

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMMAR

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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.

Tabu Hla Dam irrigation facilities increase summer paddy yields in Taikkyi



A scenic beauty catches aerial view of Tabu Hla Dam in Taikkyi Township, Yangon Region. **PHOTOS: KANU**

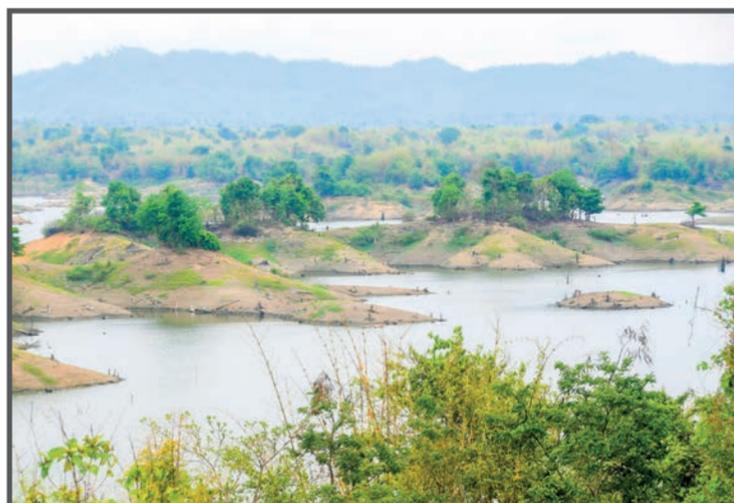
OF 30,000 acres of summer paddy fields in Taikkyi and Hmawby townships in Yangon Region that are irrigated by Tabu Hla Dam, a total of 26,553 acres were well watered by the irrigation, increasing in yields.

The water was provided to summer paddy from the Tabu Hla Dam as of 15 December 2021, and the summer paddy was harvested in the first week of April. Due to the abundance of irrigated water, between 90 and 100 baskets of summer paddy were produced per acre, making the farmers delighted.

Efforts will be made to supply full irrigation water depending on the expansion of cultivation, said Staff Officer U Tun Tun Win of the Taikkyi Township Department of Irrigation and Water Utilization Management.

In addition to summer paddy, more than 4,000 acres of sunflower plantations will be grown in Taikkyi Township, in January and February, 2023, according to the Staff Officer.

Tabu Hla Dam was completed on 27 May 1995, aimed to irrigate 52,000 acres of farmland in Taikkyi and Hmawby



Townships. In the first week of May this year, more than 15 feet of water remained in the dam, and during the rainy season, more than 195 feet deep of water was pumped in. The

dam supplies water to 52,000 acres of irrigated farmland areas through three 6x4 feet conduits.—Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

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MoI Deputy Minister inspects IPRD works in Yangon South District

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Ye Tint inspected Yangon South District Information and Public Relations Department in Thanlyin and Kyauktan Township IPRD office yesterday.

During the meeting, the deputy minister briefed them on the current development of political situation, imple-

mentation of the objectives by the ministry, striving of the development of villages and words' libraries with collaboration of local authorities, to educate people and the young people with the proper characteristics and to issue true news in time.

After that, the deputy minister fulfilled the needs

of the district after hearing the reports on future plans of officials of district and township offices.

The deputy minister also inspected libraries of district and township IPRD offices, small museum, display of wall magazines and children's reading room.—MNA

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Reference wholesale prices for Union territory, Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay and reference retail prices for cities of regions and states

16-5-2022

Kyat/Litre

Fuel (Retail Price)	Yangon	Mandalay	Nay Pyi Taw	Bago	Magway	Dawei	Monywa	Patheingyi	Myittha	Sittway	Hpa-an	Mawlamyine	Lashio	Taunggyi	Loikaw	Haka	Kengtung
92 Ron	2,090	2,140	2,130	2,100	2,135	2,160	2,145	2,125	2,215	2,230	2,130	2,140	2,175	2,175	2,175	2,395	2,430
95 Ron	2,150	2,195	2,195	2,155	2,195	2,215	2,200	2,180	2,275	2,290	2,185	2,200	2,230	2,230	2,235	2,450	2,605
HSD (500 ppm)	2,260	2,305	2,300	2,265	2,305	2,325	2,320	2,290	2,405	2,400	2,295	2,305	2,340	2,340	2,345	2,560	2,690
HSD (50 ppm)	2,285	2,335	2,330	2,295	2,330	2,355	2,350	2,320	2,435	2,430	2,325	2,335	2,370	2,370	2,370	2,590	2,725
HSD (10 ppm)	2,285	2,335	2,330	2,295	2,330	2,355	2,350	2,320	2,435	2,430	2,325	2,335	2,370	2,370	2,370	2,590	2,725

Fuel (Wholesale Price)	Yangon	Mandalay
92 Ron	1,991	2,064
95 Ron	2,045	2,120
HSD (500 ppm)	2,153	2,225
HSD (50 ppm)	2,180	2,253
HSD (10 ppm)	2,180	2,253

Remarks: (1) It's calculation is based on MOPS price.

(2) If people are not satisfied with purchase of fuel, they may safely send complaints to telephone numbers of the committee as follows: -

067-409881 and 09-699611116, 067-411129, 09-440433533

Fuel Import, Storage and Distribution Supervisory Committee

Public Notice

- The Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to effectively curb corruption.
- The ACC used SMS on the mobile phone to ask the public who seek services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via Short Code No "1111" for feedbacks, including the Public Feedback Programme-PFP.
- According to the PFP, the right replies of the citizens via Short Code No "1111" will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.
- Therefore, the public should make a reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at Short Code No "1111" and such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

Anti-Corruption Commission

Answer "1111" to fight against corruption

Answer "1111" to improve services

Let's work together to eliminate corruption towards prosperity

Tatmadaw has to safeguard the National interests

TATMADAW has to safeguard the National interests of the people and the country without the acceptance of all acts detrimental to Our Three Main National Causes, and will put an emphasis on the end of armed conflicts for long-lasting peace.

(Excerpt from New Year Message of greetings delivered by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on the New Year occasion in 1384 Myanmar Era Myanmar New Year Day on 17-4-2022)

Thapyaywa solar power plant in Meiktila District inspected

UNION Minister for Electric Power and for Energy U Thaung Han and Deputy Minister Dr Aung Zeya inspected the 30 MW Thapyaywa Solar Power Plant and supply of electricity from the 230 KV Thapyaywa main station yesterday morning in Thapyaywa village, Thazi Township, Meiktila District, Mandalay Region.

During the visit, the Union Minister spoke about the need to implement solar plants in the country, to use solar tracking technology, which is used in Thapyaywa Solar Power Plant, in future solar projects.

He also added that plans will be made to implement new solar projects in the vacant lands near the Thapyaywa Solar Plant to meet the state's



Union Minister U Thaung Han views round Thapyaywa Solar Power Plant in Thazi Township, Meiktila District on 15 May.

electricity demand.

He also instructed officials to pay attention to the

uninterrupted power supply and transmission of electricity from the power plant.

Thapyaywa Solar Power Plant is located on 133.44 acres of land near Thapyaywa vil-

lage, in Mandalay Region. The installed capacity is 30 megawatts and the maximum power is 455 watts.

It generates more than 200,000 kwh as well as an average of 66 million kilowatt hours per year.

The generated electricity is being transmitted to the national grid through a 230 KV Thapyaywa station with a 33 KV double-deck overhead cables in some 4 miles in length.

At the 230 KV Thapyaywa power station, the Union Minister awarded the staff of the substation for the excellence in performance, in accord with the guidelines of the Prime Minister for recognizing and honouring outstanding civil servants.—MNA

Central Bank Governor attends 50th board of directors' meeting of ACU



A Myanmar delegation led by Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar attended the 50th Board of Directors' Meeting of the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) held on 12 and 13 May in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The meeting was attended by delegates from nine ACU member countries: India, Pakistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Bangla-

desh, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan and the Maldives.

