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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.

Bago River-crossing Thanlyin Bridge No 3 project completes 69%

Part 2 construction site of bridge. **PHOTO: SOE MYINT AUNG**

THE construction of Bago River-crossing Thanlyin Bridge No 3 linking Yangon, Thanlyin and the Thilawa Special Economic Zone is now 69 per cent complete, according to the Bridge Department of Ministry of Construction.

The construction of No 3 Thanlyin bridge is being implemented near the No 1 Yangon-Thanlyin bridge by the Japanese engineers, experts and experienced engineers of the Bridge Department with Japanese ODA loan.

The 3,500 metres long steel cable-stayed, PC box girder and steel box girder bridge is constructed under three parts.

Part 1 of the bridge project will have 1,312 metres in length while 1,363 meters in length for Part 2 and 825 metres in length for Part 3 including 22.9 metres in width of main bridge and 13 metres in height of water clearance. It can withstand 75 tonnes of loads.

Currently, the PC box girder processes are being conducted for approach road of Thanlyin side and it completes the Pier Head processes of P11 and P12 and the steel box girder operation is in process for P16 and P17. The completions of these Parts 1, 2 and 3 are 64.8 per cent, 68.1 per cent and 92 per cent respectively, according to the department.

The bridge will connect Yangon and Thanlyin and facilitate the transportation to Bago Region including to Yangon, economic zone, Kayan-Thongwa of Thanlyin Township. It can also reduce the heavy traffic congestion and save the time and fuel. The bridge is a part of series of the construction of East-West Economic Corridor.

The bridge construction was launched in February 2019 and the operation was suspended temporarily over the COVID-19 cases, and the officials resume the construction recently. It is slated for completion in mid-2024, the department said. —Pwint Thitsa/KTZH

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39 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 December, total figure rises to 633,457

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 633,457 after 39 new cases were reported on 11 December 2022 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached 607,973, including 11 new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to 19,488 on 11-12-2022 with no new death reported from the pandemic.

The country has vaccinated 30,801,991 people aged 18 and above for COVID-19 vaccines and 6,779,914 people aged under 18 till 10 December 2022.

Status of COVID-19 vaccination (as of 10 December 2022)

People aged 18 and above who received vaccines	30,801,991
People under 18 years old who received vaccines	6,779,914

According to the research, it is found that people who have been vaccinated do not suffer severely from the disease, need not to be hospitalized and unlikely to die. If they have received booster shot, the death rates can be reduced more.

As such, the people need to follow the new normal way in living with COVID. Hence, all the people above five have to fully receive COVID-19 vaccination inoculated by the Ministry of Health free of charge. Six months after the vaccination, they have to take booster jabs at relevant health centres and ward/village administration offices without fail.

Moreover, they have to wear masks while in closed chambers and public places. They need to often wash hands with soap and water or the hand gel containing alcohol (at least 60 per cent) for 20 seconds.

People need to follow the social distancing rule and avoid the crowds as much as possible. While not wearing masks, if they cough and sneeze, they need to cover mouth and noses with elbows in line with the personal hygienic ways.

COVID-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health.—MNA

Visitors frequent Gubar Guest House in Machanbaw

THE Gubar Guest House near the Malikha River bank in Ward 3 of Machanbaw, Putao District, Kachin State, is full of visitors and photographers.

During the period from 1956 to 1958, Machanbaw Village was upgraded from the status of a village to that of a town and the border administration office was based there. Therefore, it was required to build a guest house to accommodate State leaders, foreign diplomats and State officials. It was named as "Gubar" after the Gubar village located at the source of Maykha River in Nagmun Township.

The Gubar Guest House was built in Financial Year 1959-1960 with an allocation K20,000 and is a two-storey building. There is form with a balcony, a living room, a VIP bedroom and a dining room upstairs, and a dining room, a kitchen and a bedroom downstairs. The bedding, furniture, beds, cabinets, and utensils to be used in the guest house were directly imported from Singapore at that time.

Everybody can also observe the feelings and suggestions written from various perspectives by Heads of State, foreign diplomats, veteran writers and special guests, in the guest book of the Gubar Guest House.

Interior settings and decorations are seen at Gubar Guest House in Machanbaw of Kachin State.

Tourists and visitors frequented the guest house by car or motorbike in winter, the open season. Visitors said that the Gubar Guest House is a must-visit place for visitors to Machanbaw, it is learnt. — Yaw Shwe Ni (Machanbaw)/CT

Photos show pleasant views of Gubar Guest House and beautiful environmental scenes.

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Cooperate for promotion of socio-economic lives of farmers and the farming sector

THE government has been fulfilling the need for agricultural water supply tasks constantly for the development of the agriculture sector, as farmers are required to cooperate for promotion of their socio-economic lives and the farming sector in line with the term participatory irrigation management.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting on the enhancement of the agriculture sector and socioeconomic life of farmers by Participatory Irrigation Management on 26 August 2022)

Gala Dinner held to mark meeting of MoEP, MoST and Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation "ROSATOM" for cooperation project

ACCORDING to the Myanmar-Russia joint project implementation plan, the Ministry of Electric Power, the Ministry of Science and Technology and Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation "ROSATOM" will cooperate with each other on the project.

A dinner ceremony to mark the meeting and discussion of the project was held at the Ministry of Electric Power in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, Union Minister for Electric Power U Thaung Han, Union Minister for Energy U Myo Myint Oo, Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Myo Thein Kyaw, and Union Minister for Construction U Myo Thant, representatives from ROSATOM, departmental heads and officials from ministries attended the dinner.

Union Minister for Electric Power U Thaung Han extends greetings at Gala Dinner to mark implementation of cooperation project among MoEP, MoST and Russia's Rosatom on 11 December.

First, Union Minister for Electric Power U Thaung Han and a representative of the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation "ROSATOM" extended greetings.

Afterwards, the gala dinner was held with a musical performance.

After that, Union Ministers U Thaung Han and Dr Myo Thein Kyaw warmly greeted the delegation from "ROSATOM" and the employees of the ministry. After that, the Union Minister for Electric Power awarded the entertainment group with cash award.

The Russian delegation arrived in Myanmar in early December this year. They travelled Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, and Inlay regions.

The views and heartfelt words of the guest groups on Myanmar are described below. —MNA

Palamarchuk Igor
(Deputy Director)

HELLO, this is the second time I have come to Myanmar. The first time was in September.

I would like to invite my friends from Myanmar to Russia as a courtesy, and I would also like to invite the Russians to Myanmar as friends. I am very happy to visit Myanmar.

When we come to Myanmar, there is a lot to cooperate in the energy sector as well as other economic sectors. Russia will continue to help Myanmar develop its energy sector. In the future, we are going to help step by step.

Energy sector of Myanmar need to be developed much. There is still a need for development in the technological sector, so there is a lot to help in these sectors. On this trip, we will work to develop those sectors.

Zhukova Ekaterina
(key account director)

HELLO, this is my fifth visit to Myanmar. When I visited Myanmar, I was very happy to see the friendliness of the Myanmar people. I am happy and take pride in visiting Myanmar again and again. I also invite Myanmar people to visit Russia.

When I was in Myanmar, the places I visited were Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Inlay regions. I was very happy when I visited the Inlay. I got an experience like no other place in the world. Myanmar is always lush and green. As Russians, when we visit Myanmar, we love the weather and the natural beauty of the forests.

The next city I want to visit is Mandalay. I have known the famous places of Mandalay. I would like to visit there.

As ROSATOM, we are going to cooperate with Myanmar in many other sectors as well as the energy sector. There are many things that will continue to be done for the development of Myanmar.

The electricity sector contributes a lot to the development of a country. Russia is going to provide a lot of good support for Myanmar in the hydropower sector as well.

Union Industry Minister inspects No 1 Textile Factory (Shwedaung)

Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than views round machines at No 1 Textile Factory (Shwedaung) on 11 December.

UNION Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than made an inspection tour of No 1 Textile Factory (Shwedaung) in Bago Region yesterday.

The factory manager reported on operating production of the factory.

