

# 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.

## 8<sup>th</sup> 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee holds 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting

**T**HE tenth plenary meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee began at the Maha Pasana Cave on Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday.

The meeting was attended by the members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee led by Chairman Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bharmo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko and officials of the departments concerned.

Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa presided over the meeting and Joint Secretary Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Setthila acted as the master of the ceremonies.

First, Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa gave Saraniya Ovada Katha.

Then, Union Minister U Ko Ko supplicated the religious affairs.

After that, Sayadaw Agga



The tenth Plenary Meeting of the Eighth 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee in progress at the Maha Pasana Cave on Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon on 8 March 2022.

Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Setthila submitted a summary report on the activities during the third term of the eighth State Sangha Maha Nayaka Branch (First Subcommittee); and other member Sayadaws submitted a summary report on the activities of the eighth State Sangha Maha Nayaka Branch

(First Subcommittee).

The first session of the meeting ended after discussing religious matters.

Then, Union Minister U Ko Ko and Lt-Gen Ye Myint (retired) donated day alms to the Sayadaws.

Then, the Union minister and party paid homage and donated cash for nine prerequi-

sites to Bhamo Sayadaw and Thanlyin Min Kyaung Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa.

Then, the second session of the first-day meeting continued and Sayadaws participated in the discussion and concluded the event.

Donors U Zay Thu Aung

and wife Daw Pwint Ngon donated dawn alms and religious friends under the auspices of Senior General Than Shwe (Retd) and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and family members donated day alms to the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee member Sayadaws who attended the ceremony yesterday. —MNA

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## Objectives of 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Armed Forces Day

1. THE Tatmadaw to participate in the leading role of national politics for the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism while safeguarding the Constitution (2008) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
2. The Tatmadaw to take responsibility for substantial contribution to measures of peace and prosperity of the country and food sufficiency as a national task the government primarily emphasizes
3. The Tatmadaw to join hands with all ethnic national people in the national reconciliation and peace processes
4. The Tatmadaw to provide necessary assistance for convening a free and fair multiparty democracy general election for ensuring the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism upon completion of endeavours in accord with the provisions of the State of Emergency
5. To build a powerful, capable and modern patriotic Tatmadaw to protect the national interest of the State

## Statement to appreciate teachers' efforts

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

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

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

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

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

*Information Team  
State Administration Council*

## Myanma Tatmadaw Cultural Team leaves for Thailand



Members of the cultural team undergo health check before boarding.

AIMING to increase friendship and cooperation between the Myanmar Tatmadaw and the Royal Thai Armed Forces to exchange culture and arts, the Myanmar Tatmadaw Cultural Team led by Brigadier-General Ye Yint Aung from the Directorate of the Public Relations and Psychological Warfare left for Thailand from Nay Pyi Taw Military Airport yesterday morning.

The cultural team was seen off by Commander of the Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Zaw Hein, Vice-Adjutant-General Maj-Gen Zin Min Htet from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Director of the Public Relations and Psychological Warfare Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun and senior military officers at the airport.

The Myanmar Tatmadaw

Cultural Team arrived at Royal Thai Army Airport (Wing-6) in Bangkok, Thailand at 9:10 am yesterday.

Director of the Department of Border Affairs Lt-Gen Pongtep Gaewchaiyo and officials of the Office of the Chief of the Defence Force, Minister Counsellor of the Myanmar to Thailand U Maw Bala, Myanmar Military Attache (Army, Navy and Air) Brig-Gen Khun Nay Tun Oo and officials welcomed the Tatmadaw Cultural Team.

The 51-member Myanmar Tatmadaw Cultural Team will perform at the Office of the Chief of the Defence Force of Thailand in Bangkok, Thailand, on 10 March.

This is the third cultural exchange between Myanmar and the Thai Armed Forces. — MNA

## 1,401 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 8 March, total figure rises to 601,020

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **601,020** after **1,401** new cases were reported on 8 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **550,882** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **19,394** after **3** died. —MNA

## Promote education as a priority for strengthening democracy

As a larger number of educated persons is designed to own the future of the country for democratization, ...

*(Excerpt from the speech made by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with departmental officials and town elders from Kengtung and Mongpyin townships of Shan State (East), Namsang Township and Kholan of Loilem District in Shan State (South) on 18-2-2022)*

# Myanmar celebrates International Women’s Day 2022

**M**INISTRY of Social Welfare, Relief and Re-settlement celebrated International Women’s Day for 2022 yesterday at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The event was attended by State Administration Council Member Daw Aye Nu Sein, Union Union Minister for Legal Affairs Union Attorney-General Dr Thida Oo, Union Minister for MoSWRR Dr Thet Thet Khine, Judge of the Union Supreme Court Daw Khin May Yi, member of Constitutional Tribunal of the Union Dr Malar Aung, Deputy Ministers Daw Than Than Lin and U Aung Tun Khaing, Vice-chair of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Dr Nanda Hmun, Anti-Corruption Commission member Daw Khin Cho Ohn, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Myint Soe, the permanent secretaries and directors-general while chairpersons of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Region/State Women’s Committees and officials of Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs via videoconferencing.

First, Chairman of the State



The International Women’s Day 2022 in progress with the theme: Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow.

Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivered the video message.

(The opening speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime

Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is separately reported on page 4)

Then, Union Minister for MoSWRR Dr Thet Thet Khine, Chairperson of the Myanmar National Committee for Wom-

en’s Affairs explained the work plans for women’s empowerment.

Director-General Daw San San Aye of the Social Welfare Department read out the UN Secretary-General’s message

on International Women’s Day 2022 and concluded the ceremony.

The theme for this year’s International Women’s Day is “Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow”. — MNA

# Naval Vessel (Sinphyushin) returns from Indian Navy-led MILAN-2022

THE warship Sinphyushin led by Commander Commodore Kyaw Kyaw Htoo from the Danyawady Naval Region Command Headquarters of the Tatmadaw (Navy) together with officials and other ranks, which left for Visakhapatnam, India to attend the Multilateral Naval Exercise (MILAN-2022), arrived back in No 3 Naval Jetty (Thilawa) yesterday.

The warship and Naval officials were welcomed back by Commander Rear-Admiral Htein Win from Central Naval Command Headquarters, and officers and other ranks from the Navy and their families.

The Multilateral Naval Exercise (MILAN-2022) was held

in Visakhapatnam, India from 25 February to 4 March and 22 warships including Sinphyushin of Myanmar from 14 countries participated in the operation.

Myanmar took part in the International Maritime Seminar with other 39 countries, Subject Matter Expert Exchange Programme, harbour-based exercises, International City Parade, and performed at MILAN Village, displayed traditional food and Myanmar’s handicrafts, visited Bodh Gaya and Taj Mahal in addition to the naval exercises with international warships.

The naval ship (Sinphyushin) sailed a total of 3,020 nautical miles during the voyage. — MNA



Warship “Sinphyushin” arrives back in Myanmar.

# An opening address sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony in commemoration of International Women's Day which falls on 8 March 2022

## Auspiciousness to all!

First of all, I'd like to extend greetings to all guests who attend the ceremony to mark today's International Women's Day 2022 to be physical and mental well-being and auspiciousness.

The International Women's Day ceremonies are held across the world with the aim of paying the attention to the rights and capabilities of women and emphasizing the realization of women's rights. To do so, the United Nations has been setting the themes for the ceremonies yearly since 1996.

The theme for International Women's Day 2022 was set as **gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow**. The theme of this year's celebration will help all global countries ensure harmony with climate change in further strengthening the future for sustainable development, recognize the contribution and capability of women and young women who are taking a leading role in the implementation of measures of harmony, risk reduction and response in the climate change in the building the sustainable developed and firm future and pay attention to further taking gender equality into consideration in order to mitigate the crises and disasters related to the climatic conditions which are challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

We all will face climate change and the outbreak of natural disasters which are primary hindrances to marching into the sustainable development goals. Climate change may cause not only biophysical changes but also social impacts.

Climate change may cause inequality and various sensitivities based on gender affairs, standards, movable situations, age and disabilities. Women



are suffering from impacts of the climate changes more than men. It is because women are more relying on the resources which may be mostly damaged by climate change and sufferings. At the same time, as women and girls know environments and ecosystems on a wider scale due to their work natures, they can be seen as leaders in harmony with climate change, risk reduction and response tasks. Hence, it is noticeable that women are of great importance in keeping abreast of men in participating in the efforts and response to risk reduction of climate change at full capacity.

With regard to the important role of women, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change approved in 1992 states that those member countries of the convention shall recognize the important role of women in tackling the climate change

and gender equality measures and shoulder to shoulder with the men in implementing the convention tasks.

Since the time when Myanmar signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, it has been placing emphasis on the implementation of the provisions of the convention. The National Environmental Policy of Myanmar (2019), the Myanmar Climate Change Strategy (2019) and the Myanmar Climate Master Plan (2018-2030) were drawn in conformity with the situation of Myanmar, including gender quality and role enhancement of the women and girls. It can be seen that the women and natural environment were inserted as a primary work field into the strategic plan in order to emphasize the strengthening of systems, organizational setup, and work procedures in which women shall fully participate with essence so

as to harmoniously respond to the management of natural resources, environmental conservation and climate change. I firmly believe that it will be a strategic plan in creating a further comprehensive society with equal participation of both men and women in all sectors.