The meeting focused on the economic development and prospects of the ACU member countries, ACU activities and achievements during the fiscal year 2020, recommendations from the ACU Expert Committee on improving transnational payments innovation, issues related to the implementation of local currency payments among the ACU countries and the strengthening of the ACU system.

The Myanmar delegation returned home on the afternoon of 14 May.—MNA

The 50th Board of Directors' Meeting of the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) is in progress in Islamabad, Pakistan on 12 and 13 May.

4 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 15 May, total figure rises to 613,140

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **613,140** after **4** new cases were reported on 15 May 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **592,089** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at **19,434** without more casualties.

COVID-19 vaccine is being injected to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 14-5-2022, a total of **31,096,606** people have been vaccinated. Of them, **24,599,048** people have been fully vaccinated and **6,497,558** people have yet to get the second shots and 1,771,653 people have received booster doses.—MNA

MoH Minister attends 2nd day of 15th ASEAN Health Ministers' meeting, and related meetings

THE second day of the 15th ASEAN Health Ministers' Meeting and related meetings took place in Bali, Indonesia, yesterday. The meetings were attended by Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win, together with the Health Ministers and Deputy Health Ministers from the ASEAN countries and dialogue partners, China, South Korea, and Japan.

As the first portion of the morning session, the Union Minister spoke about the importance of the health system for every country, the need to reduce private expenditures in accessing health care for the people, adding that he hoped that South Korea would share its experience with the ASEAN countries on achieving universal health coverage using ICT in a short period. The meeting approved the joint statement of the first ASEAN-South Korea Health Ministers' Meeting.

In the 9th ASEAN+3 Health Ministers' Meeting, Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win discussed that public health emergencies are frequent and that healthcare resources such as health manpower, medicines and medical equipment, and health budgets are insufficient, adding that it is necessary to make efficient use of limited health resources.

He said Myanmar is coop-



Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win addresses afternoon session of the 15th ASEAN Health Ministers' meeting in Bali, Indonesia on 15 May.

erating not only with regional countries but also with countries around the world. Efforts were made to eradicate the COVID-19 pandemic with the concerted efforts in various sectors related to health. He also highlighted the importance to disseminate information on communicable diseases to ASEAN member countries in response to pandemics and to use health resources efficiently. He said that Myanmar will effectively connect with countries not only in the region but also around the world, taking advantage of future challenges and opportunities to improve public health. The meeting approved the joint

statement of the 9th ASEAN+3 Health Ministers' Meeting.

In 8th ASEAN-China Health Ministers' Meeting in the afternoon session, Union Minister Dr. Thet Khaing Win discussed the establishment of Myanmar Centre for Disease Control with the assistance of the People's Republic of China for effective control of communicable diseases such as COVID-19, expressing words of thanks for the COVID-19 vaccines and the assistance in the establishment of the centre which will provide scientific information and services to the Ministry of Health as well as other related ministries

regarding Myanmar's communicable disease prevention and control activities. In addition, it will also be able to carry out laboratory tests for pathogens, and to interact with communicable disease control centers in the countries in the region.

He added that the animal pathogens for the current COVID-19 epidemic and future epidemics are being monitored through one health approach, and the rapid dissemination of information, analysis of infectious diseases would reduce the risk of human catastrophe.

Then, the meeting released the joint statement of the 8th

ASEAN-China Health Ministers' Meeting.

In the ASEAN-US Health Ministers' Meeting attended by health ministers from ASEAN including Myanmar and US Department of Health and Human Services, Union Minister Dr. Thet Khaing Win discussed that strengthening the health system plays an important role in public health emergencies. He said Myanmar has made every effort to control the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic in line with the five-point roadmap of the State Administration Council despite the sabotage acts carried out by terrorist groups to health care staff at vaccination sites. He highlighted that the COVID-19 vaccinations have been carried out to persons with disability, armed ethnic organizations, displaced persons, in addition to the set targeted groups. He added that the vaccination to the children age 12 and above will be conducted in coming weeks.

He said humanitarian assistance through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management-AHA Centre is being conducted by the government together with the Myanmar Red Cross Society.

Before concluding the meeting, the joint statement of the ASEAN-US Health Ministers' Meeting was released.—MNA



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

THE Ministry of Commerce oversees the importation of necessary medical supplies and anti-COVID-19 devices critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities through trading posts and international airports and seaports.

A total of 19 tonnes of masks were imported by two vehicles of two companies yesterday.

Officials from relevant de-

partments cooperate to facilitate and expedite standard operating procedures for the import process.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments to prevent COVID-19, and contact persons for enquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website – www.commerce.gov.mm.—MNA

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

LOCAL BUSINESS

Seintalone mango from Kanbalu District to be shipped to China

SEINTALONE mango produced in the Seintalone Special Farming Zone in Kanbalu District, Sagaing Region will be conveyed to China through Muse border post.

“The mango harvest started on 15 May. They are designated for Chinese market. The minimum price is approximately 90-100 Yuan per 16-kg basket. Each mango can fetch up to 120 Yuan in maximum. As mango is abundantly flowing into the market at present, the price is slightly decreasing,” said U Than Tun Oo, staff officer of Kanbalu District Agriculture Department’s farm.

Sagaing Region Agriculture Department designated 2,500 acres in Kyunhla and Kanbalu townships as Seintalone Special Farming Zone as a trade mark.



Young Seintalone mango plants are bearing fruits in the farms in special farming zone of Kanbalu District in Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: LULAY**

There is a total of 148 mango growers engaged in 3,052 acres of Seintalone and other mango varieties in Kanbalu

and Kyunhla townships.

“The trade barrier is high transportation charges resulted from the fuel oil hike. Additionally, other general cost related to the virus policy add additional charges.

However, the mango market does not collapse like watermelon market happened. The trade is steadily flowing. This year is unlikely to see as more losses as last year,” said U Than Tun Oo.

A five-year old Seintalone mango tree can bear 20-30 fruits.

The yield rate is 70-80 fruits per 10-year old tree. About 100 trees can be grown per acre, if the distance between trees is 20 feet.—Lu Lay/GNLM

Myanmar exports up by \$115.99 mln over one month

THE Customs Department’s statistic indicated that Myanmar’s exports between 1 April and 6 May in the current financial year from April 2022 to March 2023 soared to US\$1.34 billion from \$1.2 billion recorded in the corresponding period of last year. The figures reflected an increase of over \$115.99 million compared with a year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

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

export groups, fisheries, forest and other exports showed a small increase compared to the year-ago period.

Over one month, export values were registered at \$423.3 million for agro products, \$2.77 million for livestock, \$56.137 million for fishery products, \$69.66 million for minerals, \$12.15 million for forest products, over \$750.69 million for manufactured goods, and \$26.24 million for other goods. Myanmar’s top export countries are listed China, Thailand, Japan, India, USA, Spain, Germany, UK, ROK and the Netherlands.

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

Over 2,000 traditional inshore trawlers allowed fishing despite three-month close season

MORE than 2,000 traditional fishing trawlers have been given the go-ahead in spite of the three-month close season, according to the Department of Fisheries.

Myanmar puts a temporary stop to fishing season in Myanmar sea every year. Between 1 May and 30 June 2020, fishing vessels of squid, bamboo fishing rafts are banned to run operations.

The close season for fishing vessels including bamboo fishing rafts in Taninthayi Region is set from April to June. Nevertheless, the traditional inshore fishing trawlers are allowed to run during the close season.

“The close season will expire on 1 July. Over 2,000 traditional inshore trawlers are excluded from this ban,” said an official of Kawthoung District Fisheries Department.

The fish hatcheries in the regions and states yearly add the

one-inch sized fish larvae into the lakes, dams and ponds. Such an event is not found in Taninthayi Region. According to a survey conducted by Myanmar Fisheries Department and Norwegian fish researcher, fish and marine resource depletion is found on

the surface and deep sea in Myanmar.