In his response, the Union minister instructed officials to seek modern technologies for manufacturing clothes, conduct the multiplier course on techniques, efficiently apply skills of service personnel, to draw the plan for development of human resources, manufacture clothes offered by ministries in time, systematically perform quality control and facilitate fire extinguishers under the firefighting plan.

Yesterday evening, the Union minister inspected installation of machines jointly undertaken by No 3 Heavy Industries Enterprise and Tsuyatomo Co Ltd of Japan for dyeing the products at No 1 Textile Factory (Shwedaung) and instructed officials to observe operating the machines and dyeing of products, manufacture the clothes at cheap prices for the people, timely install the machines and produce the dyed clothes to attract the people.—MNA

Students from ASEAN member states arrive in Yangon to take part in 10th ASEAN Quiz-Regional Level

THE students and administrators from ASEAN member states arrived at the Yangon International Airport from yesterday morning to take part in the 10th ASEAN Quiz-Regional Level to be hosted at MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory on 14 December.

ASEAN member countries host the quiz once every two years. This year, Myanmar will host the quiz. Relevant countries selected first, second and third prize winners in the quiz at different levels, and those students are between aged 15 and 18.

Under the arrangement of the Basic Education Department, a total of 33 students between aged 15 and 18 who came from region and state level quizes were assessed under the written test on 30 May 2022 and ten of them were selected through the personal test.

Students from ASEAN member states arrive at Yangon International Airport on 11 December to take part in 10th ASEAN Quiz-Regional level in Nay Pyi Taw.

Those ten selected students were allowed to take part in the 10th ASEAN Quiz (National level) at the Myanma Radio and Television on 1 June 2022 and five selected students—first, second and third prize winners and two reserved ones.

Experienced officials gave training to them in international relations and English proficiency from June to November 2022. The firts, second and third prize winners representing Myanmar will participate in the 10th ASEAN Quiz-Regional Level at MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 December together with those from other ASEAN member states.

The MICC-II is being facilitated technological devices and network cottection on 11 December. At present, the Quiz360 Software is being conducted on test for contestants in person and those online in hybrid system.—MNA

Students from ASEAN countries are seen at Yangon International Airport on 11 December.

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

Mon State Chief Minister inspects progress of jetty at Gaungsaygyun

Mon State Chief Minister U Zaw Lin Tun strolls along jetty at Gaungsaygyun of Mawlamyine Township on 11 December.

MON State Chief Minister U Zaw Lin Tun inspected progress of Gaungsaygyun jetty in Mandalay Ward of Mawlamyine yesterday. The jetty construction aims to enable pilgrims from various regions to visit historical Gaungsaygyun pagoda with smooth transportation.

At the construction site, an official of the jetty construction reported on Gaungsaygyun jetty and bailey bridge. After hearing the reports, the chief minister gave instruction for long-term existence of the jetty meeting set standards.

The pilgrims and local people from Kawttun, Kawtsein and Kawtpauk village-tracts of Mawlamyine Township can use the jetty.— State IPRD/KZL

Public Notice

1. The State Administration Council awarded Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma, Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma, Agga Maha Thray Sithu, Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu, Maha Thray Sithu, Thray Sithu, Sithu, Thura, Thiri Pyanchi, Zeya Kyaw Htin, Wunna Kyaw Htin, Alinka Kyaw Swa and Theikpa Kyaw Swa titles in 2022 with Order Nos 2/2022, 54/2022, 63/2022, 211/2022, 212/2022, 213/2022, 214/2022, 215/2022, 218/2022, 219/2022, 220/2022 and 221/2022.
2. The honorary title recipients will be awarded honouring Diamond Jubilee Independence Day and are invited to attend in person or their family member to the honorary titles conferring ceremony, Diamond Jubilee Independence Day Celebration, Reception and Dinner events to be held at the Grand Military Review Parade on 4 January 2023.
3. It is here announced that the recipient of titles or one family member on behalf of awardees who will attend the ceremonies must contact officials of respective organizing committees no later than 20-12-2022.

Sub-Committee on Invitation to Honorary Titles Conferring Ceremony (Ministry of Home Affairs)
Phone: 067-3412715, 067-3412716
Diamond Jubilee Independence Day Seating Sub-Committee (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture)
Phone: 067-3408436, 09-455955110, 09-2035502
Working Committee on Organizing Reception and Dinner for Diamond Jubilee Independence Day (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Phone: 067-3412054, 067-3412655

Yangon-Mawlamyine new train starts tonight

IN order to faciliate the travel of passengers by train, Myanma Railways stated running the Yangon-Mawlamyaine night train from 8 pm tonight.

The new No 81-up train departed at 8 pm from Yangon Railway Station and arrived in Mawlamyine station at 4:45 am. No 82-down train will depart at 8 pm from Mawlamyaine station on 12 December and will be arrive in Yangon at 4:55 am.

This new train includes five ordinary class carriages, five upper class carriages and one guard coach. Each upper class carriage can accommodate 33 passengers and ordinary class, 68 passengers.

The train that will leave Yangon Railway Station will stop over for passengers to get on and off at Toegaunggale, Bago, Thaton and Paung stations.

"Myanma Railways is trying to meet the needs of passengers as much as possible. Looking at the needs of passengers in the future, Myanma Railways will fulfill the needs of passengers," said U Zaw Lwin, Regional Manager.

Yangon-Mawlamyine night train tickets for the new trip will be sold 3 days in advance at Yangon Railway Station and passengers can show citizenship scrutiny cards for purchase of tickets. The ticket price is K7,050 per person for the upper class and K 3,550 for ordinary class.— Nay Lin (MNA)/KZW

Illegal timbers, feedstuff, precursor chemicals, foodstuff, electrical accessories, vehicles confiscated

SUPERVISED by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, effective action is being taken to prevent illegal trade under the law.

On-duty teams under the management of the Customs Department confiscated electronic equipment worth K3,924,610 that did not claim designated date from the warehouse of at the Yangon International Airport and brooms and related items worth K4,572,120 that do not match with the import declaration at Hteedan port on 9 December. Action was taken under Customs Procedures.

Similarly, combined inspection teams under the management of Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted a surprise check along the Myawady-Yangon road and nabbed 28,500 kilogrammes of monosodium glutamate branded EPPEN worth K65.835 million and a vehicle with a trailer worth K70 million carrying that monosodium glutamate. Action was taken under Customs procedures. A combined team led by region Forest Department seized 10.804 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K4,510,176 and action was taken under the Forest Law.

On 10 December, a combined inspection team made an inspection under the management of illegal trade eradication task force of Kachin State at Nantsiaung combined checkpoint in Mohnyin Township. During the inspection, 8,000 kilos of ammonium nitrate, and four vehicles valued at K248 million were seized at the checkpoint, and action was taken under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

8,000 kilos of ammonium nitrate in 80 barrels seized at Nantsiaung checkpoint on 10 December.

A combined inspection team led by Insein District illegal trade eradication task force and Mingaladon District Police Force conducted inspection under the management of illegal trade eradication task force of Yangon Region at the junction of No 3 highway checkpoint on Yangon-Bago road. The inspection team seized 69 bullocks and two vehicles worth K228 million. Action was taken under the Essential Supplies and Services Law.

Therefore, 15 arrests (approximately K624,841,906) were made on 9 and 10 December, according to the Steering Committee. — MNA/KZL

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Renowned singers to perform at PyinOoLwin Flower Festival

FAMOUS singers will perform song entertainments at the 15th PyinOoLwin National Kandawgyi Garden Flower Festival in PyinOoLwin, according to the organizing committee of the flower festival.

In the Flower Festival, which will be held for a month from 15 December, 2022 to 15 January, 2023, famous singers of the country will perform song entertainment as of 2:30 pm on 18 December.

In addition, various species of flowers from all over the country, foreign flower species, and rare species of flowers will also be displayed in the flower festival.

Also, playgrounds for children, and gaming programmes for young and old visitors individuals or in groups are arranged in the festival, and domestic foods and costumes will also be showcased and sold as a market fair.

In order to ensure smooth transportation for tourists to the flower festival, officials have also arranged with the tourism agencies in the city, and security measures have been planned for them to travel safely.