The year 2022 is the final year of the national-level strategic plan. Hence, it is necessary to draw a new strategic plan for the future by assessing the advantages and disadvantages in the implementation of the main work sections. In so doing, I'd like to urge all ministries and organizations to actively lead their respective arenas.

Gender equality systematically inserted into the policy, strategy, main work programme and plans for implementation is designed to create a good environment to contribute to the enhancement of the leadership role of women

and girls in the tasks related to climate change. It will contribute much to shaping a healthy and happy society with resilience to climate change in 2030.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women Myanmar signed in 1997 stipulates that it shall need to enhance participation of women as much as possible similar to men in all areas so as to have effects for comprehensive development of a country, the prosperity of the whole world and restoration of peace.

As part of emphasizing these provisions, our country is implementing the role of women on a wider scale. It can be seen that the government has deeply prioritized the women to have the chance to participate in the political and administrative arenas in addition to the economic and social fields keeping abreast of men. Remarkable progress has been gained. I'd like to draw new policies, work procedures, and laws for having acceleration for existing progress and for overcoming the difficulties, hindrances and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the women and girls face as well as to amend the necessities in conformity with the current situations

In conclusion, the women representing more than a half of the population of Myanmar are an important force in building a Union based on democracy and federalism as well as very valuable human resources for the State. I'd like to conclude my speech, urging all to continuously strive for enhancement of the capacity of women and girls so as to effectively utilize their human resources in all sectors including the harmonization of climate change and lessening the risks.

Thank you all.

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# Union Minister for Defence meets govt officials, military officers, families in Sagaing district

STATE Administration Council member Union Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo and party met Tatmadaw officers, other ranks and their families yesterday morning in Shwebo and provided food items.

The Union minister and party, afterwards, went to Sagaing and met Tatmadaw officers, other ranks and their families. During the meeting, the Union minister gave necessary orders, and together with the deputy minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, provided food items, seeds and veterinary vaccines.

At the cordial meeting with town elders at the Sagaing District Administration Body's

office, the Union minister handed over souvenirs. At the Town Hall in Sagaing, the Union minister met Sagaing district-level and township-level departmental officials. During the meeting, Sagaing District Administration Body Chairman U San Tun Sein explained the situation in the area, and the Union minister coordinated necessary matters and provided food items.

In the afternoon, the Union minister and party went to the International Sitagu Vipassana Centre, Adipati Monastery on Sagaing Hill, and paid homage to Sitagu Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nyanissara and donated items and alms. — MNA



The MoD Union Minister kowtows to Sitagu Sayadaw.



The MoD Union Minister meets departmental personnel in Sagaing Region.



The MoD Union Minister meets officers, other ranks and families at Sagaing Station.

# MOFA Union Minister receives Thai ambassador

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mrs Suphatra SRIMAITREEPHITHAK, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar who is leaving Myanmar after completion of her tour of duty in Myanmar at 4:00 pm on 8 March 2022 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the farewell call, they reviewed the status of the existing friendly relations

and cooperation, and cordially discussed matters pertaining to the further enhancement of bilateral friendship, promoting bilateral border trade, providing humanitarian assistance, and implementation of Dawei Special Economic Zone Project, as well as closer collaboration in international arenas including ASEAN and the UN.—MNA

The Union Minister receives the Royal Thailand Ambassador to Myanmar.



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Zigon locals receive inoculation.

## People aged 18 & older get injected for Phase-8 first time in Zigon Township

PHASE-8 first time of COVID-19 vaccine is underway for the people who have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19 at 8:00 am yesterday in Zigon Township, Thayawady District of Bago Region.

The 18-year-old and above who have never been vaccinated against COVID-19 get jabbed in line with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and prioritized target group in Zigon

Township.

In Zigon Township, there are 42,708 people who have been fully vaccinated twice and 44,370 who have been inoculated for the first time in the target groups of religious people, government staff, volunteers, students and locals, according to the Township COVID-19 control and emergency response committee. — Tint Swe (IPRD)/GNLM

## CRIME NEWS

### Illegal timbers, vehicles seized in Rakhine state, Yangon, Bago regions

SUPERVISED by the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, illegal timbers and vehicles worth more than K42 million were seized in Yangon Region, Rakhine State, and Bago Region, on 4, 5, 6 and 8 March.

From 4 to 6 March, combined inspection teams led by the Yangon Region Department of Forest conducted inspections in Hlegu Township and North Okkalapa

Township and confiscated three vehicles carrying illegal timbers (estimated value of K41,947,826), and action is taken under the Forest Law.

Similarly, on 5 and 6 March, over 9 tonnes of illegal timbers (estimated value of K430,227) were seized under the Forest Law in An Township and Taungup Township in Rakhine State. Moreover, on 8

March, 1.0288 tonnes of illegal teak (estimated value of K156,860) were seized from the forest reserve in Thayawady District of Bago Region.

Therefore, a total of seven arrests (estimated value of K42,534,913) was made on 4, 5, 6, and 8 March, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA



Confiscated timbers.

### Drugs worth over K1.8 billion seized in Pyigyidagun, Mandalay



Three arrestees are seen together with seized drugs and Nissan truck.

OVER K1.8 billion worth of drugs were seized in Pyigyidagun Township, Mandalay, according to the Myanmar Police Force.

According to the report, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force inspected a Nissan 12-wheeler vehicle driven by 55-year-old Tin Win between 61<sup>st</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> Streets in Pyigyidagun Township at 12:30 pm on 6 March.

Next, Aik San (alias) Win Seng (alias) Ah Shan (33 years old) and Rog Kyaing Yan (alias) Ah Kwaik (32 years old) arrived on a motorcycle and the drug force detained them and searched for the 12-wheeler.

A total of 10,300,000 ecstasy tablets worth over K1.8 billion, 6.6 kilogrammes of heroin and 62.4 kilogrammes of opium extract were confis-

cated.

According to the investigation, the seized drugs were being transported from Shan State (North) to Mandalay Region, and Aik San and Rog Kyaing Yan were the recipients in Mandalay.

They are being prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law and the perpetrators are still being investigated. —MNA

### Illegal drugs seized in Mohnyin, Waingmaw, Nawnghkio, Palaw townships

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-illegal Drug Police Force seized stimulant tablets while conducting inspections at checkpoints in Mohnyin, Waingmaw, Nawnghkio, and Palaw townships on 6 and 7 March.

At around 10 am on 7 March, a combined team inspected a man driving a motorcycle at Nantseeaung combined checkpoint on the Shwebo-Myitkyina Road, Myaingthaya village in Mohnyin Township. The man drove away while he was asked to stop for inspection, abandoned the vehicle, and fled near Mawhan village. The police confiscated 28,500 stimulant tablets from the bag near the motorcycle.

On 7 March, police inspected the motorcycle driven by Ma Sunt Eain at the 13 KM combined

checkpoint near Warshaung village in Waingmaw Township and seized 7,200 stimulant tablets. On the same day, 12,000 stimulant tablets were seized from the motorcycle driven by Arkar at milepost No. (80/4) on the Mandalay-Lashio Road, Nawnghkio Township.

On 6 March, 47 stimulant tablets were seized from the motorcycle driven by Tun Aye (a) Sayawun and accompanied by Ye Naing Oo (a) Awli near Shatpone village in

Palaw Township. According to the investigation, police searched the house of Ye Naing Oo (a) Awli and seized 10,000 more stimulant tablets. The investigation also led to the house of Wai Than, who lived in Shatpone village, where 5,400 stimulant tablets were confiscated.

It is reported that action is taken against the arrested suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to the MPF. — MNA



Seized drugs and motorbike.

## Pure gold price surges to over K2 million per tical

THE domestic market sees gold bounce again to up to K2,016,000 per tical (0.578 ounce, or 0.016 kilogramme) in 2022, according to Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

The rise in domestic gold price is tracking the global price, which stands at US\$2,018 per ounce. Additionally, the US dollar exchange rate is worth over K2,000 in the local forex market at present.

The domestic gold price is highly correlated with the global gold price so it remains an upward trend, U Myo Myint, chair of YGEA stated.

The price of safe-haven

assets is unlikely to fall in the coming months. Only when Kyat strengthens against the US dollar in the local forex market and the global gold price slides can the domestic gold price fall, U Myo Myint quoted in his saying.

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

Under the guidance of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market was formed on 17 Decem-



Gold jewellery is seen at one of the gold outlets in Yangon.

ber 2021 as gold and currency market stability play a crucial

role in trade facilitation.

The objectives of the com-

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

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

## Over 3,700 acres of sunflower to expand in next winter cultivating season



A total of 3,770 acres of sunflower plantation will be expanded in the next winter cultivation season in Taungoo Township, Bago Region.

A total of 3,770 acres of sunflower plantation will be expanded in the next winter cultivation season in Taungoo Township, Bago Region, according to the Township Agriculture Department.