Myanmar’s aquaculture exports are shipped to over 40 countries, primarily to Thailand and China, according to the Fisheries Department. — Pwint Thitsar/GNLM



Photo shows tilapia fingerlings. **PHOTO: BO BO**

Areca nut price likely to remain high in coming two months

THE prices of areca nuts are possibly to continue rising in the coming June and July, according to areca nut market.

The inventory of dried areca nuts is lower at present. Only the warehouse owners are holding them. Therefore, the price goes up. The prices stood at K4,550-K5,350 per viss (a viss

equals to 1.6 kg).

Starting from last April, the fresh areca nuts have been flowing into market. The price jumped on the low supply.

China highly demands those fresh areca nuts, the traders said.

Normally, India purchases Myanmar’s dried areca nuts.

Nonetheless, trade is sluggish for now, the areca nut traders said.

The trade of areca nuts produced in Ye Township of Mon State is brisk. Those areca nuts are delivered to markets of Yangon, Bago and Mandalay regions. Then, they are exported to India through the big cities.

At present, betel nut export to India plummeted because of the trade suspension triggered by the COVID-19 negative consequences and security concerns.

Myanmar earlier exported 400-500 bags of areca nuts. The export volume dropped to 300 for now, areca nut traders stressed. Transportation rate in-

creased from K2,500 to K3,000 per 60-viss bag owing to the high fuel oil price. At present, the growers are facing a series of challenges such as virus negative impacts, political instability, security concerns, transport difficulty, banking restrictions and money withdrawal limit, high fuel oil prices.—NN/GNLM

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions



A local in Pauktaw Township gets COVID-19 vaccine shot.

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

COVID-19 vaccine is administered daily to target groups regardless of race or religion, including Buddhist monks and nuns, local people over the age of 40, students, religious leaders, prisoners, people with disabilities, ethnic armed groups, people with

chronic diseases, people in IDP camps and over 12-year-old students at the middle and



A local in Kyaukse Township gets COVID-19 vaccine shot.

high school levels respectively.

On 15 May, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 8,661 people from twenty-six townships in Ayeyawady Region, and 4,345 people from nine townships in Rakhine and Chin states, respectively.

It is reported that officials from relevant regions and states visited the vaccination site and coordinated the necessary work. — MNA

Announcement of the resumption of Tourist Visa service on Online e-Visa System

1. The Ministry of Immigration and Population resumed the Online e-Visa services on 1st April 2022 for business visa applications to facilitate the entry of foreign investors and businessmen to Myanmar. Moreover, commercial International Flights operations are allowed to operate in accordance with the COVID-19 rules and regulations of the Ministry of Health, and therefore, the number of foreign visitors to Myanmar has been increasing.
2. With an aim to develop tourism sector and to have a harmonized tourism with the neighboring countries, e-Visa (Tourist) applications will be allowed and accepted from 15th May 2022.
3. Requirements for the application of Online e-Visa (Tourist) will be available at the Ministry's website <https://evisa.moip.gov.mm>.

Ministry of Immigration and Population

Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was reconstituted under the State Administration Council's Order No 366/2021 dated 10.12.2021, and action is being taken effectively against illegal trade under the law.

The following telephone numbers, fax and email address can be reached to safely report information in connection with illegal trade.

- Auto telephone number - 067 409 883
- Mobile phone - 09 404339969
- Fax - 067 409 886
- Email address - antiillegaltradeinfo@gmail.com

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

CRIME NEWS

Illegal automobile spare parts, consumer goods seized

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

On 14 May, a customs team of inspection and anti-illegal trade section under the management of the Customs Department conducted

inspections at the Yangon International Airport warehouse, and automobile spare parts, mobile handset accessories and fancy materials at estimated value K28,967,300 without any official documents were seized. The action was taken under the Customs Law.— MNA



Photo shows seized automobile spare parts, mobile phone handset accessories and fancy materials at warehouse of Yangon International Airport.



Stimulant tablets seized in some townships

COMBINED teams consisting of members of the Anti-illegal Drug Police Force seized illegal drugs in Myitkyina, Myawady, Taunggyi, and Nawngkhio townships respectively on 14 May.

The police force seized 1,750 stimulant tablets in Myitkyina Township, 1,950 stimulant tablets in Myawady, and 1,250 stimulant tablets and 0.012 kilo of heroin block in Taunggyi, and 10,000 stimulant tablets in Nawngkhio township, respectively.

It is reported that the suspects arrested together with the illegal drugs were prosecuted under the Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to the Myanmar Police Force.—MNA

Action to be taken for selling, storing palm oil at a higher price

IT was announced on 15 May that it would take action under the Important Goods and Services Act if the persons raises prices, stores goods illegally and scams in the domestic market.

The Committee for the Supervision of the Import and Distribution of Edible Oils under the Ministry of Commerce has issued the statement in a bid to manage the domestic palm oil prices.

Depending on the daily monitoring of FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, transportation costs, bank expenses, and basic wholesale reference price to be

traded in the local market are taken into account, including taxes for setting the proper prices.

Palm oil prices fallen slightly in the world's palm oil exporters this week, with FOB prices expected to rise sharply this week. From 16 to 22 May, the basic Yangon Reference Wholesale Price of palm oil is K5,685 per Viss.

These basic wholesale quotes are available on the Department of Consumer Affairs website: www.doca.gov.mm and on the Facebook page of the Myanmar Oil Traders and Oil Entrepreneurs Association.—MNA

Aid provided to fire victims from Kyauktaw Mahamuni IDP camp



Photo shows arrivals of relief supplies for victims of fire at Kyauktaw Mahamuni IDP Camp. PHOTO: UNHCR

RAKHINE State government and UNHCR have provided assistance to the fire victims from the Kyauktaw Mahamuni IDP camp in Rakhine State.

In the early morning of 9 May, a fire broke out in the

Mahamuni evacuation camp in Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State, leaving 1,073 people to be fire victims and destroying more than 260 houses.

Consequently, the Rakhine State government and UNHCR

provided foodstuffs, aids and emergency relief supplies to the fire victims.

UNHCR Myanmar is working closely with various partners to carry out emergency response works.—TWA/GNLM

Myawady-Mae Sot Bridge yet to reopen on 15 May



Cleaning task is being carried out at Mae Sot gate to Thailand on 1 May.

THE Myawady-Mae Sot bridge was not reopened on 15 May although it was reported that it would be reopened, according to locals.

There are rumours that it will be opened on 15 May. In the meantime, the bridges on both sides are being cleaned, and they said that such a bridge is likely to open today. The bridge was not open until 7 am today, so it is certain that it has not reopened today, said driver Ko Zaw Gyi from Myawady.

The bridge will be reopened, but local authorities in Tak Dis-

trict, have barred Myanmar nationals for crossing the border, making it difficult for the Myanmar returnees to go home.

Thais are allowed to go anywhere in their country, but Myanmar migrant workers are barred from doing so under local orders. The bridge will be ready to give service after relaxing the local orders, Ko Zaw Gyi added.

After more than two years of closure, Thai authorities cleared the gates of Mae Sot on the Thai side of the border on 1 May.

Officials from the two countries began talks on 5 May to re-

open the bridge after cleaning and painting the steel frame on 4 May.

Negotiations are underway to reopen the bridge in Thailand, but no announcement has been released on the Myanmar side, locals said.

Thailand closed 17 border crossings between the two countries within two years to control of COVID-19, and officials reopened some border crossings in May in accordance with COVID rules and allowed MoU workers from Myanmar to enter Thailand.—TWA/GNLM

130 Myanmar nationals arrested for illegally entering Thailand

THAI authorities have arrested 130 Myanmar nationals for illegally entering Thailand, according to their announcement.