At the present time, growing flowery plants, construction of shops and stages are being carried out in the garden.

In the last festival, various flowers named sunflower maze, tulip flower representing the Netherlands, the rose patch representing the UK and the lily patch representing Italy were displayed.

The flower festival held at PyinOoLwin National Kandawgyi Garden in 2019.

The purpose of the event is to make the flower festival as a prominent one in Myanmar and to be able to see and enjoy seasonal flowers in a single venue, and to help business of Myanmar's flower cultivation and production, and promote the tourism sector and improve development of the region.

Although the flower festival is held every year at the garden in PyinOoLwin Township, the last festival was held in 2019 due to the local COVID-19 infections.—TWA/KZL

USD 9.45 million exceeded in forest products' export within eight months this FY more than that of last FY

DURING the eight-month period from 1 April to 25 November 2022 of the fiscal year 2022-2023, more than US$94.28 million were earned from the export of forest products abroad.

Myanmar's forest products are exported to 238 foreign countries, and the export of forest products in the government sector earned US$0.843 million and $83.992 million from privately owned sector, totalling $84.835 million the corresponding period of last year. Compared to the same period, the eight-month period in the 2022-2023 fiscal year exceeded over US$9 million more than the previous year.

Last fiscal year 2020-2021, it received US$128.072 million, and during the 2021-2022 Mini Budget period, it received US$83.901 million. Agricultural produce along with forest products, animal products, aquatic products, mineral products, finished industrial products and other goods are also being exported abroad, and it is reported that US$10,920.72 million were pocketed from the export of goods.

The forest products exported from Myanmar are teak lumber, hardwood in addition to plywood, and other forest products such as bamboo, rattan, jute, orchid, Thanaka, etc.—TWA/KZL

Some pieces of the export quality sawn timber.

Decreasing fuel price helps commodity price drop and double-cropping

The price rate of a fuel station is seen on 10 December.

A drop in fuel oil price helped reduce the prices of commodities, during the second week of December 2022.

On 9 December, the retail reference price of Octane 92 per litre dropped to K1,830 and regular diesel fell to K2,125 per litre in Yangon. The price of Octane 92 rose to K2,605 per litre and regular diesel to K3,245 per litre on 31 August 2022.

In particular, fuel oil is used to pump water for agriculture sector in double-cropping, which will be planted as a spring crop after the monsoon paddy was harvested.

According to the farmers, the significant drop in price of fuel oil during the time of double-cropping, will bring benefits to them.

Among the claims regarding the high price of cooking oil and fuel, a claim concerning the high fuel price became less in time of price dropping. In the markets, it is often referred that the cause of high goods price was the freight charges. Meantime, it is no longer possible to justify the increase in commodity prices on fuel oil, due to a fall in its price.

In the same way, people in Yangon said that most of the taxis are asking for higher fares in the city referring the high price of Octane fuel. No car fares were reduced when fuel oil prices slump. A few taxis offered a little cheaper price since there are natural gas used vehicles in them.

Most passengers who ride a taxi were directly affected by the increased car fares due to the increase in fuel prices before. Since the drop in fuel prices, it has not been possible to pay the same fare as before the previous oil price hike.—TWA/CT

LOCAL BUSINESS

Rubber market sees price persistence

THE price of rubber hovers around K1,200 per pound in the first week of December, according to the rubber market in Mon State.

The prevailing prices are K1,200 per pound of sundried local 3 and K1,220 per pound of Ribbed Smoked Sheet Local 3.

The price of rubber hit K1,600 per pound in the third week of September 2022. Thereafter, the prices showed a gradual decline. In November, the price fluctuated a lot, with the maximum price of K1,300 per pound for sundried rubber and K1,320 for RSS3 on 8 and 9 November and the lowest price of K1,090 per pound for sundried rubber and K1,110 for RSS3. The prices became stable at the end of the month.

Global demand for rubber, rubber production of the Southeast Asian nations and the market supply are contributing factors to the rubber price condition of Myanmar.

Additionally, the foreign exchange rate affects the price as a weaker domestic currency stipulates exports.

According to the meeting 66/2022 of Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee, export earnings of some items can be made in Chinese Yuan and Thai Baht in addition to the US dollar.

The CBM's notice dated 18 November takes effect on those export items; various pulses (green gram, black gram, chickpea and pigeon pea), edible oil crops (peanut, sesame seeds), corn, rubber, fishery products (fish, shrimp, crab and eel) and livestock products (live cattle, hides, frozen meat and dried meat).

The traders need to apply for a licence to make Yuan or Baht payment. According to the US dollar policy, 65 per cent of earnings must be exchanged to local currency at the CBM's reference foreign exchange rate, while exporters can use 35 per cent of export earnings or transfer or sell them on to Authorized Dealers or others with an over-the-counter rate within one month.

This directive came into effect starting from 21 November, the CBM stated.

Rubber sheets are under sunray to produce sun dried rubber and collection of rubber latex is seen at a rubber plant.

The rubber price in Mon State, a major rubber production state in Myanmar, is positively related to those factors as well, the traders elaborated.

Rubber is commonly produced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As per 2018-2019 rubber season's data, there are over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon State accounting for 497,153 acres, followed by Taninthayi Region with 348,344 acres and Kayin State with 270,760 acres.

Seventy per cent of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, and other countries.

Myanmar bagged more than US$449 million earning from rubber exports in the previous financial year 2020-2021.—GNLM

Coffee beans from Thandaunggyi Township conveyed to China

COFFEE beans from Thandaunggyi Township, Kayin State are delivered to China and fetched K3.5 million to K4 million per tonne, according to a report cited by the Ministry of Commerce's Commerce Journal.

Traders from Toungoo city purchased the coffee beans, areca nuts and cardamom from Thandaunggyi Township. The coffee beans are priced K5,000-K7,000 per viss depending on the varieties. The coffee powder is sold at K20,000 in the domestic markets.

Those coffee beans are cultivated with low pesticide use. The occurrence of pest damage in coffee farms and shortage of workers at harvest time reduced the outputs of quality.

As a result of this, the quality of coffee beans from the Thandaunggyi area does not meet specialty quality produced by the Ywangan area.

There are 9,863 acres of Robusta coffee across Thandaunggyi Township, according to the statistics of the district Agriculture Department.

The production is estimated at 172 viss per acre. The coffee beans are abundantly harvested in February and March.

With technical assistance for harvesting and post-harvest handling practices, coffee beans from the Thandaunggyi area might penetrate more international markets. Myanmar will add 300,000 more coffee cultivation acres in five years from the 2023-2024 financial year, with a view to boosting exports, penetrating more international markets and becoming one of the leading coffee exporting countries.

According to Myanmar Coffee Association, there are 40,000 acres of highland coffee (Arabica) plantations and about 10,000 acres under lowland coffee (Robusta) in Myanmar, totalling 50,000 acres. Shan State is the main producer of coffee beans. The annual yield is estimated at over 9,000 tonnes of coffee beans.

The country ships about 800-1,000 tonnes of coffee beans to Asian countries, the US and European countries every year.

Myanmar's specialty coffee beans are highly demanded due to their high quality and organic production. Specialty coffee fetches a good price as well. Myanmar ships coffee beans to the external market without affecting the domestic consumption, Myanmar Coffee Association stated.—GNLM

Myanmar's exports rise 15 per cent in FY 2022-2023

MYANMAR'S exports significantly grew by about 15 per cent in the eight months of the current financial year 2022-2023 from the corresponding period of last year.

Between 1 April and 2 December of the current FY2022-2023, Myanmar's exports soared to US$11.17 billion from $9.7 billion in the year-ago period. The figures reflected a sharp increase of over $1.44 billion compared with a year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

The negative pandemic consequences dealt a severe blow to the agriculture, livestock and mineral sectors during the past mini-budget period. As China eases some virus rules and regulations, the export sees a slight increase in the agriculture sector this FY. At present, the CMP garment sector raises its head again after the vaccination programme to the factory workers as well.

Of the seven export groups, fisheries, mineral and other exports showed a decrease compared to the year-ago period.

