monastery in Thepyu village of Theinkhun village-tract in Taninthayi Township to construct the Lawka Chantha Pagoda in the monastery precinct. — Nanthayi-Htein Win (IPRD)/GNLM

The traditional tiger dance is held in Thaninthayi township. **PHOTO: NANTHAYI HTEIN WIN (IPRD)**

Rice and wheat donated by India to be distributed in Yangon Region coordinated

THE Indian government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, donated rice and wheat to Myanmar.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief & Resettlement coordinated with the Yangon Region Government to accept a total of rice of 10,000 tonnes and wheat of 200 tonnes.

Among the rice and wheat donated by India, 280 containers of rice of 7,560 tonnes were reached Asia World Port, 90 containers of rice of 2,440 tonnes Myanmar Industry Port (MIP) on 17 March and nine containers of wheat of 200 tonnes were reached to MIP Port on 30 March, respectively.

So, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief & Resettlement coordinated with relevant departments to get import permits, exemption from customs and commercial taxes, special orders and delivery orders for taking out rice and wheat from ports.

Afterwards, 47 containers of rice (25,354 bags of rice), nine containers of wheat (4,000 bags of wheat) were taken out from 5 April to 11 April.

These donated rice and wheat will be provided through the Central Warehouse (Yangon) by the Yangon Disaster Management Department officials under the close supervision of the Yangon Region Government to people in need.

Efforts are being made to take out and distribute the remaining rice and wheat as soon as possible.

The transport and distribution cost is provided by the approval of the fund (GRF) of the Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19. — MNA

Myanmar Traditional Maha Thingyan Water Festival Celebrations broadcast live on MRTV

THE 1383 ME Myanmar Traditional Maha Thingyan Festival celebrations across Myanmar is being filmed by Myanma Radio and Television (MRTV-HD).

The Water Festival celebrations of Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay mayor pavilions are being broadcast live on exclusive channels of the Myanma Radio and Television.

The Nay Pyi Taw Mayor Maha Thingyan Pavilion performances are broadcast on MRTV Farmer's Channel, and the Yangon Mayor Maha Thingyan Pavilion's concerts are broadcast on MRTV Sports Channel. The Mandalay Mayor Maha Thingyan Pavilion's performances are also broadcast on MRTV Hluttaw Channel from 8 am to 12 pm and from 3 pm to 6 pm daily on 14 April (Thingyan Akya day), 15 April (Akyat day) and 16 April (Atet day).

The compilation of the performances of Yangon and Mandalay Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pavilions will be broadcast on MRTV-HD Channel at 9 pm daily from 14 April to 16 April.—MNA

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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Japan, US to exclude Russian COVID vaccines over Ukraine invasion

JAPAN and the United States are set to exclude Russian COVID-19 vaccines from a list of items subject to financial assistance when manufactured in developing countries, sources familiar with the plan said Tuesday.

The move, which comes as Western nations step up sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, is especially aimed at dissuading India from fulfilling an agreement to produce Russian vaccines under the funding support scheme, the sources said.

Photo shows Sputnik V single dose COVID-19 vaccine vials. **PHOTO: SOPA IMAGES/LIGHTROCKET/GETTY/KYODO**

India has built close relations with Russia, including cooperation in the fields of energy and military technology.

Japan and the United States are planning to gain India's understanding and make necessary arrangements ahead of a summit of the Quad nations, also involving Australia, according to the sources. Japan will host the summit, possibly in May.

About 1 billion doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine are expected to be produced annually in India, according to a market research firm and other sources.

India has already produced coronavirus vaccines developed domestically, as well as those developed by British pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca Plc and US drugmaker Moderna Inc.

The global share of Russian vaccines is small, while India manufactures COVID-19 vaccines for domestic use and exports to other developing countries.