During the three-day period from 12 to 15 May, 130 illegal Myanmar migrant workers were arrested in Mae Sot and Pho Pha of Thailand.

On the night of 12 May, 17 people from Kawthoung were arrested by the Thai navy when they arrived in Thai waters by boat on their way to Ranong.

Similarly, 43 Myanmar nationals were arrested on the morning of 15 May after crossing the Mae Sot River and 70 Myanmar nationals were also detained while they were waiting for a car to pick them up in Pho Pha Township, Thailand.

The Myanmar nationals had to pay 2,7,000 baht each to the intermediary to enter Thailand illegally and travel to Bangkok.—TWA/GNLM

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OPINION BOOKRACK

ARTICLE Weather Report

Restore peace for ensuring healthcare services to people

NOWADAYS, the government is striving for the implementation of a healthcare system which can cover the whole nation.

But, as peace and stability of the nation are crucial to assign the health staff in necessary areas, the government gives priority to the restoration of peace.

The Ministry of Health lost many health staff from public healthcare services in the recent political changes.

Anyhow, encouragement is being given to not only government-run hospitals, rural health centres and rural health branches but private hospitals and clinics to provide healthcare services to the people.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of the people, the whole country could overcome the challenges of COVID-19 from the first to the fourth waves although the infection rate of the pandemic was very high in 2021.

The government takes preventive measures for all diseases across the nation, especially major diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, AIDS and hepatitis.

Anyhow, encouragement is being given to not only government-run hospitals, rural health centres and rural health branches but private hospitals and clinics to provide healthcare services to the people.

Only when the development gap in healthcare services can be closed will all ethnic national people enjoy the fruits of development.

Everybody wishes to have longevity. To meet the wish, they must be healthy and fit physically and mentally.

They all wish to do something they expected throughout their lives. They see their lives as their heaven. They all wish to restore paradise for their life, their family and their country.



US rate hikes strain Hong Kong's virus-weakened economy

Financial Secretary Paul Chan wrote last week that Hong Kong was now facing a reversal of the low interest rate environment it had enjoyed for more than a decade.

RECENT rate hikes from the Federal Reserve have come at a bad time for Hong Kong which, thanks to its US dollar peg, must follow suit despite its own flagging economy.

Hong Kong has pegged its currency to the US dollar since 1983, which has helped the city weather economic storms such as the 1997 Asian financial crisis and underpinned its status as a major global finance hub.

But it also means Hong Kong has little choice but to follow the Fed's latest round of hawkish rate hikes — the biggest of its kind in 22 years.

"The Covid outbreak in Hong Kong and in mainland China is already hurting growth," senior economist at Oxford Economics Lloyd Chan told AFP.

"The last thing that Hong Kong needs now is a rising interest rate."

The city on Friday revised its

2022 GDP growth forecast down to between one and two percent, after a worse-than-expected four percent drop in the first quarter.

Financial Secretary Paul Chan wrote last week that Hong Kong was now facing a reversal of the low interest rate environment it had enjoyed for more than a decade.

"As the economy has not yet fully recovered from the epidemic, we have to pay attention to the impact of interest rate hike... (on) people and small and medium enterprises," he wrote on his official website.

Impact on housing market

Hong Kong banks have so far kept their best lending rates steady, but they will feel the squeeze in three to six months, analysts say.

"The interest rate may increase quicker than in the past, given the faster pace from the Fed

and also the change in the overall background risk sentiment in the world," economist Gary Ng of Natixis told AFP.

Homebuyers whose mortgages are linked to the Hong Kong interbank offered rate (HIBOR) will be the first to feel the heat, said economist Heron Lim at Moody's Analytics.

"This usually has a downward effect on housing prices, (which) should shrink in 2022 and into 2023 as well, especially if there's low demand from mainland Chinese investors," Lim told AFP.

The Hong Kong government on Friday said it expected signs of revival later this year following the relaxation of coronavirus curbs that ground the economy to a halt in the first quarter.

But the rate hikes could dampen a domestic rebound as the higher burden shouldered by homebuyers will eat into their consumption power.



Citizens wearing face masks select goods at a supermarket in south China's Hong Kong, 14 April 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA

Small and medium-sized businesses also potentially face a "really tough time" if the rising rates coincide with a Covid resurgence, economist Samuel Tse of

DBS Bank told AFP

Hong Kong is still hewing to a lighter version of China's zero-Covid model that has taken a toll on businesses in the city.

Dollar peg 'defensible'

Hong Kong allows its currency to trade within a range of 7.75-7.85 to the greenback.

Capital outflows and intense

selling of the Hong Kong dollar in recent months have pushed it to the weak end of that trading band.

Last week, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) spent HK\$8.53 billion (\$1.08 billion) in three attempts to prop up the local currency, the first intervention since 2019.

Some commentators have begun questioning the sustainability of the peg, citing pressures of the pandemic and geopolitical tensions between China and the United States.

Responding to a Bloomberg op-ed, HKMA deputy chief executive Edmond Lau said earlier this month that the US dollar peg was a "highly robust and transparent system" and "highly resilient".

"Hong Kong's monetary base is fully backed by US dollar assets," Lau wrote, adding that the government had ample fiscal reserves and no net debt.

All four analysts who spoke

with AFP agreed that Hong Kong would hold on to the peg despite changes in the global economy.

"Although the foreign reserve has dropped from \$500 billion to around \$460 billion, it is still a relatively high level which should be enough to defend the Hong Kong dollar," said Tse of DBS.

Lim at Moody's said the HKMA war chest ensured the peg was "very defensible", adding that the arrangement had policy value as Hong Kong remained an international gateway to China's economy.

Ng of Natixis noted that there has not been any selloff or panic offloading of Hong Kong dollar-related assets, which he said bodes well for the future of the peg. "But in the medium or long run," he added, "it depends on whether this currency stability still has benefits that outweigh the costs, such as the divergence... between China and the US."

SOURCE: AFP

Study finds glucose-like metabolite effective against COVID-19

CHINESE researchers have identified a glucose-like metabolite associated with diabetes in human blood with effective antiviral activity against SARS-CoV-2.

The findings, led by researchers from Tsinghua University, were published in the journal

Nature Metabolism on Tuesday.

Previous studies show that the severity and mortality of COVID-19 are associated with pre-existing diseases such as diabetes. However, the underlying causes behind this have not yet been well established.

In this new study, research-

ers screened out more than 200 small-molecule metabolites and found that 1,5-anhydro-D-glucitol (1,5-AG), which is deficient in patients with diabetes, can inhibit cellular entry of SARS-CoV-2.

They found the level of SARS-CoV-2 replication is higher in the presence of serum from patients

with diabetes than from healthy individuals, but this can be counteracted by 1,5-AG supplementation to the serum from patients.

According to molecular mechanism analysis, 1,5-AG presented an effective anti-SARS-CoV-2 activity by binding to the S2 subunit of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, thereby interrupting the process of virus-cell membrane fusion.

In experiments conducted on mice, researchers discovered that diabetic mice undergoing SARS-CoV-2 infection were accompanied by much higher viral loads and more severe respiratory tissue damage when compared to non-diabetic mice. Sustained 1,5-AG supplementation in diabetic mice reduced SARS-CoV-2 loads and disease severity to similar levels in non-diabetic mice.

The results suggest that 1,5-AG supplementation can help reduce such incidences and prevent severe COVID-19 in diabetics, according to the study.

SOURCE: Xinhua



A medical worker injects COVID-19 vaccine for a senior citizen in Dongcheng District of Beijing, capital of China, 18 April 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/JU HUANZONG

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Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 15 May 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is weak to moderate over the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay of Bengal. Weather is cloudy over the Southwest Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 16 May 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing, and Bago regions and Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states, scattered in Yangon, and Ayeyawady regions and Eastern Shan and Chin states and isolated in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (6-8) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 May 2022: Likelihood of Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 May 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 May 2022: Likelihood of Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

ENVIRON WORLD

BRICS countries renew pledge to address climate change

BRICS countries renewed their joint commitment to tackling climate change and explored approaches to accelerating the low-carbon transition at a meeting on Friday.