The values of export were registered at $2.37 billion for agro products, $18.2 million for livestock, $491.2 million for fishery products, $205 million for minerals, $97.14 million for forest products, over $7.65 billion for manufactured goods, and $320.35 million for other goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on reducing trade deficit, export promotion, import substitution and market diversification.—KK/EMM

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OPINION

To remedy patients with potent traditional medicines

SINCE time immemorial, Myanmar people have been using potent traditional medicines to cure themselves suffering from diseases. Up to now, Myanmar traditional medicine practitioners are bearing the remedies of traditional medicines to provide healthcare services for people with trust and reliance.

Myanmar traditional medicine has developed since the Myanmar monarchical era such as Tagaung, Sri Ksetra, Bagan, Inwa, Pinya and Konbaung. Myanmar traditional medicine is trustfully utilized by all Myanmar native generations including all ethnic groups.

Currently, the Myanmar traditional medicine practitioners conference and symposium are being organized for creating chances for traditional medicine practitioners and relevant professionals to exchange knowledge and experiences in remedying patients with the use of potent Myanmar traditional medicines. Myanmar Traditional Medicine therapies and academic ideas will be exchanged at the conference and the symposium so that it is a precious and noble traditional medicine heritage from senior professionals and their successors leading to brighter futures for these successors.

> Potent traditional medicines and remedies will occupy the soul of patients. Hence, those practitioners need to try hard for the emergence of potent therapies of traditional medicines to be able to cure people to be free from diseases.

Myanmar's traditional medicine is composed of four kinds of Naya and it is very compatible with Myanmar's environmental conditions, Unlike medicines from other countries, it has a long history as a competent medicine with a reputation.

Myanmar's traditional medicine practitioners are proud and respected for being the individuals who have inherited and preserved Myanmar's traditional medicine, which is a key part of the heritage passed down from generation to generation by ancestors.

At this year's conference, Myanmar traditional physicians and delegates of the conference aim to achieve all-round development in Myanmar's traditional medicine sector and quality development of Myanmar Traditional Medicine, to raise the quality and moral dignity of Myanmar's traditional physicians, to further develop Myanmar's traditional medicine, and traditional medicine production technologies, to cooperate with related professionals, experts and organizations at home and abroad.

Especially, research is being conducted for Vi-tha-ma fever medicine mentioned in the treatise of traditional medicine of Ma-dha-wa-ni-dan and the main content is a bitter traditional medicine called Say-Khar-Gyi to produce traditional medicines that can prevent and treat the Covid-19 and seasonal cases of flu. The tests were followed by immediate and short-term toxicological tests ensuring its safety and efficacy in human subjects. And the clinical trials are done in healthy voluntary human subjects followed by clinical trials on Covid-19 patients with normal signs and symptoms. These successful clinical trial outputs will be followed by the production of this traditional medicine soon.

Potent traditional medicines and remedies will occupy the soul of patients. Hence, those practitioners need to try hard for the emergence of potent therapies of traditional medicines to be able to cure people to be free from diseases.

ARTICLE
WEATHER REPORT

Research shows how a viral toxin may exacerbate severe COVID-19

ACCORDING to a recent study published in the journal Nature Communications, the SARS-CoV-2 virus may create a viral toxin that causes severe COVID-19 infections.

The research demonstrates how the SARS-CoV-2 "spike" protein can harm cell barriers that line the interior of blood veins within bodily organs like the lungs, causing what is known as a vascular leak. One of COVID-19's deadliest symptoms, pulmonary oedema, which contributes to acute respiratory distress syndrome, may be avoided by blocking the function of this protein (ARDS).

Specifically targeting this pathway

"In theory, by specifically targeting this pathway, we could block pathogenesis that leads to vascular disorder and acute respiratory distress syndrome without needing to target the virus itself," said study lead author Scott Biering, a postdoctoral scholar at the University of California, Berkeley. "In light of all the different variants that are emerging and the difficulty in preventing infection from each one individually, it might be beneficial to focus on these triggers of pathogenesis in addition to blocking infection altogether."

While many vaccine sceptics have stoked fears about the potential dangers of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein — which is the target of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines — the researchers say that their work provides no evidence that the spike protein can cause symptoms in the absence of viral infection.

Instead, their study suggests that the spike protein may work in tandem with the virus and the body's own immune response to trigger life-threatening symptoms.

Patients with severe COVID-19

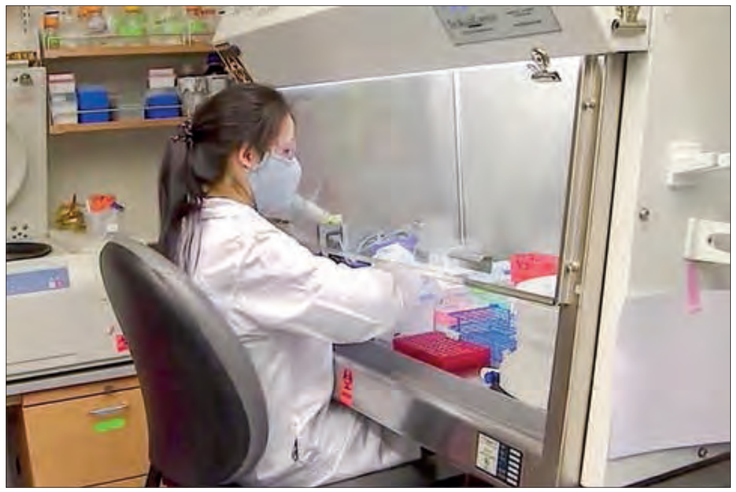
In addition, the amount of spike protein circulating in the body after vaccination is far less concentrated than the amounts that have been observed in patients with severe COVID-19 and that were used in the study.

"The amount of spike protein that you would have in a vaccine would never be able to cause a leak," said study senior author Eva Harris, a professor of infectious diseases and vaccinology at UC Berkeley. "In addition, there's no evidence that [the spike protein] is pathogenic by itself. The idea is that it's able to aid and abet an ongoing infection."

By examining the impact of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein on human lung and vascular cells, and on the lungs of mice, the research team was able to uncover the molecular pathways that allow the spike protein to disrupt critical internal barriers in the body. In addition to opening new avenues for the treatment of severe COVID-19, understanding how the spike protein contributes to vascular leak could shed light on the pathology behind other emerging infectious diseases.

A viral toxin

"We think that a lot of viruses that cause severe disease may encode a viral toxin," Biering said. "These proteins, independent of viral infection, interact with barrier cells and cause these barriers to malfunction. This allows the virus to disseminate, and that amplification of the virus and the vascular leak is what triggers the severe disease. I'm hoping that we can use the principles that we've learned from the SARS-CoV-2 virus to find ways to block this pathogenesis so that we are more prepared when the next pandemic happens."



In the Harris lab at UC Berkeley. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ KTVU**

A vascular leak occurs when the cells that line blood vessels and capillaries are disrupted, allowing plasma and other fluids to leak out of the bloodstream. In addition to causing the lung and heart damage observed in severe COVID-19, a vascular leak can also lead to hypovolemic shock, the primary cause of death from dengue.

Harris Research Programme

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Biering and other members of the Harris Research Programme were studying the role of dengue virus protein NS1 in triggering vascular leaks and contributing to hypovolemic shock. When the pandemic hit, the team wondered if a similar viral toxin in SARS-CoV-2 could also be contributing to the acute respiratory distress syndrome that was killing COVID-19 patients.

"People are aware of the role of bacterial toxins, but the concept of a viral toxin is still a really new idea," Harris said. "We had identified this protein secreted from dengue virus-infected cells that, even in the absence of the virus, is able to cause endothelial permeability and disrupt internal barriers. So, we wondered if a SARS-CoV-2 protein, like a spike, might be able to do similar things."

Spike proteins coat the outer surface of SARS-CoV-2, giving the virus its knobby appearance. They play a critical role in helping the virus infect its hosts: The spike protein binds to a receptor called ACE2 on human and other mammalian cells, which — like a key turning a lock — allows the virus to enter the cell and hijack cellular function. The SARS-CoV-2 virus sheds a large portion of the spike protein containing the receptor-binding domain (RBD) when it infects a cell.