Ensuring equitable access to vaccines remains a global challenge as lower-income nations often struggle to procure enough shots for their people. Russia, which approved its Sputnik V in August 2020 and then CoviVac, is seen as aiming to promote them overseas.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Official COVID-19 test no longer needed in Netherlands

STARTING from Monday, an official COVID-19 test is no longer needed in the Netherlands to confirm whether someone is infected with the virus, according to the Dutch government.

A self-test is the starting point from now on for determining if someone is infected with COVID-19. This means that it is no longer necessary to have this confirmed by the Municipal Public Health Services (GGDs), as was usual before. A GGD test remains possible for specific groups, for example, people who work in healthcare or who cannot use a self-test. A formal polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test can still be requested by people who need proof of health, like those travelling abroad. "Self-tests are reliable for testing complaints, widely available and provide a quick result," the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport said in a statement. "In addition, advice will be made available to help people if they or someone close to them gets a positive test result."—AFP ■

Portugal decides to extend further COVID-19 state of alert

The Portuguese government decided on Tuesday to extend the "state of alert" due to the COVID-19 pandemic until 22 April. According to a statement of the Council of Ministers released Tuesday, the resolution "maintains the measures currently in force unchanged", including the mandatory use of masks in public indoor spaces, health services, and transport. For those who do not have the booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, the negative test for the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus remains mandatory in visits to nursing homes and health facilities.—Xinhua ■

US orders non-essential consulate staff to leave Shanghai

Workers work in wearing protective clothes in an area where barriers are being placed to close off streets around some lockdown areas after the detection of new cases of covid-19 in Shanghai on 15 March 2022. **PHOTO: HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP**

THE United States announced Tuesday it had ordered all non-essential employees at its Shanghai consulate to leave, while voicing concerns for the safety of Americans in China as the government enforces hard lockdowns to contain Covid-19.

China has stuck to a policy of "zero Covid", aiming to eliminate infections through rigid lockdowns, mass testing and travel restrictions.

But the policy has come under strain since March as more than 100,000 cases in Shanghai have led to a lockdown of the city's 25 million inhabitants, sparking widespread public outcry over food shortages and an inflexible policy of sending anyone who tests positive to quarantine centres. The US State Department ordered the departure "due to the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak", a spokesperson from its Beijing embassy said in a statement.

American diplomats have also raised "concerns about the safety and welfare of US citizens with People's Republic of China officials," the statement added.

"It is best for our employees and their families to be reduced in number and our operations to be scaled down as we deal with the changing circumstances on the ground," it read. China's largest city reported more than 23,000 new coronavirus infections on Tuesday.

While some Shanghai residents who live in neighbourhoods deemed a low virus risk have been allowed outside their homes this week, unclear rules and the threat of re-entering lockdown if new cases are found has left most in limbo. Criticism of China's unrelenting approach to crushing outbreaks is mounting, more so as the rest of the world learns to live with the pandemic. The European Union Chamber of Commerce has warned that China's coronavirus strategy is "eroding foreign investors' confidence". In a letter seen by AFP, it urged the Chinese government to shift its approach by vaccinating the elderly — among whom inoculation rates are low — and allowing people with mild Covid to quarantine at home.—AFP ■

Italy begins distributing 2nd COVID-19 booster shot to elderly

ITALY on Tuesday began the process of distributing a second COVID-19 booster shot to the most high-risk members of its population.

Italy's medicines agency, AIFA, gave its approval to the distribution of second booster doses to those over the age of 80 and those over the age of 60 if they are deemed unusually vulnerable. In both cases, the shots will be distributed only if the previous vaccine dose was received at least 120 days earlier.

The approval in Italy, which becomes applicable from Tuesday, came a week after the European Medicines Agency (EMA) formally recommended a fourth dose for those over the age of 80, though in its statement, EMA said it was too early to recommend a second booster for the general population.

For most Italian residents, the second booster will represent their fourth vaccination. But for those who previously received the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, the second booster will be just their third vaccine dose.—Xinhua ■

According to government data, more than 48.5 million people have been completely vaccinated, excluding booster shots, accounting for nearly 90 per cent of the population over the age of 12. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka defaults on all foreign debt

Sri Lanka defaulted on its $51 billion foreign debt Tuesday as the island nation grapples with its worst economic crisis in memory and widespread protests demanding the government's resignation.