The farmers from 31 villages from 15 village-tracts cultivated 10 acres of sunflower plantation and 178.5 acres of sunflower planted in black bean plantation for sufficient domestic consumption. Consequently, they have yielded about 20 baskets per acre.

“Last year, when we ground four baskets of ordinary sunflower seeds, it produced only 10 visses of sunflower oil. This year, we have cultivated Hsin Shwe Kyar-2 sunflower species on a trial basis. When we ground three baskets, it can produce about 10 visses, which is more convenient for local farmers. Therefore, we have planned to expand this high yield of sunflower plantation in the next cold season,” said U Tun Ka, a sunflower grower from

DoInn village.

Under the regional government programme, the Agriculture Department freely distributed 357 acres of Hsinshwe kyar-2 sunflower species to 206 local farmers. The government authorities are also making arrangements for farmers to buy fertilizers at the same price as the factory price.

Besides, Township Agriculture Department is making effort to grow about 10 acres of sunflower seeds in next May and July in DoInn village. Next winter season. About 3,770 acres of sunflower plantation will be expanded in 50 villages, 22 village-tracts. Taungoo township cultivated about 13,316 acres of edible oil crops including sunflower depending on the soil land to ensure sufficient domestic consumption, said U Naing Min Hlaing, agriculture manager in Township Agriculture Department. — Zaw Htet (Taungoo District IPRD)/GNLM

## Traditional clay pot makers disappearing in Myothit Tsp

THE traditional clay pot makers are almost vanishing fast in Myothit Township, Magway Region as the residents primarily execute agriculture.

Earlier, there were over 30 clay pot makers in Myothit Township. The number is less than 10 for now amid the shortage of labourers and raw materials, said a pottery maker.

“It is 20 years that I have been engaged in this traditional clay pot business. I rarely see the makers these days. At present, I am making pots for the Thingyan festival. The pots for drinking water are also made. The makers sell Thingyan pot (locally called Ah-Tar-Oh) at K200 and K800 for a drinking water pot to the brokers, said U Thet Soe Htike, a pottery maker.

“The clay is crucial in making pots. A bullock cartload

of clay is worth about K3,000. We have a shortage of raw materials and labourers. Additionally, the wholesale-retail price gap widens and the makers are making fewer profits, prompting some of them to turn to other business,” he quoted in his sayings.

The prices of clay pots range between K2,000-7,000 depending on design, size, and quality in the retail market. The prices of clay pots range between K2,000-K7,000 depending on design, size, and quality. — Win Ei Zun (IPRD), KK/GNLM



Earlier, there were over 30 clay pot makers in Myothit Township. The number is less than 10 for now amid the shortage of labourers and raw materials.

## Growing of ground orchid in Hopong township succeeds

PEOPLE from Naungson village, Hopong township, Pa'O Self-Administered Zone, Shan State (South) are growing ground orchid and their plants have succeeded, it is learnt.

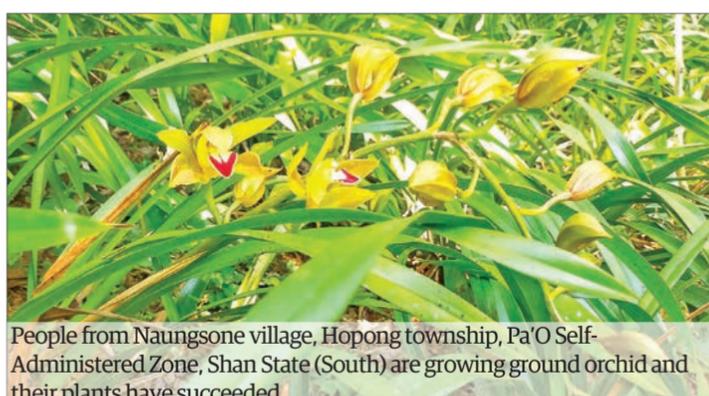
U Khon Chit Tun, a ground orchid grower from Naungson

village in Hopong township said that the elder people said that the ground orchid is naturally grown in the forest. Later, they have grown the ground orchid on the land on a trial basis and it has succeeded.

The ground orchid is a per-

ennial plant and it will be blossom within a year. The orchid needs a good peat-based, well-drained organic soil mix. But they are fairly adaptable. In the ground, mix some peat in with the soil to create a mixture that will drain well if there is prolonged wet weather. Now, the ground orchid has already been cultivated, it will be blooming in March. The ground orchid fetches at K1,000 per plant. When the plants are ordered from other townships, those are sold for K1,500 per plant, he added.

The ground orchid from Naungson village, Hopong township are conveyed to Hopong, Namkoat and Ban Yin markets. — Pa'O Region (IPRD)/GNLM



People from Naungson village, Hopong township, Pa'O Self-Administered Zone, Shan State (South) are growing ground orchid and their plants have succeeded.

## Conserve trees and forests for greening the planet Earth

THE area of forests and trees is shrinking from the total area of the Earth day by day. So far, just 30 per cent of the whole world has been covered by forest area which is home to more than 60,000 species of trees, a large number of flora and fauna species.

The forests across the world are still giving useful raw materials to living beings for their consumption and daily use. Moreover, forests and trees are habitats for wildlife animals. No useless plant thrives in the forests. All plants are useful for indigenous medicines, foods and shelters.

Currently, some 13 million acres of forest area face deforestation on a yearly basis due to the impacts of humans. Consequently, regeneration of flora and fauna is not in balance, with unexpected extinction of some species.

Indeed, forests are primary sources of restoring rainwater as well as the origins of springs and waterfalls while supporting the underground water. Moreover, forests and trees give a break to impacts of torrential rains to protect rivers, creeks, lakes and dams against silting. As such, trees and forests are crucial for the efforts of global countries in the reduction of climate change risks.

Climate change is based on changing of the world's temperature triggered by the impacts of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. It is because trees, as well as forests, are able to absorb carbon dioxide mostly involved in the greenhouse gases. Hence, the global people are responsible for the conservation of forests.

Oxygen emitted by trees and forests which absorb carbon dioxide contributes much to the breathing of all living beings including humans across the world. The global people need to prevent deforestation and desertification and conserve forests comprising flora and fauna.

If so, the climate change the whole world faces can be lessened to some extent.

It is necessary to raise the awareness of knowledge about the important role of trees and forests for the people through Myanmar. Such a move aims to enable the youths to understand the value of forests and supplies and adore the forests and trees for better conservation.

Trees and forests can be dubbed the perpetual benefactor for all humans and living beings. Moreover, these forests are a key for the point of balance in the global weather which creates seasonal effects. That is why all global countries, including Myanmar, need to prevent deforestation in time.



## Apple injury

By Yin Nwe Ko

IT has been not less than a week since the smell of fruit wafted through my room. Right now, I am in an upset situation. I'm not in good health. While taking a break from work and staying at home, friends often came to me to ask about my poor health. Everyone who came carried along with a hearty meal of lentils as well as fruit juices. They came from a fruitful region. In this way, my little house was full of their love and fruits, I did not know that it gradually became a fruit shop with love.

In the earlier days of my recovery, I have to do my homework at home. Sometimes the nightwork is not completed until the early hours of the morning. Because of my habit of getting up in the sun, I do not eat breakfast regularly and am somewhat hungry that morning. I cannot find anything to eat but fruits near me. I decided to eat only fruit. When there is no choice, I wonder if it is natural for people to choose what they have. I make a bitter cup of coffee and hold a fruit slicer. Peeling a squash, my mind starts drifting hither and thither.

Does the smell of apples awaken me? My thoughts go back to my childhood as I look at the

apples, which are more than I can have.

What is the difference between being scanty and being abundant?

My childhood was based in a small town far from Yangon. It was the early socialist era. As a small town, everything was rare. Apple was also the name of rare and precious fruit. It was a royal fruit that would be very expensive. As for the diet for unhealthy people, I thought it had ever been food for the rich for many years. It would not be wrong to conclude that it is the impact of a closed economy.

One day, my mother and I visited a relative's house. I vaguely remember that I slept there for about two or three nights. I think I was about five years old. There were also children in that family. Most of them are my cousins and some are children from the neighbourhood. In every early night, the whole house was in an uproar of same-aged children.

One evening, the hostess sat down on a stool and let the children sit down, peeling a rare apple. We squatted down in front of my aunt and watched her apple. It would be more appropriate to say that we are hungry. We did

not know the taste of apples yet. As the jungle children had never eaten apple. The taste of an apple we had never eaten would be the most delicious one of heaven in our dreams.

After chopping an apple into several small pieces, my aunt held a cane. "Well ... come on. Take it one by one. Who takes more? I'll hit the one who needs it," she said, sharing the apple pieces. The children could no longer be tied. We wanted to know the taste of very strange fruit. We spread our hands before my aunt. Nearby children were getting it first, and children who did not yet get it were pushing each other to get it. The noise from the apple robbery was already getting uproar.

I, far behind the group, stepped forward to get my share of apples. My aunt was shouting and sharing an apple piece with one hand and with the other, she repeatedly sent her cane to the heads of those who seemed to be thought it was another outreach. At that moment, her cane fell hard on my head as I hesitantly approached her to get a slice of apple.