Protein correlates

"What's really interesting is that circulating spike protein correlates with severe COVID-19 cases in the clinic," Biering said. "We wanted to ask if this protein was also contributing to any vascular leak we saw in the context of SARS-CoV-2."

Currently, scientists attribute the heart and lung damage associated with severe COVID-19 to an overactive immune response called a cytokine storm. To test the theory that the spike protein might also play a role, Biering and other team members used thin layers of human endothelial and epithelial cells to mimic the linings of blood vessels in the body. They found that exposing these cellular layers to the spike protein increased their permeability, a hallmark of the vascular leak.

Using CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing technology, the team showed that this increased permeability occurred even in cells that did not express the ACE2 receptor, indicating that it could occur independently of viral infection. In addition, they found that mice that were exposed to the spike protein also exhibited vascular leak, even though mice do not express the human ACE2 receptor and cannot be infected with SARS-CoV-2.

SOURCE: ANI

WHO concerned over increasing antibiotic resistance in human infections

The report shows over 50 per cent resistance in bacteria, which frequently causes bloodstream infections that require treatment with last-resort antibiotics. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ EUROPEAN DATA NEWS HUB**

HIGH levels of antibiotic resistance in bacteria are causing life-threatening bloodstream infections, according to the latest report released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday.

For the first time, the Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS) report provides analyses of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) rates in national testing coverage, AMR trends since 2017, and data on antimicrobial consumption in humans in 27 countries.

The report shows over 50 per cent resistance in bacteria, which frequently causes bloodstream infections that require treatment with last-resort antibiotics. Meanwhile, common bacterial infections are becoming increasingly resistant to treatments. Over 60 per cent of Neisseria gonorrhoea isolates, a common sexually transmitted disease, have shown resistance to the common oral antibacterial ciprofloxacin.

WHO's Essential Medicines List (EML) divides antibiotics into three categories: access, watch and reserve. Medicines in the access group are available at all times as treatments for a wide range of common infections; the watch group lists antibiotics that are recommended as first or second choice treatments for a small number of infections, while the reserve group is for antibiotics which should only be used as a last resort in the most severe circumstances.

Bloodstream infections

The report shows that bloodstream infections due to resistant E. coli, Salmonella and gonorrhoea increased by at least 15 per cent compared to 2017. More research is required to identify how this is related to increased hospitalizations and antibiotic treatments during the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO says.

Also, countries with lower rates of testing, mostly low- and middle-income countries, are more likely to report significantly higher AMR rates.

"Antimicrobial resistance undermines modern medicine and puts millions of lives at risk," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "To truly understand the extent of the global threat and mount an effective public health response to AMR, we must scale up microbiology testing and provide quality-assured data across all countries, not just wealthier ones."

SOURCE: Xinhua

■

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 11 December 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 12 December 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Yangon and Taninthayi regions. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions and (Northern and Eastern) Shan State and partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuations of slight decrease of night temperatures in Kachin, Northern Shan and Chin states.

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

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

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

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

NASA's Orion space capsule, photographed at more than 432,000 km (268,000 miles) from Earth, a record for a habitable vessel, with our planet and the Moon in the background, in November 2022. **PHOTO: NASA/AFP**

NASA Moon capsule Orion due to splash down after record-setting voyage

AFTER making a close pass at the Moon and venturing further into space than any previous habitable spacecraft, NASA's Orion capsule is due to splash down Sunday in the final test of a high-stakes mission called Artemis.

As it hurtles into Earth's atmosphere at a speed of 25,000 miles (40,000 kilometers) per hour, the gumdrop-shaped traveler will have to withstand a temperature of 2,800 degrees Centigrade (5,000 Fahrenheit) — about half that of the surface of the sun.

Splashdown in the Pacific off the Mexican island of Guadalupe is scheduled for 1739 GMT (9:39 am local time).

Achieving success in this mission of just over 25 days is key for NASA, which has invested tens of billions of dollars in the Artemis program due to take people back to the Moon and prepare for an onward trip, someday, to Mars.

So far the first test of this uncrewed spacecraft has gone very well.

But it is only in the final minutes of this voyage that the true challenge comes: seeing if Orion's heat shield, the biggest ever built, actually holds up.—AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Canada to hasten permitting for critical minerals mines

CANADA will look to quickly ramp up production of critical minerals that are vital to its transition away from climate-harming fossil fuels, according to a new strategy unveiled Friday.

The 58-page document notes that Canada is home to vast untapped deposits of lithium, graphite, nickel, cobalt, copper and rare earth elements.

But under a current framework, it adds, it can take from five to 25 years to get new mines approved and operational.—AFP

PETA takes UK military to court for rejecting fake fur hats

ANIMAL rights group PETA said Friday it is taking legal action against the UK defence ministry over its refusal to test a fake fur version of the distinctive bearskin hats worn by ceremonial guards.

The tall black hats are worn by the elite regiments, including for the Changing of the Guard ceremony outside Buckingham Palace, and are one of the best-known symbols of the UK.

PETA has long campaigned to stop using the fur of Canadian Black Bears and has developed a prototype replacement hat made of shaggy acrylic material.

It said it has filed for a "judicial review" over the Ministry of Defence (MoD) decision, alleging "unlawful conduct".—AFP

"Zero-carbon" heating, electricity project in Tibet readied

WITH the successful electrification of a 110-kV booster station in Tibet's Ngari Prefecture, the local "zero-carbon" solar photovoltaic energy storage project has been readied to further enhance the supply capacity of clean energy in the autonomous region.

Upon completion, the project is expected to provide an average of 357.95 million kWh of clean electricity to the power grid each year and reduce annual carbon dioxide emissions by about 254,000 tonnes.

The project, developed by the China General Nuclear Power Corporation and located south of Shiquanhe Town, is expected to guarantee 1.5 million square meters of clean heating.

According to the regional government plan, by 2025, Tibet will build a national demonstration zone for clean and renewable energy, with the installed capacity of hydropower built and under construction exceeding 15 million kilowatts, and the installed capacity of photovoltaic solar energy exceeding 10 million kilowatts. —Xinhua

Photo taken on 29 November, 2020 shows a transmission tower of a power grid interconnection project in Ngari Prefecture, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. **PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHAN YAN**

Cash crops: Dutch use bitcoin mining to grow tulips

TULIPS and bitcoin have both been associated with financial bubbles in their time, but in a giant greenhouse near Amsterdam the Dutch are trying to make them work together.

Engineer Bert de Groot inspects the six bitcoin miners as they perform complex sums to earn cryptocurrency, filling the air with a noisy whine along with a blast of warmth.

That warmth is now heating the hothouse where rows of tulips grow, cutting the farmers' reliance on gas whose price has soared since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Despite a recent plunge in value, Bitcoin firm owner de Groot says the virtual currency will last 'forever'. **PHOTO: AFP**

The servers in turn are powered by solar energy from the roof, reducing the normally huge electricity costs for mining, and cutting the impact on the environment.

Meanwhile both the farmers and de Groot's company, Bitcoin Brabant, are earning crypto, which is still attracting investors despite a recent crash in the market.

"We think with this way of heating our greenhouse but also earning some bitcoin we have a win-win situation," flower farmer Danielle Koning, 37, told AFP.

The Netherlands' love of tulips caused the first stock market crash in the 17th century when speculation bulb prices caused prices to soar, only to later collapse.

Now the Netherlands is the world's biggest tulip producer and also the second biggest agricultural exporter overall after the United States, with much grown in greenhouses.—AFP

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

Thailand hits 10 million visitors in 2022 as tourism recovers

THAILAND celebrated the arrival of its 10 millionth international visitor of 2022 on Saturday, according to the tourism authority, as the kingdom consolidated the recovery of its Covid-battered travel sector.

Thailand welcomed some 40 million people in 2019, but then the pandemic hit and travel was decimated as nations tightened border controls to contain the coronavirus.

With those restrictions easing worldwide Thailand's travel numbers have begun a slow recovery and the government expects to generate nearly $16 billion in tourism revenue this year.