Acute food and fuel shortages, alongside long daily electricity blackouts, have brought widespread suffering to the country's 22 million people in the most painful downturn since independence in 1948.

Public anger has flared in recent weeks with crowds attempting to storm the homes of government leaders and security forces dispersing protesters with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Sri Lanka's finance ministry said the country was defaulting on all external obligations, including loans from foreign governments, ahead of an International Monetary Fund bailout.

"The government is taking the emergency measure only as a last resort in order to prevent further deterioration of the republic's financial position," a statement from the ministry said.—AFP ■

Ukraine's economy to shrink by 45.1 pct in 2022: World Bank

Ukraine's gross domestic product (GDP) will shrink by 45.1 per cent this year due to the conflict with Russia, the Interfax-Ukraine news agency reported on Monday, citing a recent World Bank (WB) report.

In its report, the bank has projected that the poverty rate in Ukraine will increase from 1.8 per cent in 2021 to 19.8 per cent in 2022.

The private consumption in Ukraine this year will fall by 50 per cent, exports will decrease by 80 per cent, while imports will shrink by 70 per cent. In 2023, the Ukrainian economy is expected to rise by 2.1 per cent, down from the previous projection of 3.5 per cent, the WB said.—Xinhua ■

US budget deficit shrinks $1 trillion through March

The US budget deficit shrunk by more than half in the first six months of the fiscal year, falling $1 trillion to $668 billion, the Treasury said Tuesday.

As the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic has picked up steam and companies return to normal, government outlays on unemployment benefits dropped sharply, while tax receipts from individuals and families picked up, according to the report.

The deficit for October through March plunged 61 per cent compared to the same period of the prior fiscal year.

Receipts rose 25 per cent in the year-to-date period and outlays fell 18 per cent, although spending by the Labour Department, which managed many of the jobless support programmes during the pandemic, dropped 87 per cent, the report showed.—AFP ■

War in Ukraine could halve 2022 global trade growth: WTO

The war in Ukraine could slash the global trade growth in 2022 to 2.4%-3%. **PHOTO: STRINGER / AFP**

RUSSIA'S war in Ukraine could almost halve world trade growth this year and drag down global GDP growth too, the World Trade Organization projected Monday.

The WTO said that the Russian invasion had not only created a humanitarian crisis of "immense proportions" but had also dealt a "severe blow" to the global economy.

It also said that in the longer term, the conflict could even spark a disintegration of the global economy into separate blocs.

The Geneva-based global trade body issued its first analysis of the impact of the war ahead of its annual world trade forecast report on Tuesday.

It said that while the shares of Russia and Ukraine in overall world trade and output are relatively small, they are important suppliers of essential products, notably food and energy.

"Using a global economic simulation model, the secretariat projects that the crisis could lower global GDP growth by 0.7 to 1.3 percentage points, bringing growth to somewhere between 3.1 per cent and 3.7 per cent for 2022," the WTO said. — AFP ■

Yen drops to 20-year low against dollar

One dollar bought 126 yen at around 0630 GMT on Wednesday, the lowest rate since 2002. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE yen hit its lowest level against the dollar in two decades on Wednesday, extending recent falls as the gap widens between Japan's ultra-loose monetary policy and Fed tightening.

Despite being traditionally considered a safe-haven currency, uncertainty fuelled by Russia's war in Ukraine has not caused the yen to strengthen.

Instead, moves by the US Federal Reserve towards a more aggressive policy and the shock of rising oil prices in Japan — a major importer of fossil fuels — have pushed the currency lower, analysts say. One dollar bought 126 yen at around 0630 GMT on Wednesday, the lowest rate since 2002. "The Japanese yen has been one of the weakest currencies anywhere in the world this year," Dutch banking group ING said in a recent commentary.