The BRICS High-level Meeting on Climate Change was hosted by China via video link and was attended by ministerial officials responsible for climate change response from Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa.

Noting that the BRICS countries are a prominent force in addressing climate change, China's Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu said in a speech that China will work with fellow BRICS countries to promote the full and effective



Aerial photo taken on 17 December 2020 shows the headquarters building of BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) in east China's Shanghai. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FANG ZHE**

implementation of the United Nations Framework Conven-

tion on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. China will pro-

vide full support to the incoming Egyptian Presidency of the 27th

session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, hoping that the event will prioritize implementation and highlight the reinforcement of adaptation and financial aid to developing countries, said Xie Zhenhua, China's special envoy for climate change.

Vice Minister of Ecology and Environment Zhao Yingmin said that climate-change cooperation has brought the BRICS countries closer and helped establish high-quality partnerships. Zhao called on all sides to carry out communication and policy-sharing, and launch joint projects in areas like clean energy and low-carbon technology.—Xinhua

Pakistan parched and pummelled by blistering heatwave

PAKISTAN was in the grip of a heatwave on Friday, with parts of the nation previously scalded by temperatures of nearly 50 degrees Celsius as officials warned of acute water shortages and a health threat.

Swathes of the country have been smothered by high temperatures since late April, in extreme weather the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has warned is consistent with climate change.

On Thursday the city of

Jacobabad in Sindh province hit 49.5C (121 degrees Fahrenheit), the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said, with temperatures forecast to remain high until the end of the week.

"It's like fire burning all around," said labourer Shafi Mohammad, who is from a village on the outskirts of Jacobabad where residents struggle to find reliable access to drinking water. Nationwide, the PMD alerted temperatures were between 6C

and 9C above normal, with the capital Islamabad — as well as provincial hubs Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar — recording temperatures around 40C on Friday.

"This year we have jumped from winter right into summer," said PMD chief forecaster Zaheer Ahmad Babar.

Pakistan has endured heightened heatwaves since 2015, he said, focused in upper Sindh province and southern Punjab province.—AFP

Kenya banking on adventure tourism to boost arrivals

KENYA intends to showcase some of its iconic scenic attractions like mountains, tropical forests and savannah grasslands to foreign and local tourists keen on adventure, officials said Saturday.

Najib Balala, the cabinet secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, said that by promoting adventure tourism, the country expects to

shore up arrivals and generate additional foreign exchange earnings. Speaking ahead of a four-day hiking expedition in Mount Kenya, Balala said the adventure tourism had the potential to hasten the sector's post-pandemic revival besides creating new jobs for the country's youth.

He reckoned that hiking and

mountaineering are niche adventure tourism products that have the potential to shore up visitors' numbers and generate new revenue for the exchequer.

"We are positioning the country as a top destination for adventure tourism. Our landmarks like mountains are ideal for visitors looking for outdoor adventure," said Balala.

He said the ongoing climbing expedition in Mount Kenya, Africa's second tallest mountain whose height is 5,199 meters, aims to showcase it as an ideal destination for adventure and nature lovers.

Balala added that Mount Kenya national park which is a UNESCO natural world heritage site and a wildlife sanctuary has always been an attractive tourist destination.—Xinhua



Mount Kenya National Park was established in 1949 to protect Mount Kenya, the wildlife and surrounding environment. **PHOTO: MOUNT KENYA TRUST/XINHUA**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Climate change made deadly S Africa rains twice as likely

RAINFALL that caused catastrophic floods and landslides last month in and around Durban, South Africa, was made twice as likely by global warming, scientists said Friday.

An exceptional downpour — more than 35 centimetres (14 inches) over two days — on April 11-12 claimed hundreds of lives and caused \$1.5 billion in damage across the provinces KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape.

Without climate change, rain of this intensity would happen roughly once every 40 years, according to a report from the World Weather Attribution consortium, a global network of scientists that quantify the impact of a warming world on individual extreme weather events.

But an increase in Earth's average surface temperature of nearly 1.2 degrees Celsius since the late-19th century has shortened that interval to about 20 years.—AFP

7 elephants killed by suspected poachers in past two weeks in southern Tanzania

SEVEN elephants have been killed in the past two weeks in Tanzania's southern region of Ruvuma, police said Friday.

Joseph Konyo, the Ruvuma regional police commander, said the seven elephants were found dead in two separate incidents in Namtumbo and Tunduru districts.

In the first incident, Konyo told a press conference, five elephants were found dead on May 1 in a forest in the Hanga area in Namtumbo district.

"Police could not find poachers who killed the jumbos, but they managed to recover five tusks weighing 44 kilograms," he said.

In the second incident, Konyo said, police found two dead elephants in a forest in Tunduru district on 10 May where they recovered four tusks and eight pieces of tusks weighing 20.4 kilograms. He said three suspected poachers were arrested in connection with the second incident.

The elephants were suspected to have been strayed from the Julius Nyerere National Park that borders with the districts, said Konyo.—Xinhua

Kim Jong Un says N Korea facing upheaval due to COVID-19



A pupil has her temperature taken as part of anti-COVID-19 procedures before entering a school in Pyongyang on 22 June 2021. **PHOTO: KIM WON JIN/ AFP**

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un has described the spread of the novel coronavirus as the greatest turmoil facing the country since it was founded, state-run media reported Saturday.

The official Korean Central News Agency said an additional 21 people had died and

around 174,400 had symptoms of fever on Friday, possibly because of the virus.

North Korea on Friday confirmed its first COVID-19 death since the pandemic began. Around 187,800 people are being quarantined and treated after the rapid spread of the fever since late April, according

to KCNA.

The country, which has been facing international economic sanctions over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, is believed to be vulnerable to infectious diseases due to shortages of food and medical supplies. —Kyodo

Bulgaria's COVID-19 recoveries exceed 1 mln

THE number of COVID-19 recoveries in Bulgaria has exceeded 1 million amid a steady decline in the spread of the disease, the country's Health Ministry said on Friday.

As many as 7,024 recoveries were recorded in the last 24 hours, bringing the national tally to 1,006,669, the ministry said.

Meanwhile, the number of

confirmed infections reached 1,161,038, with an increase of 332 on Thursday, the ministry said.

The death toll rose to 37,035 as 16 more patients died in the past 24 hours, it said.

At the same time, according to the ministry's statistics, the numbers of active cases and hospitalizations fell to 117,334 and 608, respectively, the lowest

figures since January 2022 and July 2020.

The ministry also said that 29.75 percent of the country's population became fully vaccinated after 944 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered in the past day, and the total number of administered vaccine doses reached 4.39 million. — Xinhua

Guangzhou airport resumes domestic flights after controlling outbreak

THE Baiyun airport in Guangzhou, capital of south China's Guangdong Province, has resumed regular operation with a large number of domestic passenger flights reopened, after the latest COVID-19 resurgence was brought under control, the airport said on Friday.

The airport is expected to handle 300 flights on Friday, while its main airline, China Southern Airlines, plans to operate 61 inbound and outbound domestic flights at the airport.

Most of the airport's in-

bound and outbound domestic passenger flights were canceled or rescheduled, following positive results found during its routine nucleic acid testing of staff on 27 April.