My aunt beat the wrong person, but I still panicked, wondering if my memory had memorized

the incident for years. I didn't eat my share of apples that day. I even remembered the details of looking at her through tears.

I think that it was my bitterness that began over being punished innocently. That trauma seemed to have plagued me for the rest of my life. If not, I did not want to accept it and if I thought it was unfair, the root cause of rebellion might be these hits of cane. An unforeseen event one did not think might have been imagined that it would be a lifetime for a person.

I should have to mention one of the highlights of my life here. My parents never beat me up until they were dead. They only controlled their son by pointing out all the sins I had committed. For that reason, I wondered

If my young heart had kept as a deadly scar on beating the punishment without committing any fault. That memory took me from good to bad. The good was that I have never beaten my children and my staff in my life and extreme care was taken not to punish the one who did not actually commit the fault.

Bullying the weak in life is the nature of the savages. It is a 'wildlife law'. I did not understand

what Dad was saying. After two-thirds of my life, I seemed to have come to a deeper understanding of his wise words.

But ...in the first decade of the 21st century, television news coverage includes orange, green, and blue of Conflicts over black smoke and smog are still seen. Technology, strength, modern heroism, etc. that continues to dominate and kill everything is still aired. Relying on weapons, the strong still win over the weak. Selfish wars centred on self-interest are still rampant, with threats not to cling to power. The unbalanced weight of crime and punishment continues to erupt around the world.

I'm currently listening to a song over and over again. It is a song by a well-known pop star. I happen to sing it as if I am not satisfied enough to listen to. Many times I have been swept away by the melody of that song. As I sing the song, I am indeed in a new world of imagination. At the end of the song, I automatically feel like I am back in the scary real world. Certainly, the environment in which I live cannot provide me with security. How

long do I have to try to escape with that song every time whenever I get discouraged? Even if you have heard the song before, please try to listen to it again.

*"...The world is full of atrocities. At first glance, I was shocked. Love that is too thin ... Think immediately about the future Wisdom and Love Will there still be beautiful days in my heart? This wisdom and love ... Can you overcome the worst forces in life?"*

*Faithful hearts ... The new world of all Faithful hearts ... Everyone's dream Oh, I'm going. Oh, I'm going..."*

One does not need a bow or arrow to reach the new world beyond oppression but just needs love and wisdom. Did the singer say that all needed are wisdom and love? Or does one dare to say, "Can one really be free from the world that is sinking into the abyss of love and wisdom?"

The whole room full smells of the fragrance of apples...



## 283 acres of edible oil crop sunflower cultivated in Padaung

THE 283 acres of edible oil crop, sunflower, were cultivated in the whole township during the 2022 winter crop season, according to the Township Agriculture Department in Padaung Township, Pyaw District of Bago Region.

In October, 100 bags of Sinswekyar-2 sunflower quality seeds were provided free of charge to sunflower growers under the arrangement of the region chief minister for sufficient supply in the region and it is expected to expand sunflower-growing lands in Padaung.

Farmer U Pho Myaung in Taungbogyi village successfully cultivated three acres of sunflower; farmers U Myo Min Thu and U Myint Swe in Myaung village successfully cultivated

four acres of mixed cropping sunflower; farmer U Thiri in Minyat Ward two acres of mixed cropping sunflower; farmer U Kyaw Swa Win in Hton Bo village three acres of sunflower separately. So, it is prepared to provide quality seeds in the next winter crop season, according to Daw Aye Aye Thin, Head of the Township Agriculture Department.

In Padaung, 283 acres of sunflower, an edible oil crop, were grown not only mixed cropping sunflower with beans but also cultivating sunflower separately. The Township Agriculture Department is preparing to expand sunflower cultivation in the next sunflower crop season. — Thin Thin Aye (IPRD)/GNLM



One of the sunflower plantations in Bago Region.

## Aussie researcher warns of deadly risk of novel flu viruses

THE reopening of Australia's international borders following a two-year closure due to COVID-19 could trigger the rise of

new forms of influenza, according to a leading virologist.

Professor Kanta Subbarao, writing in the Medical Journal

of Australia (MJA) on Monday, said that the lifting of quarantine regulations posed the potential for "novel flu viruses", such as



The reopening of Australia's international borders following a two-year closure due to COVID-19 could trigger the rise of new forms of influenza, according to a leading virologist. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

from animals, crossing over to humans and then spreading quickly due to the community's lack of immunity.

Subbarao, who is director of the World Health Organization's Collaborating Center for Reference and Research on Influenza at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, said, "we have learnt from COVID-19 that we ignore the animal-human interface at our own peril".

She said that while health authorities' primary focus remained on seasonal flu, there was a need to "remain vigilant" about the threat of germs spreading between animals and people, noting that various forms of bird flu viruses had already been reported in the state of Victoria, while swine flu viruses had been detected elsewhere in Australia.

Subbarao's MJA editorial made several recommendations to avert such a health crisis including establishing "surveil-

lance at the animal-human interface because focusing on viruses that can cross the species barrier is an excellent place to start".

The virologist also said there needed to be "improved communications between animal and human public health sectors so we can institute active surveillance on people involved in culling large numbers of infected animal".

She also called for stronger public and private partnerships to "lower the barriers to surveillance at the animal-human interface".

"Such efforts will be beneficial beyond influenza: the COVID-19 pandemic and recent reports of a new genotype of Hendra virus in Australian flying foxes are excellent reminders that other animal viruses that can cross species barriers bear watching," she said.

Her warning of novel flu viruses comes at a time when

health authorities are preparing for the return of seasonal flu following a two-year reprieve from the usual annual disease.

Earlier this month the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) publication NewsGP noted that nobody in Australia died of flu throughout 2021 and there had only been one related hospital admission.

The article, however, quoted the nation's Chief Medical Officer Professor Paul Kelly as saying that situation would soon end as Australia approached its cooler season.

"I think we need to start getting ready for a winter with COVID and influenza," Kelly said. "With open borders and with a relatively open society, we expect COVID will continue to be circulating, and flu almost certainly will be here in winter as it normally is."

SOURCE: XINHUA

### Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 8 March 2022)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is cloudy over the Andaman Sea, generally fair over the north Bay of Bengal and west central Bay of Bengal and a few cloudy to partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 9 March 2022:** Weather will be partly cloudy in lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway regions and Chin, Rakhine states. Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi region, scattered in eastern Shan, Kayin, Mon States and isolated in the remaining regions and states. Degree of certainty is (80%).

**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 continuation of scattered rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi region and isolated in Kayin and Mon states.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 9 March 2022:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 9 March 2022:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 9 March 2022:** Partly cloudy.

# Amazon nears climate ‘tipping point’ faster than expected

HAMMERED by climate change and relentless deforestation, the Amazon rainforest is losing its capacity to recover and could irretrievably transition into savannah, with dire consequences for the region and the world, according to a

study published Monday.

Researchers warned that the results mean the Amazon could be approaching a so-

called “tipping point” faster than previously understood.

Analyzing 25 years of satellite data, researchers measured for the first time the Amazon’s resilience against shocks such as droughts and fires, a key indicator of overall health. This has declined across more than three-quarters of the Amazon basin, home to half the world’s rainforest, they reported in *Nature Climate Change*.

In areas hit hardest by destruction or drought, the forest’s ability to bounce back was reduced by approximately half, co-author Tim Lenton, director of the University of Exeter’s Global Systems Institute, told AFP.

“Our resilience measure changed by more than a factor

of two in the places nearer to human activity and in places that are driest,” he said in an interview.

Climate models have suggested that global heating — which has on average warmed Earth’s surface 1.1 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels — could by itself push the Amazon past a point of no return into a far drier savannah-like state.

If carbon pollution continues unabated, that scenario could be locked in by mid-century, according to some models.

“But of course it’s not just climate change — people are busy chopping or burning the forest down, which is a second pressure point,” said Lenton. — AFP ■



“Savannification” of the Amazon would be hugely disruptive, in South America and across the globe. PHOTO: NELSON ALMEIDA/AFP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Los Angeles suing Monsanto for chemicals in waterways

CHEMICAL company Monsanto found itself in the horns of yet another lawsuit Monday, as Los Angeles sued the firm for allegedly knowingly polluting waterways in one of the biggest cities in the United States.

The suit — filed last week against three companies including Bayer, the German agro giant that now owns Monsanto Company — comes after a raft of legal action over weedkiller Roundup.

The latest legal filing claims Monsanto polluted waterways in Los Angeles with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) up until 1979.

PCBs — a toxic chemical that does not break down easily — were used in paint, ink, paper products, fireproofing products, hydraulic fluids and industrial equipment.

“It’s time for Monsanto to clean up and pay up,” said Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer.

“The health and environmental impacts of PCBs — impacts the city has been working hard to reduce in waters throughout LA — are just jaw dropping.” — AFP ■

### Yemen rebels back UN proposal for abandoned oil tanker

YEMEN’S Huthi rebels have signed a UN agreement hoped to help stop a rusting oil tanker in the Red Sea becoming an ecological and humanitarian catastrophe, officials said Monday.