"Driving the rally has been the perfect storm of a hawkish Federal Reserve, a dovish Bank of Japan (BoJ), and Japan's negative terms of trade shock as a major fossil fuel importer."—AFP ■

The China-Singapore Suzhou Industrial Park, or Suzhou Industrial Park for short, abbreviated as SIP, is a county-level administrative area located in Suzhou, Jiangsu, China. Loufeng Community of Suzhou industrial park offers meal delivery service to elderly people living in the community, a move to bring more convenience to the aged. **PHOTO: XINHUA/YANG LEI/FILE**

30 projects inked under China-Singapore connectivity initiative

A total of 30 cooperation projects worth 1.82 billion US dollars have been inked under the China-Singapore (Chongqing) Demonstration Initiative on Strategic Connectivity.

The projects involve finance, information and communication, transportation and logistics, and talent training, according to a meeting of the China-Singapore connectivity initiative implementation committee held Monday.

Among the projects, there are two intergovernmental cooperation projects, 20 commercial cooperation projects worth 250 million US dollars, and eight cross-border financing projects worth 1.57 billion US dollars.

As of 2021, China and Singapore had inked a total of 162 commercial cooperation projects with an amount of 25 billion US dollars and 208 financing projects worth 23.2 billion dollars.

Launched in 2015, the initiative mainly targets financial services, air transportation, logistics, and information communication.

The initiative is the third intergovernmental cooperation project between China and Singapore, following the Suzhou Industrial Park in east China's Jiangsu Province and the Tianjin Eco-city in north China's Tianjin Municipality. — Xinhua ■

E-commerce platforms aid daily supplies amid Shanghai's COVID surge

AN increasing number of e-commerce giants and food delivery platforms have joined in the battle against the resurgence of the Omicron variant in Shanghai to secure the megacity's daily supplies.

Local authorities confirmed Sunday that e-commerce giants such as JD.com, online food delivery platforms Meituan and Eleme, and courier services companies have cooperated with the city to provide daily necessities for the residents.

With a population of 25 million, Shanghai has now become a primary battleground against the virus. It reported over 20,000 new domestic infections on Saturday. The city has employed a temporary closed-off management strategy with citywide nucleic acid testing rounds.

"I haven't slept a wink for days," said Cai Xiaobing, head of a branch of YTO Express, a major express delivery firm in China. Cai has become a community volunteer since 4 April, providing food for residents in the neighbourhood of his community.

Cai's wife organizes online group buying every morning, and Cai contacts sellers and arranges the company's drivers to distribute the goods to residents door-to-door.Cai said he needs to cope with goods for several thousands of residents every day. "I even drove to a community to deliver 150 kilogrammes of rice at around 2 am And just now, 500 bags of flour sold out in merely two minutes," he said, adding a volunteer team consisting of deliverymen has grown from six to 40, and they need to work more than 10 hours per day. Wang Wenbo, vice president of JD, said that JD is sourcing goods from nationwide to meet Shanghai citizens' needs. The first batch of goods, including infant milk formula, diapers, medicines, epidemic prevention materials and mutton, have arrived.The company has dispatched more than 2,000 anti-epidemic workers including delivery people to provide services in Shanghai.—Xinhua ■

An employee prepares online orders for delivery at a Burger King store in east China's Shanghai, 10 April 2022. **PHOTO:XINHUA/CHEN JIANLI**

Top Russian diamond miner says can't make eurobond payment

People take photos of polished diamonds in an Alrosa facility in Moscow, Russia, on 14 Nov 2018.
PHOTO: XINHUA/BAI XUEQI

RUSSIA'S state-owned diamond miner said on Monday it cannot make a payment on a eurobond after Washington imposed blocking sanctions, the Interfax news agency reported.