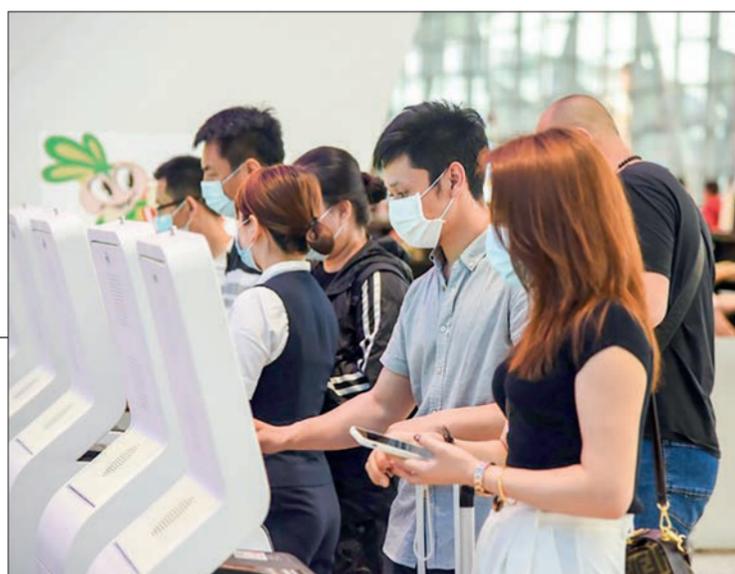
Baiyun airport has since intensified COVID-19 screenings among staff members. More than 10,000 of them have undergone a total of 26 rounds of nucleic acid testing from 29 April to Friday. Starting from 30 April, daily antigen testing has also been added to the routine staff testing.

Since 30 April, no posi-

tive cases have been reported among its staff, said the airport.

With strict COVID-19 prevention and control measures put in place, the airport has also resumed its catering services and retail businesses in the terminals. — Xinhua

Passengers operate automatic check-in machines at Baiyun International Airport in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, 26 April 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA/ TIAN JIANCHUAN**



NEWS IN BRIEF

ADB reaffirms support to Bangladesh's rapid recovery from COVID-19, green growth

THE Asian Development Bank (ADB) has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Bangladesh in its efforts to achieve a rapid recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, green growth and climate resilience.

ADB Vice President Shixin Chen made the remarks when meeting with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka on 9 May.

The Manila-based lender in a statement Friday said that during the meeting, Chen said the ADB will prioritize assistance for least developed country graduation, climate change, and sustainable development goals to help the South Asian country achieve its goal of becoming an upper middle-income country by 2031 and a high-income country by 2041. — Xinhua

Indonesia monitoring COVID-19 transmission after Eid holiday

INDONESIA has been monitoring the increase in COVID-19 cases after this year's Eid al-Fitr holiday, when a massive exodus occurred.

During the holiday, urban people leave big cities where they work to return to their hometowns, celebrating Eid with families.

Minister of Health Budi Gunadi Sadikin said, "For the next 20 to 25 days we'll see if there is an increase."

The Indonesian government has been monitoring the possibility of the emergence of new sub-variants, Omicron BA.4 and BA.5, which has been detected in South Africa. — Xinhua

New Zealand reports 7,441 new community cases of COVID-19

NEW Zealand recorded 7,441 new community cases of COVID-19, the ministry of health said on Friday.

Among the new community infections, 2,503 were reported in the largest city Auckland, the ministry said in a statement.

In addition, 78 new cases of COVID-19 were detected at the New Zealand border. Currently, 398 COVID-19 patients are being treated in New Zealand hospitals, including six people in intensive care units or high dependency units. The ministry also reported 29 more deaths from COVID-19. — Xinhua

ECONOMY WORLD

Japan, China talks over food import ban not held for over 1 year

TALKS between Japan and China over Beijing's import ban on Japanese food products have not been held for over a year, sources familiar with bilateral relations told Kyodo News recently.

As China has not responded to Japan's request for resuming the talks amid soured bilateral ties, it is uncertain when the ban will be lifted, with the deadlock possibly to affect discussions on China's accession to a major Pacific free trade deal, the sources said.

In the wake of the Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011, Beijing banned imports of food



Beijing banned imports of food products from Fukushima and several other prefectures over the risks of radioactive contamination. **PHOTO: KYODO**

products from Fukushima and several other prefectures over the risks of radioactive contamination. Japan has been asking

China to hold a third meeting of a panel they established to discuss lifting the ban, the sources said.

Foreign ministers of the two countries agreed in November 2020 to set up the panel as Tokyo aimed to expand sales of Japanese food in the Chinese market, and Beijing, which has been at odds with the United States, hoped to improve ties with Japan.

Officials on the panel met in virtual meetings held in December 2020 and February 2021, according to the sources.

But China did not agree to hold panel talks when Japan in

November 2021 called for them, in an apparent protest at Japan's decision in April that year to release treated radioactive water from the crippled nuclear plant in Fukushima into the sea.

Bilateral relations further deteriorated as Chinese authorities detained a Japanese diplomat in Beijing temporarily in February this year for allegedly collecting information illegally.

China has banned imports of all food products from Fukushima and eight neighboring prefectures as well as food products except rice from Niigata Prefecture.—Kyodo

NEWS IN Brief

Portuguese gov't announces measure to cap gas price

THE Portuguese Council of Ministers announced on Friday a measure to halve the price of gas used for electricity production for both domestic and industrial consumers, who have been severely affected by this year's electricity price inflation.

The mechanism adopted by Portugal after negotiation with the European Union establishes that, for the next 12 months, gas will cost an average of 48.8 euros/megawatt-hour (MWh) — almost half the current price. — Xinhua

Peru sues Spain's Repsol for \$4.5 bn over oil spill

PERU has filed suit against Spanish energy company Repsol over the massive January oil spill that ravaged its coast, seeking \$4.5 billion in damages.

The lawsuit was filed before the 27th civil court in Lima against six companies: Repsol (Spain), Mapfre Global Risks (Spain), Mapfre Peru Insurance and Reinsurance Companies (Peru), La Pampilla Refinery (Peru), Transtotal Maritime Agency (Peru) and Fratelli d'amico Armatori (Italy, owner of the tanker involved), Peru's consumer protection agency said.

"These suits could create precedents for oil spills that cause damage and collective non-material damages due to environmental pollution of coastal areas," said Julian Palacin, executive director of the National Institute for the Defense of Competition and Protection of Intellectual Property (INDECOPI), in a statement released late Friday. —AFP



A resident of a community affected by the Repsol oil spill on the coast of Peru protests against the Spanish oil company, on 20 January 2022 in Callao. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

IMF lifts Chinese yuan's weighting in basket of top currencies

THE International Monetary Fund has lifted the Chinese yuan's weighting in its elite basket of reserve currencies to 12.28 percent from 10.92 percent, the country's central bank said Sunday.

In its first regular review of the evaluation of the IMF's special drawing rights, or SDR, since the yuan was included in the basket in 2016, the Washington-based organization has decided to raise the status of the Chinese currency, also known as the renminbi.

The updated basket weights will come into effect on 1 August, the People's Bank of China said in a statement, adding that the next SDR review is scheduled to be concluded before the end of July 2027.

Financial experts said the IMF might be trying to increase



File photo taken in August 2019 shows Chinese 100-yuan and US 100-dollar banknotes. **PHOTO: KYODO**

pressure on the Communist-led Chinese government to work harder to remove restrictions on transactions in the yuan.

The weighting of the US dollar was also raised to 43.38 percent, but that of the euro, yen and pound was decreased to 29.31

percent, 7.59 percent and 7.44 percent, respectively, according to the IMF.

As of Sunday, the weights of the dollar, euro, yen and pound were 41.73 percent, 30.93 percent, 8.33 percent and 8.09 percent, respectively.—Kyodo

Iraq's prized rice crop threatened by drought

DROUGHT is threatening the Iraqi tradition of growing amber rice, the aromatic basis of rich lamb and other dishes, and a key element in a struggling economy.

The long-grained variety of rice takes its name from its distinctive scent, which is similar to that of amber resin. It is used in Iraqi meals including sumptuous lamb qouzi, mansaf and stuffed vegetables.