Traditional dancers and drummers at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport on Saturday welcomed passengers arriving on a Saudi Arabian Airlines flight that authorities believe clocked the 10-million milestone.

Travellers walk through the arrival terminal at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

"The sky is open," Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha said in a speech at the airport. "We would like to build confidence that Thailand is still one of the (top) tourist destinations of people around the world."

Finance minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith said this week that visitor numbers were expected to grow next year too.

Government figures suggest Thailand would welcome roughly 23 million tourists in 2023, while some analysts believe a full recovery in tourist numbers could happen in 2024.

Thai hotel owners and restauranteurs have breathed a sigh of relief as business has slowly picked up.

Marisa Sukosol, president of the Thai Hotels Association, welcomed the 10 million travellers milestone "after two years and a half of pain".

"I think next year we will see continuous momentum of growth," she said, pointing to the return of tourists from Russia and across the Asia-Pacific region. —AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

WHO donates medical supplies to Uganda to address impact of food insecurity

WORLD Health Organization (WHO) has donated medical supplies worth over 1.1 million US dollars to be used in districts facing drought and food insecurity in Uganda.

The global health body in a tweet on Friday said the supplies will address the health impact of the drought and food insecurity affecting 20 districts of Karamoja, Lango, and Teso regions.—Xinhua

Singapore reports 1,102 new COVID-19 cases

SINGAPORE reported 1,102 new cases of COVID-19 on Saturday, bringing the total tally to 2,180,146.

A total of 106 cases are currently warded in hospitals, with four of them held in intensive care units, according to statistics released by the country's Ministry of Health. –Xinhua

Two wishes of a 106-year-old who has recovered from COVID-19

SINCE recovering from COVID-19 in April, a 106-year-old woman surnamed Li has been keeping an eye on the development of the pandemic and is no longer afraid of COVID-19.

Li, a resident of Changchun, the capital of northeast China's Jilin Province, was diagnosed with the novel coronavirus and admitted to the First Hospital of Jilin University in mid-April.

After a comprehensive examination, doctors found abnormalities in the centenarian's lung CT scan, and she soon developed a severe cough that produced phlegm. Li also has several underlying medical issues, including hypertension, cerebral infarction and brain atrophy. She was initially anxious and depressed.

The hospital established a COVID-19 treatment area that specializes in the treatment of the elderly and patients who are unable to take care of themselves. Li was admitted to this area.

"Our medical team made an individualized treatment plan for the centenarian, provided her with psychological counselling, and adjusted her diet according to her nutritional status. Meanwhile, we were in constant communication with her family members," said Zheng Yang, leader of the COVID-19 treatment team at the hospital.

After 16 days of meticulous treatment from medics, Li's physical and mental states improved, and she was discharged from the hospital on April 30.

Medical staff prepared dumplings to see her off, and she said she was grateful for and moved by the gesture. —Xinhua

Canada approves first bivalent COVID-19 booster for children ages 5 to 11

HEALTH Canada on Friday authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty Omicron BA.4/BA.5 bivalent-adapted booster for use in children 5 to 11 years of age.

This is the first bivalent COVID-19 booster authorized for use in this age group that targets the original COVID-19 strain and the Omicron BA.4/BA.5 subvariants, Health Canada said in a press release.

According to the release, Health Canada previously authorized this bivalent booster for use in individuals 12 years of age and older on 7 October, 2022. While the formulation for children 5 to 11 years of age is the same, the dose is one-third of that authorized for individuals 12 years of age and older.

The release said that after a thorough and independent scientific review of the evidence, Health Canada has determined that the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty Omicron BA.4/BA.5 bivalent-adapted booster vaccine for children 5 to 11 years of age is safe and effective and that its benefits outweigh any potential risks.—Xinhua

Health Canada on Friday authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty Omicron BA.4/BA.5 bivalent-adapted booster for use in children 5 to 11 years of age. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/AFP**

ECONOMY
WORLD

China commends WTO's ruling on US tariff case

Photo taken on 17 August 2022 shows a stainless steel production workshop of Tsingtuo Group in Fu'an County of Ningde, southeast China's Fujian Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA/WEI PEIQUAN**

CHINA applauded the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling that the United States' Section 232 tariffs on Chinese steel and aluminum products were in breach of WTO rules, a spokesperson with the Ministry of Commerce said Saturday.

The spokesperson called the ruling by a WTO expert panel "objective and fair."

The United States has imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from certain WTO members in the name of "national security" since 2018. Such actions are, in essence, practices of unilateralism and protectionism, and caused serious damage to the rule-based multilateral trading system, said the spokesperson.

These actions are not only opposed by many WTO members but are widely criticized within the United States, the spokesperson said. That has shown that the WTO security exception clauses are not a "haven" for unilateralism and protectionism.

China hopes that the US side will respect the ruling of the WTO expert panel and follow the WTO rules, correct its wrongdoings as soon as possible, and work with China and other WTO members to jointly safeguard the multilateral trading system, the spokesperson said.—Xinhua

64.5% of Japan firms abroad expect to see profits in 2022: survey

According to the survey released 24 November 85.5 per cent of companies based in South Korea expect to log profits. Nijimori Studio, a theme park located in Dongducheon, Gyeonggi Province, north of Seoul, features a set of buildings that bring visitors back to Japan's Edo period (1603-1867). **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ KYODO**

AROUND 64.5 per cent of Japanese companies' overseas affiliates expect to see operating profits in 2022, bringing them almost on par with levels before the coronavirus pandemic, according to a recent survey.

While the result was almost at 2019's 65 per cent, signs of long-term recovery were less promising, with just 45.4 per cent of respondents saying they will expand their business in the next one to two years, down from a pre-COVID-19 48.9 per cent, according to the survey by the Japan External Trade Organization.

About 60 per cent of manufacturing businesses also said they planned to review their supply chains, and 57.5 per cent said they will consider changing suppliers.

A majority of manufacturers cited rising costs of raw materials for the changes, with just under 50 per cent also reporting they intend to do so due to the risk of supply chains being cut amid distribution instability.

"The energy situation is unstable due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and we cannot outline good prospects for the world economy," JETRO Chairman Nobuhiko Sasaki said at a press conference.—Kyodo

NEWS IN BRIEF

Industrial output declines in Finland in October

INDUSTRIAL output adjusted for working days in Finland in October fell year on year by 0.6 per cent, the first decline in 18 months, said Statistics Finland on Friday.

Seasonally adjusted industrial output went down in October by 2.3 per cent from the previous month.

In October, industrial output in Finland decreased from the previous month in all examined main industries. The biggest drop was seen in electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply by 10.7 per cent, and in mining and quarrying by 10.2 per cent. —Xinhua

Iran, EAEU finalize talks on free trade of over 7,500 commodities: Iranian official

IRAN announced the finalization of negotiations between the Islamic republic and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) on bilateral free trade of over more than 7,500 commodity items, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

Mirhadi Seyyedi, the head of Iran's negotiating group with the EAEU, said that during thirty rounds of talks with the EAEU over the past two years, the dimensions of the free trade agreement were discussed and the agreement was reached, which has the largest coverage in terms of goods coverage.—Xinhua

Auto sales in India surge to record high in November

In this photograph taken on 23 July 2019 workers assemble a car at a FCA India Automobiles manufacturing facility in Ranjangaon, some 200km east of Mumbai. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

AUTOMOBILE retail sales in India witnessed the best-ever performance in November, according to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), the top body of the automotive retail industry in India.

"November 2022 has clocked highest retails in the history of Indian automobile industry with March 2020 as an exception when retails were higher due to BS-4 to BS-6 (emission standards) transition," FADA President Manish Raj Singhania said in a statement.

He said auto retail in November saw an overall growth of 26 per cent thanks to festive sales during India's wedding season from mid-November to mid-December, where around 3.2 million weddings are expected to be solemnized across the country.

According to the FADA, all categories were in green with two-wheelers, three-wheelers, passenger vehicles, tractor and commercial vehicles, growing by 24 per cent, 80 per cent, 21 per cent, 57 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. —Xinhua

Russia oil embargo, price cap disrupts tankers

THE European Union embargo on Russia's oil and an international cap on the price of the country's crude is disrupting the maritime transport sector.