The company said that for "technical reasons" it cannot pay a $11.6-million (10.6-million-euro) coupon on a dollar-denominated eurobond, the agency reported. The US Treasury on Thursday announced blocking sanctions against Russia's partly state-owned Alrosa, one of the world's largest diamond mining companies. The company was already under UK sanctions. Washington cited Alrosa's role providing "an additional source of support and revenue" for the Russian government while it conducts a deadly military operation in Ukraine. The company had earlier been targeted by Britain, which additionally imposed personal sanctions on its president, Sergei Ivanov, whose father has the same name and was formerly Russian President Vladimir Putin's chief of staff.—AFP ■

UK inflation strikes 30-year high

BRITAIN'S annual inflation rate soared to the highest level in three decades last month as energy prices rocket, official data showed Wednesday, worsening a cost-of-living crisis.

Inflation surged to 7.0 per cent in March from 6.2 per cent in February, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

"Broad-based price rises saw annual inflation increase sharply again in March," said ONS chief economist Grant Fitzner.

"Amongst the largest increases were petrol costs."

Prices of restaurant meals and hotel rooms also rose steeply last month after falling a year earlier during a pandemic lockdown in the UK.

Costs are surging worldwide as economies reopen from pandemic lockdowns and on fallout from the war in Ukraine.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MAERSK NESNA VOY.NO. (211W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NESNA VOY.NO. (211W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-4-2022** 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

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

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 MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V RESOLUTION VOY.NO. (2209S)

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kyrgyz, Tajik border guards exchange fire

Kyrgyz and Tajik border guards exchanged fire on their disputed border on Tuesday, in a new incident that left one person injured from each of the Central Asian countries, the Kyrgyz side said.

Border communities in the two impoverished former Soviet states regularly clash over land and water supplies, with border guards often involved.

On Tuesday, shots were exchanged after Tajik border guards advanced on a disputed area, the Kyrgyz border guard service said in a statement.

Faced with the Tajiks' refusal to stop their advance, Kyrgyz border guards "fired warning shots in the air", the statement said.

"In response, Tajik border guards opened fire on Kyrgyz border guards. "The shooting stopped after negotiations between representatives... of the two countries," the statement said, adding that a Tajik border guard had been shot and wounded. Later, another exchange of fire occurred in which a Kyrgyz border guard was "seriously" wounded, the same source said. —AFP ■

Budapest warns against EU divisions in time of war

WITH war raging in Europe, the European Union should avoid divisive issues, Hungary's justice minister said Tuesday, as the bloc considers stripping her government of funding over poor democratic standards. Pointing to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Judit Varga stressed the need to "show solidarity and unity and strength from European partners". The bloc should "focus on those topics which unite us instead of those topics which (drive) wedges between us", she told reporters as she arrived for an EU meeting in Luxembourg.

Her comments came after the EU executive commission announced last week it would soon launch a never-used procedure against Budapest that could see the Hungarian government stripped of EU funding for flouting democratic standards. The latest report from the European Commission raised serious concerns about the rule of law in Hungary, seen especially in a deterioration of media diversity, and also charged Budapest was falling short on battling corruption.—AFP ■

Indonesia passes long-awaited sexual violence bill

INDONESIA'S parliament passed a long-awaited sexual violence bill on Tuesday, a landmark decision that raises hopes of justice for victims after the country recorded a spike in reported cases during the coronavirus pandemic.

Indonesian women's rights activists have for years condemned the lack of avenues for victims of gender-based and sexual violence to seek justice in a country where abuse is often considered a private affair and victims are discouraged from filing a report.

Cheers and applause from women's rights activists rang out after speaker of parliament Puan Maharani announced a majority of lawmakers had backed the bill at a plenary session. "This law is a real manifestation of the country's efforts to prevent any form of sexual violence and to care, protect and rehabilitate the victims as well as to enforce justice," Bintang Puspayoga, minister of women empowerment and children protection, told the plenary session.