But after three years of drought and declining rainfall, Iraq's amber rice production will

be only symbolic in 2022, forcing consumers to seek out imported varieties and leaving farmers pondering their future.

"We live off this land," Abu Rassul says, standing near a small canal that in normal times irrigates his two hectares (five acres) near Al-Abassiya village in the central province of Najaf.

"Since I was a child I have planted amber rice," says the farmer in his 70s, his face wrinkled and unshaven, dressed in a dazzling white dishdasha robe.

"Water enables us to plant every year."

Except for this one.

Normally, rice fields planted in mid-May should stay submerged all summer until October — but that's a luxury Iraq can no longer allow.

The country's available water reserves "are well below our critical level of 18 billion cubic metres (4.8 trillion gallons)", Shaker Fayez Kadhim, Najaf's water resources manager, told AFP.—AFP

India bans wheat exports to bring down domestic prices



A farmer (R) examines wheat grains coming down from a harvesting combine machine during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 coronavirus, on the outskirts of Amritsar on 20 April 2020. **PHOTO: NARINDER NANU / AFP**

THE Indian government has banned wheat exports with immediate effect as part of its steps to control the price increase at home, officials said Saturday.

The notification was issued by the federal ministry of commerce and industry's Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) on Friday.

The government said only export shipments for which letters of credit have been issued on or before Friday's notification will be allowed.

The government further said it will allow exports on requests from other countries.

The notification said the government had taken the decision "in order to manage the overall food security of the country and to support the needs of the neighboring and other vulnerable countries."

Reports said global buyers had been banking on India after exports from the Black Sea region dropped since the Russian-Ukraine conflict in late February. The move to ban wheat exports comes after a huge crop loss due to a heatwave in March in India.

The Indian government is under pressure to rein in inflation that surged to 7.79 percent in April.—Xinhua

Japan says Sakhalin energy projects do not contradict Russia sanctions

JAPAN has no plan to pull out of two major energy projects off the Russian island of Sakhalin and the policy does not contradict the slew of sanctions it placed on Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine, a

senior government official said Sunday.

"If we give up our stakes and Russia gets them," Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiji Kihara said on an NHK television, energy imports could be

"more costly" for Japan in the long term.

He also said if Japan's stakes in the Sakhalin 1 and 2 oil and liquefied natural gas projects are obtained by other countries, there is a possibility that those not

imposing sanctions against Russia will benefit. With other Group of Seven major developed countries, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has recently said Japan will ban Russian oil imports "in principle."—Xinhua

New Zealand's largest exporters confident in Chinese market

NEW Zealand's largest exporters of dairy products, kiwifruits and lobsters have expressed confidence in the future of the Chinese market and further business expansion there.

"China is a very important market for Fonterra, about one third of our farmers' milk is sold as either ingredients, food service or consumer products across China," Tehhan Chow, Greater China CEO of Fonterra, a major dairy producer, told Xinhua on Saturday.

The Chinese economy has remained strong through COVID-19, Chow

said, adding that Fonterra's relationship with China dates back to 1973 and it has benefited greatly from the healthy bilateral relationship, as well as agreements and policies including a free trade agreement (FTA) and regional trade agreement.

"Noticeably there has been new demand for dairy products to support health and wellness, which also has created opportunities for our patented products including probiotic strains," he said.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, the world's largest marketer of ki-



A customer tastes kiwifruit imported from New Zealand at a farm export in Beijing, China, 28 November 2013. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

wifruit still sees strong growth potential in China, with demand forecast to double over the next five years, said Zespri's Exec-

utive Officer for Greater China Michael Jiang, adding China has been one of Zespri's largest markets for 20 years.—Xinhua

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

MINISTRY OF ENERGY

INVITATION FOR BIDS TO CONDUCT PETROLEUM OPERATIONS IN MYANMAR HTAUKSHABIN-KANNI OIL FIELD (2022)

1. The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar hereby announces Invitation of Sealed Bids for Petroleum Operations to be conducted in Myanmar Htaukshabin-Kanni Oil Field on Improved Petroleum Recovery (IPR) basis.

2. All interested parties are cordially invited to submit "the Letter of Expression of Interest", together with Company's Article of Association (AOA), Memorandum of Association (MOA) or Constitution of Company, Certificate of Incorporation, last (3) Years Annual Report and last (3) Years Financial Statement (or) Financial Report, Detail Track Record and related documents, "Myanmar Htaukshabin-Kanni Oil Field Bidding Round -2022", to the following address not later than (12:00) noon at the date of 17 June 2022:-

Director General
Oil and Gas Planning Department
Ministry of Energy
Building No.6, Nay Pyi Taw
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

3. The petroleum operations shall be conducted on improved petroleum recovery basis and the party(s), who desire to enter into the Improved Petroleum Recovery Contract (IPR) with the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) shall have technical competency, financial capability, experience, expertise and technical know how to conduct petroleum exploration and development works and must have good track record.

4. The potential bidders will be pre-qualified and selected. Then the potential bidders who passed pre-qualification will be presented with General Overview of Htaukshabin-Kanni Oil Field's data and information free of charge by Geological/ Geophysical Team of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise.

5. The potential bidders will be explained and provided with Standard Terms and Conditions by Oil and Gas Planning Department in order to submit proposal(s).

6. The potential bidders will have to submit the proposal(s) together with proposed Terms and Conditions.

7. The potential bidders' proposed Terms and Conditions will be assessed and the best offered Terms and Conditions will be selected for awarding.

8. If the potential bidder is foreign-owned company, such potential bidder will have to submit at least one Myanmar National owned company for cooperation.

9. The pre-qualified bidders can contact to the following address:-
Director General
Oil and Gas Planning Department
Ministry of Energy
Building No.6, Nay Pyi Taw
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Tel: 95-067 3 411 046
Fax: 95-067 3 411 213
Email: oilandgasplanningdepartment@gmail.com

Note: For further inquiry (and/or) information, please contact the followings:-

(1) Director General
Oil and Gas Planning Department
Ministry of Energy, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Tel: 95-067 3 411 046
Fax: 95-067 3 411 213
Email: oilandgasplanningdepartment@gmail.com

(2) Managing Director
Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ministry of Energy, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Tel: 95-067 3 411 055/ 3 411 056
Fax: 95-067 3 411 178/ 3 411 125
Email: mogemdooffice4163@gmail.com

(3) Myanmar Embassies in respective Countries

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GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka lifts curfew for Buddhist festival

SRI Lankan authorities lifted a nationwide curfew Sunday for an important Buddhist festival, with celebrations muted as the island weathers a worsening economic crisis.

A countrywide stay-home order has been in place for most of the week after mob violence left nine dead and over 225 wounded, sparked by attacks on peaceful demonstrators by government loyalists.

In recent weeks, protesters across the Buddhist-majority nation have demanded the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa over Sri Lanka's worst economic crisis in its history as an independent nation.

Shortages of food, fuel and medicines, along with record



Vesak is the most important religious event on Sri Lanka's calendar but has not been fully staged for years, after 2019's Easter Sunday attacks and then the pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

inflation and lengthy blackouts, have brought severe hardships to the country's 22 million people.

Sunday marks Vesak, the most important religious event on Sri Lanka's calendar, which

celebrates Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.

The government also an-

nounced it was lifting the curfew for the day without saying when or whether it would be reimposed.

But the ongoing crisis prompted the government to cancel its plans to mark the festival, which had been scheduled at a temple in the island's south.

"Given the economic situation of the government and other constraints, we are not having this year's state festival at the Kuragala temple as planned," a Buddhist Affairs ministry official told AFP.

The official said Buddhists were free to hold their own celebrations, including the mass meditation and Buddhist sermons traditionally held during the festival.—AFP

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Latest developments

Intense battles in the east

INTENSE fighting rages in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region, where Russia has been concentrating its forces without making significant progress. Ukrainian forces repulsed Russian attempts to cross a river and encircle the city of Severodonetsk, says Serhiy Gaidai, governor of the eastern Luhansk region.