The EU on Monday enforced an embargo on Russian crude shipments, the bloc's latest sanction in retaliation for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. This week also saw the start of a $60 cap on a barrel of Russian crude, agreed by Western nations.

Tanker traffic jam

Aimed at depriving Russia of key income, the measures have also slowed transportation of its oil by sea.

This is because Türkiye has started to request proof of insurance from tankers loaded with Russian crude, slowing their passage through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits and onto international markets.

Turkish inspections are slowing some tankers, but analysts say it is too early to tell what impact the latest Western sanctions will have on shipments of Russian crude oil. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/AFP/FILE**

The Financial Times has reported that Russia has assembled a "shadow fleet" of more than 100 vessels seeking to circumnavigate the Western sanctions regime.

These ships are reportedly using non-Western insurers and selling oil at higher prices to countries that have not subscribed to the new sanctions.

A 1936 treaty guarantees the freedom of navigation to merchant vessels passing through Türkiye's two straits. —AFP

Startup aiming to be 1st Japanese firm to reach Moon launches lander

The spacecraf blasted off aboard a Falcon 9 rocket. **PHOTO: NASA/ JOEL KOWSKY/AFP**

A startup aiming to be the first Japanese private company to reach the Moon launched a lunar lander Sunday aboard a rocket from a US space station in Florida.

Ispace Inc.'s self-developed lander, part of its Hakuto-R exploration program, is scheduled to land on the Moon around late April next year, if all goes smoothly.

The first stage of the program, named after the white rabbit that, according to Japanese folklore, lives on the Moon, also aims to place a United Arab Emirates rover on the Earth's only natural satellite.—Kyodo

India's forex reserves reach 3-month high

INDIA'S foreign exchange reserves rose for the fourth consecutive week and stood at 561.16 billion US dollars in the week ended 2 December, according to figures published by the Reserve Bank of India in its weekly report on Friday.

This is India's highest forex reserves in the past three months.

For the week ended 25 November, the country's forex reserves were at 550.14 billion US dollars.

Overall, the country's forex reserves have declined from 632.7 billion US dollars at the beginning of this year, as the central bank had sold a portion of the reserves to ease volatility in the currency markets. —Xinhua

Chinese-brand auto sales soar 24.2% in Jan-Nov

SALES of Chinese-brand passenger vehicles continued their trend of robust expansion in the first 11 months of this year, increasing their market share further, industry data shows.

During the period, about 10.48 million Chinese-brand passenger vehicles were sold in the Chinese market, surging 24.2 per cent year on year, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

The domestic market share of these vehicles was 49.2 per cent in the January-November period, up 5 percentage points from a year ago.

In November alone, sales of domestic auto brands rose 9.8 per cent year on year to near 1.13 million units. They accounted for 54.4 per cent of the country's total passenger car sales last month, up 7.6 percentage points from a year earlier.—Xinhua

Post-Brexit UK looks to Africa, Latin America

POST-BREXIT Britain must look beyond its traditional allies to emerging powers in Latin America, Asia and Africa, Foreign Secretary James Cleverly is set to say.

In a speech Monday at the Foreign Office, Cleverly will stress the need for long-term partnerships from trade to climate change, his office said.

The speech comes a fortnight after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the "golden era" of relations with China was over, but that his government would pursue "robust pragmatism" in dealing with global competitors.

When he led the country out of the European Union, then prime minister Boris Johnson touted a "Global Britain" seeking new partnerships further afield.

But the concept remains a work in progress, in trade as well as security, and Britain is meanwhile getting hammered economically with inflation running at double digits.

Cleverly's speech will emphasise "scanning the horizon" to longer-term goals 10-20 years ahead, even as opinion polls predict his Conservatives will be booted out of power in the next two years.

The UK is ready to make "investments of faith" with Latin American, Asian and African countries that were not "traditional partners" in the past, he will say.

These efforts will be backed up by British development finance and G7 funding — although the government has been slammed by campaigners for slashing its aid budget. —AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V VENUS C VOY.NO. (2230S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V VENUS C VOY.NO. (2230S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-12-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Iran condemns Australia's sanctions as interference in internal affairs

A demonstration in support of the protest movement in Iran, 30 September 2022, Paris, France. **PHOTO: THOMAS SAMSON /AFP**

IRAN on Saturday condemned Australia's sanctions on Iranian individuals and institutions, saying they represent the country's interference in Iran's internal affairs.

The Australian government "has for years been violating the basic rights of indigenous Australians, prisoners and refugees," said Nasser Kanaani, the foreign ministry spokesman, in a ministry statement.

"Australia has also given sanctuary to anti-Iran terrorist and separatist groups," he added.

Earlier in the day, the Australian government announced sanctions on six Iranians and Iran's morality police and Basij volunteer force over what it calls "human rights violations and abuses." —Xinhua

Ex-coup leaders face off in tight Fiji election

FIJIANS go to the polls on Wednesday after a bitter and close election race between two ex-coup leaders that could test the Pacific nation's fledgling democracy.

Prime minister and former military commander Frank Bainimarama came to power almost 16 years ago in a bloodless coup, but is looking for a third elected term via the ballot box.

To win, his FijiFirst party will have to best that of long-time rival Sitiveni Rabuka — an ex-prime minister and military commander who himself led two coups in 1987.

In recent years, Bainimarama has switched his fatigues for suits and colourful bula shirts and focused heavily on Fiji's fight against climate change — an existential issue for the low-lying nation.

But the run-up to the vote has been marred by allegations of corruption, prosecutions of rival politicians and threats against journalists.

Many local commentators are fearful of speaking publicly about a vote that is expected to be a close-run affair.

"Some are concerned another coup is on the cards," said analysts Lucy Albiston and Blake Johnson, writing for the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

"Although there are no reliable pre-election polls, it's looking like Rabuka might win," they said, noting Bainimarama had not pledged to respect the result while his rival had.—AFP

Cold bites as Syria battles fuel shortage amid US-led sanctions

AS plummeting temperatures hit Damascus with a shroud of winter fog, people in the Syrian capital have been battling fuel shortage and other adversities.

Although the locals are not new to fuel crises under the impact of US-led economic sanctions and lack of access to key oil and gas fields in rebel-controlled areas, the cold wave in the past two weeks has made their fuel shortage all the more gruelling.

The shortage has disrupted the supplies at gas stations across major Syrian cities, forcing many to either reduce the use of cars or buy fuel from the black market, which costs them an equivalent of 50 US dollars for a tank of 20-liter fuel.

For the first time since the Syria war broke out 11 years ago, the government has enacted a three-day-long weekend, which will last until the end of the year, and suspended all cross-city sports games to save fuel.

The government also increased the price of diesel broadly used by heavy equipment in industries and warned against the purchases of black market fuel.

All of this is coupled with a new decline in the value of the Syrian pound and long hours of electricity outages, even in well-off neighborhoods in Damascus.

Citing Director of the General Company for Internal Transport in Damascus Maurice Haddad, the local al-Watan newspaper reported on Saturday that the government has set stricter diesel quotas, leading to fewer daily bus services offered by the company. —Xinhua

A Syrian worker cuts firewood at a workshop in Damascus, Syria, on 30 October 2022. **PHOTO: AMMAR SAFARJALANI/XINHUA**

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Ukraine's Odesa without power after Russian drone attack

THE southern Ukrainian city of Odesa was left without power on Saturday following a night-time attack by "kamikaze drones" launched by Russia, authorities said.

"As of now, the city is without electricity," Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the presidential administration, said on messaging app Telegram.

Only critical infrastructure including hospitals and maternity wards had access to electricity.

"The situation remains difficult, but is under control," Tymoshenko said.

In this file photo taken on 27 October 2022, workers examine damage as they repair power line equipment destroyed after a missile strike on a power plant, in an undisclosed location of Ukraine, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. **PHOTO: SERGEI SUPINSKY / AFP**

The Black Sea port of Odesa was a favourite holiday destination for many Ukrainians and Russians before President Vladimir Putin sent troops to pro-Western Ukraine on 24 February.