The bill, which seeks to combat sex crimes and provide a legal framework for victims including in cases of marital rape, was proposed a decade ago and drafted in 2016 but ran into delays. Islamic groups said it promoted promiscuity and conservative lawmakers called for it to criminalize extramarital sex and LGBT relationships in the world's largest Muslim-majority country. The law focuses on the handling of sexual violence from prevention to victim recovery, ordering compensation for victims and allowing community-based organizations to provide counselling. Physical sexual abuse inside and outside marriage now carries a maximum 12-year prison sentence and forced marriage — including cases involving children — carries a maximum nine-year jail term.—AFP ■

Indonesian women's rights activists have for years condemned the lack of avenues for victims of gender-based and sexual violence to seek justice. **PHOTO: AFP**

Global police shut down online hacker's market: Europol

A Europol police agent looks at the onscreen logo of a new website launched by Europol at the Europol headquarters in The Hague on 31 May 2017. **PHOTO: AFP/JAN HENNOP/FILE**

INTERNATIONAL investigators have shut down a massive online forum that sold access to hacked databases stolen from US corporations, Europe's policing agency Europol said Tuesday.

Police had also arrested the website's administrator and two of his accomplices, the agency added. The "Raidforums" cyber market was launched in 2015 and was one of the largest with more than half-a-million users, Europol said. "This marketplace had made a name for itself by selling access to high-profile database leaks belonging to a number of US corporations across different industries," it said in a statement.

"These contained information for millions of credit cards, bank account numbers and routing information, and the usernames and associated passwords needed to access online accounts," the Hague-based agency added. The data was taken during breaches carried out in recent years, Europol said.

Six countries — Britain, Germany, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the US — worked with Europol's cyber-crime unit, said the agency.—AFP ■

Manhunt after 10 shot in Brooklyn subway attack

New York City police investigate an incident on an Uptown 4 subway after an emergency brake was pulled near Union Square on 12 April 2022 in New York City. **PHOTO: ALEXI J. ROSENFEL/AFP**

A massive manhunt was underway Tuesday in New York for a man who shot 10 people on a packed subway train, donning a gas mask before setting off two smoke bombs and opening fire on terrified commuters.

Police said the incident in Brooklyn was not being investigated as an act of terrorism, with no indication of a motive at this stage. None of the injuries were considered life-threatening.

New York Police Department commissioner Keechant Sewell told a press conference the suspected gunman put on a gas mask just as the train was arriving at the station.

The gunman "opened two canisters that dispensed smoke throughout the subway car," Sewell said. "He then shot multiple passengers as the train pulled into the 36th Street station."

In addition to the 10 gunshot victims, 13 others were injured as they tried to get out of the station or suffered smoke inhalation, according to officials.

"We are truly fortunate this was not significantly worse than it is," Sewell said.

NYPD chief James Essig said the gunman had fired 33 shots. Police later recovered a Glock 17 nine-millimeter handgun, three additional ammunition magazines and a hatchet from the scene.

Sewell said they had identified a "person of interest" and described him as a "dark-skinned male" wearing a neon orange vest and a gray hooded sweatshirt.—AFP ■

Russia, Belarus to deepen integration amid Western sanctions: Putin

A liquefied natural gas plant being built on the Yamal peninsula, an Arctic region of Siberia that's a key Russian oil-and-gas region. **PHOTO: KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV/AFP**

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday at a joint press conference that it was important to deepen integration between Russia and Belarus in the face of all-out Western sanctions.

Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko hosted the joint press conference at the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's Far East, Sputnik News reported.

"We will continue to jointly oppose any attempts to slow down the development of our countries or artificially isolate them from the global economy," Putin said. Belarus is Russia's leading trade partner. Bilateral trade reached 380 million US dollars by the end of 2021, an increase of more than 33 per cent year-on-year.

Putin added that the Belarusian platform was suitable for negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv, saying that starting a direct dialogue with Ukraine has become possible largely thanks to the personal efforts of Lukashenko.

On the special operation in Ukraine, Putin said that Russia's task was to achieve all its goals, and minimize losses. Therefore, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation would act "rhythmically, calmly, according to the plan that was originally proposed by the General Staff."