The 45-year-old FSO Safer, long used as a floating oil storage platform with 1.1 million barrels of crude on board, has been moored off Yemen’s Red Sea port of Hodeida since 2015, without being serviced.

Huthi leaders and David Gressly, the UN humanitarian coordinator for war-torn Yemen, signed a “memorandum of understanding” on a “framework for cooperation on the UN-coordinated proposal to resolve the threat posed by the FSO Safer,” UN spokesman Russell Geekie said.

The United Nations proposal includes pumping the toxic cargo from the tanker to another ship, but remains dependent on raising donor cash to fund the work.

The UN has said an oil spill could destroy ecosystems, shut down the fishing industry and close Yemen’s lifeline Hodeida port for six months.

“The MoU... would include a short-term solution to eliminate the immediate threat by moving the million barrels of oil aboard the Safer to an oil tanker, as well as a long-term solution,” Geekie said. — AFP ■

## ‘Chemical recycling’ of plastic slammed by environmental group

MOST plastic “advanced recycling” plants in the United States aren’t actually recycling plastic but instead converting it into a dirty fuel, while producing toxic waste in low-income communities, a study by a leading environmental group said Monday.

Advanced recycling, also known as chemical recycling, is a relatively new technique touted by industry groups that breaks plastic down to its molecular building blocks.

It is said to be able to recapture more than traditional “mechanical” recycling that involves chopping plastic up



An estimated 242 million metric tons of plastic waste is generated globally every year, polluting cities and clogging oceans. PHOTO: AFP

and processing it into pellets to make new products.

But a research report by the Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC), a non-profit that

has helped influence key legislation since it was founded in 1970, accused the plastics industry of misleading the public through “greenwashing.” — AFP ■

## Probe accuses Swiss mining firm of hiding Guatemala pollution



In October, a group of indigenous people blocked off the town of El Estor, alleging that the company was failing to comply with a court ruling to cease mining. PHOTO: SOLWAYGROUP.COM/AFP

TWO subsidiaries of Swiss mining company Solway Investment Group hid reports of pollution in an indigenous area of northeast-

ern Guatemala, an international consortium of media companies said Sunday.

The “Mining Secrets” inves-

tigation — in which 65 journalists from 15 countries participated — also accused Solway subsidiaries Guatemalan Nickel Company (CGN) and PRONICO of intimidation and influence peddling.

The investigation run by the Forbidden Stories NGO “reveals the strategies that Solway has used to hide, in collusion with authorities, any element that could infer its responsibility in serious cases of environmental pollution.”

Solway has rejected the accusations, telling AFP in a statement it had reviewed the research in the investigation and found it to be “false.” — AFP ■

## Truck convoy protesting pandemic restrictions congests traffic near US capital

RIGHT at the entrance to a campsite in Hagerstown, Maryland, where at least hundreds of truckers gathered Sunday morning and were about to hit the road to protest COVID-related restrictions, participants gave conflicting answers about whether to mask up.

“Hey, this is a mask-free zone,” claimed a man sitting inside his car, while just across the street another one was telling reporters holding cameras that masks were required inside the campsite, where apparently no one — no matter whether they were participants or onlookers — was wearing one.

Having reached some 70 miles (113 km) northwest of Washington, D.C., from states

as far as California and South Dakota, the truckers were joined by those driving ordinary sedans, forming what they called the “People’s Convoy” comprising huge container vehicles, compact pickup trucks as well as autos of varying sizes in between. After an aborted attempt to disrupt traffic in downtown D.C. on 1 March — for which President Joe Biden’s first State of the Union address was scheduled — the convoy, with a smaller-than-expected crowd, planned to circle the Capital Beltway — an interstate highway that surrounds the nation’s capital — twice on Sunday, making a 128-mile (206 km) trip before returning to Hagerstown, according to the organizers.



Hundreds of truckers and their supporters gathered in southern California on 23 February 2022 ahead of a planned convoy across the United States to protest against pandemic restrictions. PHOTO: AFP

When approached by Xinhua in the morning, one of the organizers said he was in such a hurry directing the convoy to

set out for the campaign that he could hardly spare a few more minutes for an interview.—Xinhua ■

## India logs 3,993 new COVID-19 cases, total rises to 42,971,308



A healthcare worker collects a nasal sample of an International passenger for the COVID-19 test, at Indira Gandhi International Airport, in New Delhi. PHOTO: ANI/FILE

INDIA’S COVID-19 tally rose to 42,971,308 on Tuesday, as 3,993 new cases were registered during the past 24 hours across the country, showed the federal health ministry’s latest data.

Besides, 108 deaths from the pandemic since Monday morning took the total death toll to 515,210.

There are still 49,948 active COVID-19 cases despite a fall of 4,170 active cases dur-

ing the past 24 hours, and it was the 43rd consecutive day when the number of active cases declined in the country.

This is the first time after several months when the number of active cases fell below the 50,000-mark.

So far 42,406,150 people have been successfully cured and discharged from hospitals, of whom 8,055 were discharged during the past 24 hours.—Xinhua ■

## HKSAR gov’t should uphold “dynamic zero infection” approach with phased plan: mainland expert

A mainland expert has suggested the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government should uphold its “dynamic zero infection” approach with a phased plan and take measures to reduce COVID-19 infections, severe cases, and deaths.

“With the reduction accomplished, we will then move toward the second and third goals,” said Liang Wannian, head of the COVID-19 response expert panel under China’s National Health Commission and leader of a mainland medical expert team in Hong Kong supporting the epidemic fight.

The current focus of Hong Kong’s fight against the epidem-

ic is to reduce the number of deaths in severe cases, especially for the elderly, he said.

Mainland experience in reducing severe case fatalities in severe or critical conditions should be leveraged as patients should be treated in designated hospitals by top-level doctors and with all necessary resources guaranteed, Liang said.

Hong Kong should adopt a phased approach to achieve “dynamic zero infection,” which is characterized by prompt action in cutting off community transmission chains and precise identification of sources of infections, Liang said, noting that the “dynamic zero infection” approach does not mean pursuing



Expat families line up at the check-in counter as they prepare to depart Hong Kong, where Covid restrictions have clamped down in 2022 to flatten an Omicron-fueled wave. PHOTO: AFP

zero infections. While the highly transmissible Omicron strain makes it unfeasible to pursue zero infections, efforts should be made to reduce infections

as much as possible, timely detect and identify cases, break the transmission chains, and protect the susceptible from being infected, he said.—Xinhua ■

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Queen Elizabeth II greets Trudeau in person

QUEEN Elizabeth II met visiting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday, in her first in-person engagement since falling ill with Covid-19.

The 95-year-old monarch, who is also queen of Canada, chatted with Trudeau after he jetted in for talks on the conflict in Ukraine with UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Dutch counterpart Mark Rutte. Buckingham Palace announced on 20 February that the queen had tested positive for coronavirus and she was forced to cancel a series of appointments with foreign diplomats.—AFP ■

#### Germany: Retail sales recover in January despite Covid restrictions

DESPITE the 2G rule in force, retail companies achieved more sales in January than in the previous month, according to preliminary figures. Price-adjusted sales rose by two per cent, as the German Federal Statistical Office said on Monday. With a plus of 10.3 per cent, sales were also significantly higher than in the same month last year. Compared to February 2020, before the outbreak of the pandemic, there was an increase of 4.1 per cent in January. The statisticians justified the high increase in sales compared to the previous year with the exit restrictions in January 2021.—AFP ■

#### Brazil drops mask requirement in Rio de Janeiro

WEARING a mask is no longer compulsory in Rio de Janeiro, indoors or outdoors, announced Monday Eduardo Paes, the mayor of the first capital of a state in Brazil to make this decision. This measure was made possible by the drop in the number of contaminations and deaths linked to Covid-19 throughout the country in recent weeks.

“A decree published in an extraordinary edition of the Official Journal this afternoon puts an end to the wearing of the compulsory mask, in closed places as well as outside”, declared Eduardo Paes on Twitter, at the end of the meeting of the scientific committee, responsible for guiding municipal health policies during the pandemic.—AFP ■

# Russia not responsible for rocketing energy prices: official

RUSSIA has nothing to do with the current surge in energy prices and the volatility in the market, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said Monday.

Europe consumes about 500 billion cubic metres of gas per year, and 40 per cent comes from Russia, he noted in a statement, calling his country “always a reliable partner”.

Russia’s gas industry giant Gazprom is now fully fulfilling its contractual obligations to supply gas to Europe, Novak stressed, adding that Russia provides about 30 per cent of Europe’s oil consumption and is its largest

supplier.

Novak said that Russia has been fully fulfilling all its obligations, and oil and oil products are being shipped to European markets as planned.

The price of energy has spiked due to the COVID-19 pandemic and most recently because of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

According to a flash estimate published last week by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, energy prices are expected to increase by a record 31.7 per cent across the eurozone in February year-on-year.—Xinhua ■



A picture taken on 22 April 2015 shows a gas installation at a gas-pumping station on the gas pipeline in the small town Boyarka on 22 April 2015 in the Kyiv region. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### China to make laws on tariffs

CHINA will formulate laws on tariffs and other taxes in 2022, according to a work report submitted Tuesday to the country’s national legislature for review.