Maksym Marchenko,the governor of the region of Odesa, said Russia had attacked the city with "kamikaze drones" overnight.

"As a result of the strike, there is no electricity in almost all districts and communities of our region," he said.

Two drones were shot down by Ukrainian air defence units, Marchenko added.

On Friday, Kyiv said southern regions of the war-scarred country including Odesa were suffering the worst electricity outages days after the latest bout of systematic Russian assaults on the Ukrainian energy grid.

Russia fired dozens of cruise missiles at key infrastructure in Ukraine on Monday, piling pressure on the country's already ailing grid after repeated attacks.—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Peru's new President, Dina Boluarte (C), poses for a picture with her newly appointed cabinet ministers after the swearing-in ceremony at the Palace of Government in Lima on 10 December 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

Amid protests, Peru's new leader swears in cabinet

PERU'S new leader Dina Boluarte unveiled a new cabinet Saturday as street protests pressed on seeking new elections after Pedro Castillo's removal as president.

Boluarte, Peru's first woman president and who was vice president under Castillo in his leftist government, oversaw a ceremony in which 19 ministers — eight of them are women — took the oath of office at the presidential palace.

The new cabinet comprises people seen as technicians who are politically independent rather than partisan. Her new chief of staff is a former prosecutor who specialized in corruption cases.

A big protest seeking new elections and protesting the ouster of Castillo was planned in Lima in the evening.

Boluarte, a 60-year-old lawyer, has said she will serve out Castillo's term through July 2026 but on Friday she did rule out holding an early presidential vote.

This is a key demand of street protesters who have been blocking roads and burning tires across this country with a record of political upheaval and instability.—AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Quebec Assembly makes the oath to King Charles III optional

THE legislature in Quebec province adopted a bill Friday making optional the oath of allegiance to Britain's King Charles III, Canada's head of state.

From now on, only the oath of allegiance to the people of Quebec will be mandatory to sit in the chamber.

"This is a great moment for Quebec democracy. One more step towards the emancipation of the Quebec people from British colonialism, towards normality," said Paul St-Pierre Plamondon, the leader of the separatist Parti Quebecois, on Twitter.—AFP

German hostage held in Sahel since 2018 freed: NGO

A German humanitarian worker held hostage in the Sahel for more than four-and-a-half years has been freed, his organization said on Saturday.

Jorg Lange, 63, "can return to his family", said Bianca Kaltschmitt, director general of the NGO Help, thanking Germany's foreign ministry, criminal police and the authorities in Mali, Niger and other neighbouring countries for contributing to his release.

Lange was kidnapped by armed men riding motorcycles on 11 April 2018 near Ayorou in western Niger, in a region near the Malian border frequently hit by jihadist attacks. —AFP

Power cuts in -30C spark anger in Kazakhstan

THE plight of a city in Kazakhstan left without heating for over a week in temperatures that dropped to minus 30 degrees Celsius (minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit) has sparked anger and highlighted the deplorable state of the country's Soviet-era infrastructure.

This month the northeastern city of Ekibastuz, with a population of around 150,000 people, descended into an icy hell, highlighting the dire consequences of power disruptions in winter, as European countries struggle with shortages due to Moscow's assault on Ukraine.

Ekibastuz was home to a Soviet-era prison camp where writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn was imprisoned between 1950 and 1953.

The camp became the inspiration for Solzhenitsyn's classic novel "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich."

Images broadcast in Kazakhstan in recent days showed long icicles forming inside apartments, while residents burnt anything they could find to keep warm.

Teams had to work day and night to repair water pipes that had burst due to the cold. —AFP

Thousands of people have been left without heating in the north of Kazakhstan with temperatures plunging. **PHOTO: KAZAKHSTAN'S GOVERNMENT PRESS SERVICE/AFP**

UK charity suspends work after royal race row

THE UK charity at the centre of a royal racism controversy says it has suspended work supporting black survivors of domestic abuse, after a torrent of toxic hate.

Sistah Space founder Ngozi Fulani, who is British, was asked repeatedly at a Buckingham Palace reception on 29 November where she was "really" from.

Since revealing the exchange with Lady Susan Hussey, 83, a godmother to Prince William, Fulani has been targeted by what she called "horrific" racist insults online.

Queen Consort Camilla (R) spoke to guests near Ngozi Fulani (back L) at Buckingham Palace on 29 November. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

In a statement late Friday, she said that as a result, Sistah Space had been "forced to temporarily cease" many of its operations to protect clients and staff.

"We are overwhelmed by the amount of support and encouragement and look forward to fully reinstating our services as soon as safely possible," Fulani added.

Godmother's interrogation

Hussey resigned from her role as a palace courtier after the row, and Prince William condemned his godmother's interrogation of Fulani as "unacceptable".

But it revived attacks on the royal family in the days before William's estranged younger brother Harry and wife Meghan aired new accusations of racial bias in a Netflix documentary this week. —AFP

SPORT

GLOBAL AFFAIRS
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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.

ONE ON PRIME VIDEO 6 to feature Aung La N Sang's bout

MYANMAR MMA fighter Aung La N Sang will participate in the ONE ON PRIME VIDEO 6 tournament to be held in Thailand.

Because the ONE Championship organization will hold this contest for American fans on 13 January, it will be held at 8:30 am on 14 January of Myanmar time.

Aung La N Sang will fight in a middleweight challenge against China's Fan Rong. On 19 November, Aung La N Sang beat Okami from Japan as his latest fight.

Fan Rong has been working with ONE Championship since 2019 and has won two of his four fights including two defeats against De Ridder and Bigdash.

Fan Rong last fought in December 2021 and has not fought in 2022.

Aung La N Sang, who is aiming to regain the ONE middleweight world title, is likely to get closer to a chance to challenge for the world title again if he wins this challenge.—Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

PHOTO : ONE CHAMPIOSNSHIP

FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar2022

Neymar 'psychologically destroyed' by World Cup exit

NEYMAR said Saturday he was "psychologically destroyed" by Brazil's elimination from the World Cup in a penalty shootout defeat to Croatia and admitted it hurt more than any other loss in his career.

The 30-year-old scored a superb individual effort to equal Pele's record goalscoring haul of 77 goals for the Selecao in Friday's match that finished 1-1 after extra time.

But he never got to take a spot kick in the shootout that Croatia won 4-2 to move into the semi-finals. Pre-tournament favourites Brazil must now wait at least another four years to win their sixth World Cup — their last dates back to 2002.

"I am psychologically destroyed. It is definitely the defeat which has hurt me the most, which left me paralysed for ten minutes after the match, after which I burst into tears without being able to stop," Neymar said in an Instagram message.

"It is going to hurt for a very long time, unfortunately," he added.

Neymar said immediately after Brazil crashed out that he might have played his last match for his country — but Pele urged him to "keep inspiring us". The 82-year-old said on Instagram he hoped the superstar forward would carry on playing, adding that goalscoring achievements were no match for the honour of representing Brazil.

"You know, as I do, that no number is greater than the joy of representing our country," Pele wrote. —AFP

Neymar (R) said Brazil's defeat to Croatia in the World Cup quarter-finals was the hardest loss to accept in his career. **PHOTO: AFP**

French sports minister wore rainbow-sleeved pullover in Qatar

France's Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera wore the striking sweater as she attended the game. **PHOTO: AFP**

FRANCE'S Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera wore a sweater with rainbow-coloured sleeves to France's World Cup quarter-final in Qatar on Saturday in a message of support for gay rights.

Oudea-Castera, a former professional tennis player, watched the game from the VIP box as France beat England 2-1 to move a step closer to successfully defending their title.

The rights of the LGBTQ+ community and the use of the rainbow symbol have been a recurrent point of discussion at the World Cup in Qatar, where homosexuality is illegal.

"It was important to express my support for human rights on the whole, notably LGBT rights.. and to do it in an unaggressive way with regards to Qatar, which is our partner," she told Franceinfo radio. Saturday was the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN General assembly in Paris in 1948, she said.—AFP