On the Western sanctions, Putin said that no one could shut all the doors and windows of Russia, and no country could maintain complete dominance since the world today was more complicated than it was in the Cold War.—Xinhua

Ukraine tightens security on borders with Belarus, Moldova's Transnistria

UKRAINE has tightened security measures on the borders with Belarus and Moldova's breakaway region of Transnistria, the Ukrinform news agency reported Tuesday.

"The security measures have been strengthened to prevent escalation in these areas," Andriy Demchenko, the spokesman of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, was quoted as saying.

There is a possibility of a military invasion from Belarus to Ukraine, Demchenko said.

Firefighters try to extinguish a fire after a missile hit a building on the outskirts of Kharkiv on 12 April, 2022. **PHOTO: SERGEY BOBOK / AFP**

The Ukrainian forces stand ready to repel all possible attacks, he added. The situation on the Belarusian-Ukrainian border remained calm, but Belarus had tightened security along the border, the chairman of the Belarusian State Border Committee, Leonid Maltsev, said recently.

"No border crossing points have been closed, they operate in a routine mode," he said. Maltsev said police and interior troops had been used to beef up border security. He also said the passenger and transport flows had thinned a bit on the border with Ukraine. "A few border violation incidents have been fixed, and trespassers have been detained," he told ITAR-TASS.—Xinhua

Ukraine's position at talks with Russia unchanged: chief negotiator

UKRAINE'S negotiating position at the peace talks with Russia remains unchanged, the head of the Ukrainian delegation David Arakhamia said Tuesday.

"The Ukrainian side adheres to the Istanbul Communique and hasn't changed its position," Arakhamia wrote on Telegram. The only difference is that the Ukrainian side does not take into account all the additional issues that were not included in the Istanbul Communique. This may have led to a misinterpretation of the current state of the negotiation process, he said.— Xinhua

QUICK SUMMARY

HERE are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine:

Kyiv 'concerned' at Vatican Good Friday gesture with Russia

UKRAINE'S ambassador to the Holy See expressed "concerns" Tuesday over a plan for Russian and Ukrainian women to carry a cross together during a Good Friday ceremony attended by Pope Francis.

The gesture of peace, against a backdrop of Russia's war in Ukraine, is due to take place during the Via Crucis (Way of the Cross) procession at Rome's Colosseum on Friday evening.

Ambassador Andrii Yurash tweeted that he "understands and shares general concern in Ukraine and many other communities about the idea to bring together Ukrainian and Russian women to carry (the) Cross" on Friday.

"Now we are working on the issue trying to explain difficulties of its realisation and possible consequences," he wrote.

Yurash did not respond to requests by AFP to discuss his position, and there was no immediate comment from the Vatican itself.

'All options on table'

BRITAIN'S armed forces minister James Heappey tells Sky News that if evidence of chemical weapons use emerges, "all options are on the table" as a response.

"There are some things that are beyond the pale, and the use of chemical weapons will get a response," he says.

Invasion going 'calmly': Putin

PUTIN says Russia's offensive is proceeding "calmly" and according to plan, with the goal of "minimizing losses".

During a televised press conference with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Putin dismisses reports of the discovery of hundreds of bodies of civilians in Bucha as fake.

Residents flee east

RESIDENTS stream out of east Ukraine's Kramatorsk and Sloviansk as fears grow the cities will be key targets of a major new Russian offensive.

The Pentagon says Russia is building up its forces in the eastern Donbas region, as it switches its focus to a region where pro-Russian rebels have been fighting Ukrainian forces since 2014.

Talks 'extremely difficult': Kyiv

KYIV says talks with Russia to end the war are "extremely difficult".

"Negotiations are extremely difficult," Ukrainian presidential adviser Podolyak says.

Putin says Ukraine's "inconsistency on fundamental points" is creating "certain difficulties in reaching final agreements".

German president 'not wanted' in Kyiv

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier says he offered to visit Ukraine with other EU leaders but was told by Kyiv his trip was "not wanted".