The move aims at improving the “legal system supporting the development of the socialist market economy,” said the work report of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress.

For this purpose, the country also plans to formulate laws on rural collective economic organizations, energy, futures and derivatives this year, the report said.

China’s annual legislative plan also includes revising the Company Law, the Enterprise Bankruptcy Law, the Anti-Monopoly Law, the Railway Law, the Mineral Resources Law, the Animal Husbandry Law, and the Agricultural Products Quality and Safety Law, according to the report.

The country has formulated the Stamp Tax Law, appropriately simplifying the list of taxable items and cutting rates.

This means the country has now formulated laws on 12 out of the current 18 tax categories, the report said.—Xinhua ■

### Australian economy braces for commodity price shocks

AUSTRALIA is on a bumpy road to economic recovery amid the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly as the conflicts in Ukraine has sent global energy prices into an upward spiral and triggered price shocks in the Australian market.

Since conflicts first broke out in Ukraine in late February, global crude oil prices have surged to a record high since 2008.

Brent rose 11.67 U.S. dollars, or 9.9 per cent, to 129.78 dollars a barrel by 6:50 pm EST (2350 GMT), while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose 10.83 dollars, or 9.4 per cent, to 126.51 dollars, putting both contracts on track for their highest daily percentage gains since May 2020.

John Quiggin, a prominent research economist and Australian economic policy commentator from the University of Queensland, told Xinhua that every 10 US dollar increase per barrel in crude oil prices translates to about a 10-cent increase per litre of petrol prices in Australia.

On Monday, the Australian Institute of Petroleum’s weekly price report showed Australia’s average petrol price had reached 183.9 Australian cents per litre (about 136 US cents), more than 10 cents higher than what it was a month ago.

JP Morgan said last week that oil prices could see historic highs this year, as high as 185 dollars per barrel. This could see prices in Australia reach 2.10 Australian dollars (about 1.56 US dollars) per liter, according to experts.—Xinhua ■

## Petrobras share prices plunge after Bolsonaro criticism



On site: a worker on a Petrobras FPSO off Brazil. **PHOTO: AFP/SCANPIX**

SHARES in Brazilian oil company Petrobras plummeted more than seven per cent Monday after President Jair Bolsonaro criticized the organization’s pricing policy in the face of rising crude prices due to the war in Ukraine.

The far-right leader, who has a habit of targeting the state-run

company every time it raises prices, said that the “parity with the international price” of oil “cannot continue”, in an interview with a radio station in the northwestern state of Roraima.

The drop in share prices, due to the nervousness of investors, led to the fall of the Ibovespa in-

dex, the main index on the Sao Paulo Stock Exchange.

Ibovespa was down 2.52 per cent at close.

Bolsonaro met with specialists Monday afternoon to discuss a solution to the expected effect on fuel prices — which are estimated to rise 30 per cent — in the context of skyrocketing international oil prices following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The Brazilian president is seeking to stop Petrobras from raising prices for Brazilian consumers before the October elections, when Bolsonaro will seek reelection.

Brent North Sea crude for May delivery was up 4.31 per cent to \$123.21 per barrel on Monday.—AFP ■

## Anti-competitive practices lower US wages by 20%: Treasury

THE decline in unionization and moves by employers to stop workers from changing jobs have undermined competition in the US labour market, lowering American salaries by 20 per cent, the Treasury Department said Monday.

“Capitalism without competition isn’t capitalism. Capitalism without competition is exploitation,” Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said during a roundtable with workers affected by the practices.

The cost of anti-competitive measures are “severe” and “large enough to meaningfully change a family’s standards of



The decline in unionization and moves by employers to stop workers from changing jobs have undermined competition in the US labour market, lowering American salaries by 20 per cent. **PHOTO: AFP**

living,” she said.

President Joe Biden has repeatedly blamed corporate consolidation for pushing up prices,

and last year he signed an executive order aimed at increasing competition in the world’s largest economy.—AFP ■

## ANA to launch new budget int'l flight brand AirJapan in FY 2023

ANA Holdings Inc. said Tuesday it will launch a new lower-cost airline brand called AirJapan focusing on medium-range international flights in fiscal 2023 as it bets on a recovery in travel demand

in a post-coronavirus era. The new service will use Boeing 787-8 aircraft, providing "comfortable" space between seats, and the fares will be at "an affordable price range similar to low cost carriers," the

company said.

Although details such as exact routes and the date of the first flight are not finalized yet, an ANA official said it plans to connect Japan's Narita airport, near Tokyo, with Asian and

Oceanian cities.

The announcement comes as the Japanese major airline is propelling a structural reform to better counter fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the restructuring

plan released in October 2020, the company said it would create a new brand designed to meet demand for travel that its flagship subsidiary All Nippon Airways Co. and low-cost carrier Peach Aviation Ltd.

cannot cover, while cutting costs and shrinking the size of its fleet. The new service will combine the strengths of both full-service and low-cost carriers, while featuring Japanese-style hospitality, it said.—Kyodo ■

## Sri Lanka sharply depreciates currency as crisis bites



Workers load sugar into a container truck at a private warehouse after Sri Lankan officials seized the stocks as part of a crackdown on hoarding in Wattala, Sri Lanka, on 1 September. PHOTO: ISHARA S. KODIKARA/AFP/FILE

SRI Lanka announced a near-15 per cent depreciation of its currency Monday, four days after the IMF called for devaluation and higher taxes to revive the almost-bankrupt economy.

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka said it will allow "greater flexibility" so that the market will determine the exchange rate, which

has been pegged at 197 rupees to the dollar since last April.

The bank said it hoped the rupee will not fall to more than 230 to the dollar, suggesting it will intervene to ensure that the depreciation is limited to about 15 per cent. A severe foreign exchange shortage has led to fuel and electricity rationing across the South

Asian nation of 22 million, and has crippled public transport and caused long queues for food and medicines.

Essentials such as milk powder, sugar, lentils and wheat, as well as medicines, are in short supply as the country maintains a wide import ban in place since March 2020 to save foreign currency.—AFP ■

## London suspends nickel trade after record spike

THE London Metal Exchange on Tuesday suspended trade in nickel after the base metal rocketed to a record peak above \$100,000 as Russian supply concerns sparked sharp volatility.

"Following further unprecedented overnight increases in the three-month nickel price, the LME has made the decision to suspend trading for, at minimum, the remainder of today," the exchange said in a brief statement.

Nickel earlier spiked to an all-time pinnacle of \$101,365 per tonne.

It later settled back to

\$80,000, up 66.4 per cent from Monday, before the market was halted.

"We suspect that a so-called short squeeze is partly responsible for the extraordinary price surge, in addition to the concerns about supply," said Commerzbank analyst Daniel Briesemann.

"Some market participants who had been betting on falling prices were clearly surprised and wrong-footed by the price upswing and momentum since Russia's invasion of Ukraine."

A short squeeze occurs when investors bet

on falling prices but are then wrong-footed by the market and forced to close out their positions and purchase at a far higher price, sparking a volatile spike.

"We regard the price surge as exaggerated and expect trading to calm down again once the short squeeze has run its course," cautioned Briesemann.

Russia, which invaded its neighbour Ukraine 13 days ago, is a major producer of the metal used to make stainless steel and batteries for electric vehicles.—AFP ■