Steinmeier, a former foreign minister under ex-chancellor Angela Merkel, was long known for championing ties with Moscow. The snub comes as Chancellor Olaf Scholz is under increasing pressure for not having visited Ukraine.

Tycoon swap offer

ZELENSKY offers to swap pro-Kremlin tycoon Viktor Medvedchuk, who was arrested after escaping from house arrest, for Ukrainians captured by Russia.

Over 870,000 returnees

MORE than 870,000 Ukrainians who fled abroad since the start of the war have returned to the country, Ukraine's border force says.

Spokesman Andriy Demchenko says that 25,000 to 30,000 Ukrainians are returning each day.

SOURCE: 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 inves tment 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.

Thailand to host Invitational Women's Futsal Championship on 20 April

Myanmar Women's Futsal Team pose for a group photo during their training session. **PHOTO: MFF**

THE Myanmar women's futsal team will compete in the Thai Invitational Women's Futsal Championship, which starts on 20 April.

The Football Association of Thailand hosts the tourney in preparation for the 31st SEA Games.

The tourney will run from 20 to 26 April.

The host Thai national team, Thai All-Stars Team, Myanmar National Team, Indonesian National Team and the Australian Women's Futsal Club will compete in a round-robin format as only five teams are competing.

According to the fixtures, the Myanmar team will play against the Thai national team on 20 April, the Thai All-Stars team on 23 April, the Indonesian national team on 24 April and the Australian club on 26 April.

The Myanmar women's futsal team comprises 22 players and is headed by U Tin Maung Htay.

Officials said that the team Myanmar will compete in the tourney as preparation for the 31st SEA Games. —Ko Nyi Lay/ GNLM

Barcelona in need of rare European home victory against Frankfurt

BARCELONA have toiled at home in continental competition this season but they will need to find a way past Eintracht Frankfurt at the Camp Nou on Thursday if they are to reach the semi-finals of the Europa League.

The Catalans needed a second-half Ferran Torres strike to come from behind and draw 1-1 with Eintracht in Germany in the first leg of their quarter-final last week, leaving the tie open going into the return.

Barca have won just once at home in Europe this season, edging Dynamo Kiev 1-0 during their failed Champions League group-stage campaign.

Since dropping into the Europa League — the first time they have taken part in the second-tier European competition since 2004 — they have drawn at home to both Napoli and Galatasaray before getting the job done in the return.

There may be no away goals advantage anymore, but current form makes Barcelona clear favourites to advance to the last four with Xavi Hernandez's team unbeaten in 15 games, a run that has lifted them back up to second in La Liga.

That means they are unlikely to have to win the Europa League to return to the Champions League next season, but they still want to finish the season with silverware and are eyeing a place in the final in Seville on 18 May. —AFP ■

Real Madrid's veteran thoroughbreds keeping European Cup dream alive

REAL Madrid were given an almighty scare by Chelsea on Tuesday but the eternal brilliance of Luka Modric and Karim Benzema prevailed and now they are in sight of their 14th European Cup.

With the Santiago Bernabeu just about empty, except for the Chelsea fans still singing up in the highest corner, down below the talk had already turned to Madrid not just reaching the final, but winning the tournament again.

"Nobody can say we're not going to win it," said Real coach Carlo Ancelotti. It will be Real Madrid's eighth semi-final in 10 years and of the previous seven, they were crowned champions four times. Since the start of the Champions League era, they have reached 15 semis in total and on seven of those occasions went on to lift the cup.

Karim Benzema (right) scored the winner as Real Madrid needed extra-time to knock Chelsea out of the Champions League on Tuesday. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

This will surely be a particularly difficult year, with Manchester City and Liverpool so clearly another level above the rest of Europe's elite. Madrid have been granted no favours with the draw.

After beating Paris-Saint Germain in the last 16 and Chelsea in the quarters, their most likely route now is City in the semis and Liverpool in the final.

That has echoes of their incredible run to the trophy in 2018 when they also had to get past most of the favourites, including PSG, Juventus, Bayern and then Liverpool in the final. —AFP ■