### DIRECTOR'S DECLARATION STATEMENT OF SHARES FORFEITURE

#### WHEREAS,

1. Daw Cho Cho holding Myanmar NRC No.7/PAKHANA(N)224258 with residential address at No. Da 89, Myat Lay Street, Quarter-10, Padaythar Myothit, Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay Region, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar holds sixty-five (65) ordinary shares of Noble Planet Company Limited (Company Registration No. 122600858, the "Company");
2. in accordance with the prevailing Constitution of the Company, Daw Cho Cho's obligation to pay Myanmar Kyats 6,500,000 as the consideration for share subscription to the Company's designated Myanmar Kyats bank account not later than 9 January 2020 as specified in Clauses 2.2.1 and 2.2.5 of the JVA consisted an initial call on the sixty-five (65) ordinary shares of the Company issued and allotted to her (the "Initial Call"). However, Daw Cho Cho failed to make any payment to the Company's designated bank account;
3. the Company's Board of Directors later resolved on 19 November 2021 to make a final call of Myanmar Kyats 6,500,000 on Daw Cho Cho's sixty-five (65) ordinary shares held in the Company and that the said called money be made payable to the Company's bank account not later than 17 December 2021 (the "Second Call").
4. pursuant to the Directors' resolution on making the Second Call, a letter named Notice of Granting Grace Period (the "Notice Letter") has been mailed out on 19 November 2021 at 02:15 pm by using the Myanmar Post services at the Yangon General Post Office with the tracking number of SE824447611MP, and it has been delivered to Daw Cho Cho's address located at No. Da 89, Myat Lay Street, Quarter-10, Padaythar Myothit, Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay Region, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Notice Letter was accepted by U Min Pyae Sone Htay on behalf of Daw Cho Cho on 1 December 2021 at 11:35 am;
5. in the Notice Letter, the Second Call was made on Daw Cho Cho's sixty-five (65) ordinary shares of the Company pursuant to the Company's board resolution dated 19 November 2021 regarding making the final call on issued shares. Daw Cho Cho was required in the Notice Letter to transfer both Myanmar Kyats 6,500,000 as the consideration for subscribing the sixty-five (65) original shares and the balance amount of her committed total investment of Myanmar Kyats 18,500,000 in full not later than 17 December 2021 to the Company's designated bank account;
6. Daw Cho Cho failed again to make any payment as indicated in the Second Call to the Company's designated bank account;
7. notwithstanding the Second Call was named as the "final call" on Daw Cho Cho's shares and investment, the Company's board of Directors decided to offer Daw Cho Cho the last chance to pay the aforementioned called monies and they resolved on 7 January 2022 to make the final call on Daw Cho Cho's shares and investment;
8. pursuant to the Company's Directors' resolution dated 7 January 2022 of making the final call on Daw Cho Cho's shares and investment, on the same day, the Company made the final call of Myanmar Kyats 6,500,000 on Daw Cho Cho's sixty-five (65) ordinary shares held in the Company and the balance of Myanmar Kyats 18,500,000 on her committed investment to the Company (the "Final Call");
9. on 11 January 2022, the Company delivered a written Notice of Final Call on Shares and Investment to Daw Cho Cho by posting it on the page thirteen (13) of the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper. In the notice, Daw Cho Cho was requested to pay the called monies of total Myanmar Kyats 25,000,000 in full not later than 1 February 2022 to the Company's designated bank account;
10. however, Daw Cho Cho failed once again to make any payment as indicated in the Final Call to the Company's designated bank account;
11. pursuant to the Company's Directors' resolution dated 3 February 2022 of sending Daw Cho Cho Notice of Expiry, on 5 February 2022, the Company delivered a written notice to the shareholder Daw Cho Cho pursuant to Clause 24 of the Company's Constitution to inform the expiry of the period as indicated in the Final Call for her to pay the call on the sixty-five (65) ordinary shares and the balance amount of her committed total investment to the Company by posting it on the page thirteen (13) of the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper (the "Notice of Expiry");
12. expiry of the twenty-eight(28)-day period prescribed by Clause 24 of the Company's Constitution.

**THEREFORE, pursuant to Clauses 24, 25 and 26 of the Company's constitution, I, Mr. Li Decong, Director of the Company hereby declare in writing to state that the sixty-five (65) ordinary shares held by Daw Cho Cho, which consist all her shares held in the Company, have been forfeited on 5 March 2022 (the "Forfeited Shares").**

This written declaration is a conclusive evidence of the facts stated in the statement as against all persons claiming to be entitled to or otherwise have an interest in the Forfeited Shares.

On forfeiture of the shares, Daw Cho Cho:

- (a) ceased to be a shareholder in respect of the Forfeited Shares and as the Forfeited Shares consisted all her shares held in the Company, she ceased to be a shareholder of the Company;
- (b) loses all entitlements to dividends or other distributions determined or declared or otherwise payable in respect of the Forfeited Shares and not actually paid; and
- (c) remains liable to pay the Company all amounts which, at the date of forfeiture (i.e., 5 March 2022), were payable by her to the Company on, for or in respect of the Forfeited Shares, including the interests payable.

Mr. Li Decong, Shareholder and Director  
Noble Planet Company Limited  
Date: 9 March 2022

Daw Maw Maw Myint, Advocate (No. 13433)  
No. 46(B), Myaung Mya Street, 18 Ward,  
Shwepyithar Township, Yangon

NEWS  
IN BRIEF

## Sri Lankan president invites women to uplift country on Women's Day

SRI Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Tuesday invited all women in the country to work for uplifting the nation and pursue their aspirations with full potential.

Marking the International Women's Day, Rajapaksa in a statement honoured the strong work done by the female citizens and invited all of them to commit to the future, in which all women can contribute with their full potential to pursue their aspirations.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa said in his statement that women are the backbone of societies and there is no force more powerful than a woman's determination. "Today as we celebrate International Women's Day 2022, let us unite to strengthen and realize the global theme for the year -- Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow," the prime minister said. —Xinhua ■

## 'The bottom line': Scuba divers help preserve historic Bangkok mansion

A 200-year-old Chinese mansion in Bangkok's heart isn't an obvious place for a scuba school, but in a city relentlessly demolishing its architectural heritage the business is helping preserve the historic home.

Dive instructor Poosak Posayachinda's family has owned the traditional teak-walled So Heng Tai for eight generations, but it lives on thanks largely to his decision to convert it into a scuba academy.

The survival of the building, originally built as a home and office for the family business trading birds' nests with China, is a rare success story in a city that harbours little sentiment — or legal protections — for historic architectural gems. "It's because people want to make more money — that's the bottom line," Bangkok-based American architect Bill Bensley told AFP.

The city's breakneck reinvention over recent years has seen gleaming malls and flashy condos fly up, and buildings like the art deco Scala movie theatre and 1920s British embassy come down.

Thai law only protects properties over 100 years old and there is limited political enthusiasm for safeguarding old architecture at the expense of profitable development. —AFP ■

## Chinese FM urges bringing China-US relations back on right track

CHINESE State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Monday urged the United States to return its China policy to the right track guided by reason and pragmatism, and bring bilateral relations back on the right path of healthy and stable development.

China and the United States must replace the "competitive-collaborative-adversarial" trichotomy with the three principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, Wang said at a press conference on the sidelines of the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress.

Competition between major countries should not be the order of the day and zero-sum game is not the right choice,



Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi attends a press conference on China's foreign policy and foreign relations via video link on the sidelines of the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, 7 March 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/CHEN ZHONGHAO

Wang said. In a globalized and interdependent world, how the two countries find the right way

forward and manage to get along is both a new question for humanity and a formulation that

must be worked out by China and the United States together, Wang added. —AFP ■

## South Korea feminist presidential candidate's lonely crusade



Polling suggests Sim's strongest support is among women in their 20s. PHOTO: AFP

SOLID political credentials, scandal-free, and an excellent debater: Sim Sang-jung is one of South Korea's most established woman politicians. But

as a left-wing feminist from a minor party, she doesn't stand a chance of becoming president on Wednesday.

In socially conservative

South Korea, every president except one has been male and come from one of the country's two major parties. The next president will also be a man — the front runners are both male.

As a four-time parliamentarian and seasoned labour and women's rights activist with not a whiff of scandal about her, Sim is a stark contrast to her gaffe-prone rivals — Yoon Suk-yeol from the opposition People Power Party, and Lee Jae-myung of the ruling Democratic Party.

From Yoon's suspected links to dodgy shamans to widely reported allegations against Lee of mafia ties, the leading candidates have thrown so much mud at each other on

the campaign trail that some local media have branded it the "election of the unfavourables".

Still, Sim doesn't stand a chance of winning — her approval rating has never left the single digits.

As a self-identified feminist, Sim is the antithesis of the PPP's Yoon, who has vowed to abolish the ministry of gender equality — claiming, despite the evidence, that women do not face systemic discrimination.

"Sexism clearly exists in South Korean society," Sim told AFP by email. Yoon's stated objectives risk fanning dangerous misogynistic sentiment and will, ultimately, damage South Korean democracy, she said. —AFP ■

## Tunisia swears in judicial watchdog under Presidency

TUNISIA'S President Kais Saied inaugurated a "temporary" council of judges on Monday, which replaces an independent watchdog that he abolished weeks ago as he seized sweeping powers over the judiciary.

Saied had last month scrapped the High Judicial Council (CSM), gave himself powers to sack judges and banned them from going on strike, moves critics say threatened democracy in the birthplace of the 2011 Arab uprisings.

On Monday, members of the new "Temporary Supreme

Judicial Council", appointed by Saied, were sworn in at the presidential palace in Tunis in what the president called a "historic moment".

"This marks the true independence of the judiciary," he said, vowing to "wage a relentless war against the corrupt and those who wanted to infiltrate the courts".

Saied had on July 25 last year sacked the government and suspended parliament.

His moves pleased some Tunisians fed up with a political class seen as bickering and self-serving. —AFP ■



Members of the Tunisian security forces stand outside the closed headquarters of Tunisia's Supreme Judicial Council (CSM) in the capital Tunis on 7 February 2022. PHOTO: FETHI BELAID/FETHI BELAID/AFP

## 3<sup>rd</sup> round of Russia-Ukraine talks end with no significant results: Report



Photo taken on 7 March 2022 shows a view of the third round of talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations at the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. PHOTO: BELTA NEWS AGENCY VIA XINHUA

RUSSIAN and Ukrainian negotiators failed to achieve major breakthrough during their third round of peace talks in Belarus on Monday, while a negotiator said the fourth round will take place in “the very near future”.

“The discussions continued on political and military aspects. However, it remains difficult. It is too early to talk about something positive,” Russian presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky, also the head of the Russian delegation, said following the third round of talks.

Russian negotiators brought specific agreements to the talks,

but the Ukrainian side refused to sign them on the spot and took the documents back home for further study, he told reporters.

“To be honest, our expectations from the talks were not met. But we hope that next time we will be able to take a more significant step forward,” Medinsky said after the meeting, which lasted nearly three hours at the Belovezhskaya Pushcha on the Belarus-Poland border.

Both sides addressed the issue of civilian evacuation, and the Ukrainian side assured Russia that the humanitarian corridors would start working

on Tuesday, he said.

Leonid Slutsky, member of the Russian delegation and head of the International Affairs Committee of the lower house of the Russian parliament, said that the fourth round of talks would take place in the near future, Sputnik reported on Monday. “And the next round, given that the rounds take place almost every other day, so the next, fourth round will take place in Belarus in the very, very near future. I can’t name the exact date yet,” Slutsky said after the third round of negotiations as aired by Russia’s Rossiya 24 broadcaster.—Xinhua ■

## Writer highlights Western “double standards” on Russia-Ukraine conflict

CLEAR double standards have emerged in the Western media’s reporting of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Egyptian professor and writer Azza Radwan Sedky said recently.

“The United States got away with invading Iraq in 2003 under false pretenses, and Russia, having the reason of security concern to take actions, is now considered to be a pariah,” Sedky told Xinhua and also wrote in her article titled “Double standards on Ukraine,” published by Al-Ahram Online, the English news website of Egypt’s state-run Al-Ahram newspaper.

“The Western media misled the world into accepting the invasion(of Iraq), siding with the US administration,” Sedky lamented, emphasizing that “the Western media chooses its battles and sides with whomever it



Volunteers move supplies at a railway station in Kiev, Ukraine, 3 March 2022. PHOTO: DIEGO HERRERA/XINHUA

pleases.” Sedky pointed out the apparent double standards in the US invasion of Iraq and the current conflict in Ukraine.

“While the invasion of Iraq by the United States was considered a liberation, the operation taken by Russia is seen as a cut-throat invasion in the eyes of the

Western media.”

She also cited American political writers and scientists, such as John J. Mearsheimer and Diana Johnstone. Both blame the West for the current outcome and their use of sanctions, propaganda and other measures to Russia’s detriment.—Xinhua ■

## 20,550 Ukrainians arrive in Turkey since Russia-Ukraine conflict

A total of 20,550 Ukrainian citizens have entered Turkey since 24 February when Russia launched a “special military operation” in Ukraine, a senior Turkish official said Monday.

Within the scope of the visa exemption agreement between Ukraine and Turkey, Ukrainian citizens can enter Turkey with a passport or ID, and stay legally for up to 90 days, Turkish Deputy Interior Minister Ismail Catakli said in a written statement.

The Interior Ministry instructed the governors to provide necessary convenience in residence permit applications for Ukrainian citizens who entered Turkey legally but could not leave due to the conflict,

Catakli said.

Turkey has sent 10 trucks of humanitarian aid for Ukraine, and another 10 will be dispatched to the conflict region this week, he said.

The members of the Turkish National Medical Rescue Team and the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency were conducting humanitarian relief operations on the Romania-Ukraine border, he added. Turkish Red Crescent teams arrived at the border last week to contribute to humanitarian efforts.

Meanwhile, Turkey has evacuated 12,000 Turkish citizens from Ukraine, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Monday.—Xinhua ■



People queue to buy fair-price olive oil at an outlet of the Agricultural Products Office in Ankara, Turkey on 17 February 2022. PHOTO: MUSTAFA KAYA/XINHUA

## Israeli town welcomes fleeing Ukrainian Jews

IN a parking lot under his municipality office in northern Israel, Nof Hagalil mayor Ronen Plot juggled phone calls as volunteers unloaded blankets and clothes donated for refugees fleeing war in Ukraine.

“Nof Hagalil is built on immigration,” said Plot, 67, who arrived in Israel nearly 50 years ago from Moldova. “We will absorb as many people as we can.”

After the Russian invasion began, Plot posted on Facebook, inviting Ukrainian “olim”, or Jewish immigrants, to his town and urging residents to pitch in.

“If a big immigration wave arrives, we’d be happy to take part in the Israeli effort,” he wrote.

Under Israel’s “law of return”, anyone with at least one

Jewish parent or grandparent is entitled to citizenship.

Among those responding to Plot’s invitation was Chaim Gershman, who reached Nof Hagalil on Thursday with his wife Ora and their four children. His mother Nelja, 60, arrived a day later.

Gershman said he had just one hour to pack, as Russian bombs fell on his community near Kyiv. He left wearing work clothes from fixing a faucet.

“At first, we didn’t believe a thing like this will happen and we thought it was fake,” said Gershman.

He said when he arrived in Israel, he chose Nof Hagalil because of the mayor’s posts.

“I saw a man inviting, saying come to our city, we’ll welcome you,” he said.—AFP ■

## Aung Phyto advances to next stage in 2022 World Snooker Championship

AUNG Phyto, a Myanmar snooker player, already advanced to the next step on the last day of the group stage of the 2022 World Snooker Championships in Qatar on 8 March.

In the last matches of the group, Aung Phyto lost to Iran player Emery by four matches while Win Ko Ko defeated

Iran's Ali by 4-2.

After the group matches, Aung Phyto won two of the three matches. With just one loss, Aung Phyto has advanced to the round of 32 knockout stages, while Win Ko Ko won one match and lost two. With two defeats, he was eliminated from the group stage.

Round of 32 and 16 matches of the World Snooker Championship will continue on 9 March.

The tournament is divided into 16 groups, with the top two winners from each group advancing to the knockout stages. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

## Siblings on skis: Bond is golden for brothers

WHEN nearly blind teenager Neil Simpson hurtles 100 kilometres (60 miles) an hour down the ski slopes at the Winter Paralympics he knows he is in safe hands -- his older brother Andrew is navigating.

It's the younger Simpson's first Winter Paralympics but he's already made his mark in Beijing, with the help of his brother and guide Andrew, as the pair claimed Britain's first gold at the Games.

Their victory in the Super-G visually impaired event was followed days later by bronze in the Super Combined, and they are now eyeing more success in the Chinese capital.

Neil, 19, has nystagmus, a condition that causes involuntary eye movements — as a result, his vision is blurry and severely impaired.

"I don't know any different, I've had it since birth," he told AFP.

Competing with his brother gives them an edge, Neil said.

"It really helps to have Andrew as a guide. You can be very direct, even blunt sometimes... you don't have to beat around the bush," he said.

"Obviously we grew up together, so you know what each other is thinking... usually."

The duo uses Bluetooth transceivers built into their helmets to communicate with each other during races.

Andrew, 21, said his job is to give his brother accurate and concise information.

"Generally I'll say sort of what's coming up in the course, if the hills are rolling over, getting steeper or flatter, what sort of lines we need to take through," Andrew told AFP.—AFP ■



Britain's Neil Simpson and his guide — and brother — Andrew celebrate winning gold at the Paralympics. PHOTO: AFP

## AFC Women's Football Day event held in Yangon

THE Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) held the AFC Women's Football Day 2022 at Thuwunna Youth Training Centre in Yangon on 7 and 8 March.

On 7 March, a Women's Football Coaches Development Workshop was held at the press conference hall of Thuwunna Youth Training Centre.

Women football coaches and the new generation of young female players discussed the

emergence of female football coaches, and the importance of training section to improve the skills of women referees.

On the morning of 8 March, four women's teams played friendly matches at Thuwunna Stadium as part of AFC Women's Football Day 2022.

The Myanmar national team and young national team players are divided into four teams to play friendly matches, football officials said. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

## Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

### 1. Political affairs

- To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

### 2. Economic affairs

- To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

### 3. Social affairs

- To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
- To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

## First Chinese Para biathlete decorated with two Paralympic medals

LIU Mengtao, a 20-year-old Paralympic debutant, has become the first Chinese Para biathlete to win two Paralympic medals (a gold and a bronze) in China's winter sports history.

After finishing third in the men's sprint sitting here last Saturday, the first competition day of the ongoing Beijing Winter Paralympics, Liu claimed the men's middle distance sitting title here on Tuesday.

This is the eighth gold for host China which is leading the tally with eight gold, eight silver, and 11 bronze medals.

During the 10km race at the National Biathlon Center, Liu, who began the sport in 2016, beat 32-year-old Martin Fleig from Germany, the men's 15km individual sitting champion at PyeongChang 2018, and 22-year-old Taras Rad from Ukraine, the men's 12.5 km sitting champion at PyeongChang 2018.

In the 2017 World Cham-

pionships in Germany, Liu finished 23rd in the long distance sitting, 25th in the 10km sitting, and 28th in the sprint sitting.

"China was not strong in winter Paralympic sports. The best individual result we had at PyeongChang 2018 was Zheng Peng's fourth place in Para cross country," said Liu after Tuesday's race.—Xinhua ■



Liu Mengtao of China competes during the Para Biathlon Men's Middle Distance Sitting event of the Beijing 2022 Winter Paralympic Games in National Biathlon Center in Zhangjiakou, north China's Hebei Province, on 8 March 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/HU CHAO