"There's heavy fighting on the border with Donetsk region, from the side of Popasna," Gaidai says, reporting heavy losses of equipment and personnel by the Russians.—AFP

Japan says Sakhalin energy projects do not contradict Russia sanctions

TOKYO - Japan has no plan to pull out of two major energy projects off the Russian island of Sakhalin and the policy does not contradict the slew of sanctions it placed on Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine, a senior government official said Sunday.

"If we give up our stakes and Russia gets them," Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiji Kihara said on an NHK television, energy imports could be "more costly" for Japan in the long term.—Kyodo

G-7 pledges to tighten sanctions on Russia

FOREIGN ministers from the Group of Seven nations pledged Saturday to strengthen economic sanctions on Russia over its military aggression on Ukraine and to stand in unity to support the Ukrainian people.

In a joint statement issued after their three-day talks in Weissenhaus in northern Germany, the G-7 also agreed to take measures to ease the war's repercussions such as energy and food supply disruptions and to speed up efforts to phase out their dependence on Russian energy resources.—Kyodo

Putin says Finland's application for NATO membership a 'mistake'

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin and his Finnish counterpart, Sauli Niinisto, held a phone conversation on Saturday and discussed Helsinki's intention to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In the call initiated by Helsinki, Niinisto informed Putin of Finland's decision to seek NATO membership in the next few days, according to a press release by the president's office of Finland.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said in a statement that "Putin stressed that abandoning the traditional policy of military neutrality would be a mistake, since there are no threats to Finland's security."

Putin expressed concern that should Helsinki follow



This picture taken on 9 March 2022 shows Finnish soldiers in local defence exercise in Taipalsaari near Lappeenranta and close to the border with Russia, south-eastern Finland. **PHOTO: AFP**

through with plans to join NATO, it may have a negative impact on Russia-Finland relations, the statement said.

When discussing the situation in Ukraine, Putin said peace

talks between Russian and Ukrainian representatives "were actually suspended by Kiev that does not show interest in a serious and constructive dialogue."—Xinhua

Kyiv renames iconic Soviet monument

KYIV on Saturday renamed an iconic Soviet-era arch symbolising ties with Moscow to "Arch of the Freedom of the Ukrainian People", the mayor said.

The symbolic move comes after the city demolished a statue of two workers — one Russian and the other Ukrain-

ian — under the arch last month.

"The city council today decided to 'de-communise' the name of the Arch of the Friendship of the Peoples. It will now be the Arch of the Freedom of the Ukrainian People," the capital's mayor Vitali Klitschko

said on Telegram.

He said officials had also "approved a list of more than 40 monuments and memorial plaques that will have to be removed from streets and buildings of the capital and transferred to a museum of totalitarianism."—AFP



Myanmar Wushu team wins one gold, two silvers, two bronzes in SEA Games

THE last day of the SEA Games' Wushu competition was held on 15 May with team Myanmar winning one gold medal.

On the last day of the competition, the Myanmar Wushu team further won one gold, one silver and one bronze medal.

The SEA Games' Wushu Championships were held for three days from 13 to 15 May.

Myanmar team missed medals in the first day competition but won one silver medal starting from the second day.

The Myanmar Wushu team won the gold medal on the last day of the competition, which was won by Thein Than Oo in the (Taolu) Nangun event.

Sandi Oo and Su Hlaing



Thein Than Oo seen with gold medal after the men's (Taolu) Nangun event in Viet Nam on 15 May. **PHOTO:MWF**

Win won silver medal each in women's Taolu Chansu event and women's Sanshou 60-kilo

event while Cherry Than won bronze medal in the women's Sanshou 52-kilo event.

Meanwhile, Myo Min Htet also won one bronze medal in the men's Sanshou 70-kilo event.

With the exception of Timor-Leste, 10 Southeast Asian nations competed in the SEA Games' Wushu sport.

The host team, Vietnam, won 10 gold medals, three silver medals and seven bronze medals in the Wushu competition and stood as first.

Myanmar was placed in the fifth place of the competition with winning one gold, two silver and two bronze medals.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Myanmar women's team sails into semifinal with 1-0 win over Singapore

MYANMAR women's football team already advanced to the semifinal of the SEA Games women's football tourney after beating Singapore team 1-0 in the Group B.

The Myanmar team beat Singapore and missed out on the first place in the group due to a narrow result.

Thailand earned the top position of the group and also reached semifinal after trouncing Laos.

The Myanmar team played with their advantage from the beginning but their finishing works were weak. Team players struggled to score due to their inability to surpass Singapore's defensive moves till the 90th minute-mark.

In the first half, Myanmar team had three chances to score but Win Theingi Tun and Khin Malar Tun could not transform them into goals.

In the second half, Myanmar team changed players and attacked hard, but struggled to score and won the game only after the injury time.

The goal was scored by striker Win Theingi Tun in 90 + 4 minutes.

The semi-finals will continue on 18 May, with Myanmar taking on host Vietnam, and Thailand is facing the Philippines.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM



Myanmar team player (white) attempts to surpass the Singaporean defender during their last group match in Viet Nam on 15 May 2022. **PHOTO:VNA**

SEA Games Men's Football: Myanmar team says goodbye to Group A



Myanmar team striker Lwin Moe Aung (white) attempts to make a pass over Indonesian defenders during their last group match at Viet Tri Stadium in Phu Tho, Viet Nam on 15 May, 2022. **PHOTO:MFF**

THE last day of the 31st SEA Games Men's Football Tournament Group A was held on 15 May and Myanmar team lost and was disqualified to reach the semifinal. Myanmar lost 3-1 to Indonesia in their last group match.

Myanmar team's loss was due to conceding two goals in the first 10 minutes of the match and

poor defensive moves.

Team Myanmar had reached the semi-finals three times in a row in the previous SEA Games in 2015, 2017, and 2019 but is now content with the group stage.

Myanmar could not control the Indonesian attack from the beginning of the match and gave a series of chances. Egy Maulana

scored the ice breaker for Indonesia in the 6th minute-mark and Witan Sulaeman, the second goal in the 9th minute-mark. In the 15th minute, Maung Maung Lwin was substituted for Ye Lin Htet and after that, the Myanmar team's attacking style improved and the scoring chances were restored. However, Masalini scored the third goal for Indonesia near the end of the first half. In the second half, Win Naing Tun scored a goal in the 66th minute for team Myanmar.

After that, Myanmar team tried to score more but failed to make equalizers and ended by 1-3 at the final whistle. Host Viet Nam won the group with ten points of three wins and one draw while Indonesia earned the second place of the group with nine points from three wins and one loss.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Myanmar volleyball team beat Malaysia team 3-0 in SEA Games

THE second day of Group A of the SEA Games men's volleyball tournament was held in Viet Nam on 15 May, and team Myanmar got the victory with a 3-0 win over Malaysia.

The Myanmar team, which lost to Indonesia in the first match of the group, can only hope to reach the semi-finals if they win this match.

Team Myanmar dominated the whole game with 25-13, 25-19, and 25-22 points against Malaysia.

The last match of the group will be played on 18 May against host Vietnam.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

SEA Games Women's Futsal: Myanmar loses 0-6 to Viet Nam

THE first day of the group stage of the SEA Games Women's Futsal Tournament started on 15 May, and the Myanmar team suffered a 0-6 loss to host Viet Nam. Team Myanmar could not play well against the host team and faced the big loss.

The Myanmar team conceded four goals in the first half and two more in the second half. The Myanmar women's

futsal team, which has been away from international competitions for many years, is struggling to get good results in the first match. In the other match on the first day of the group, Thailand beat Malaysia 4-0.

The second day of the group continues on 17 May and Myanmar will take on Thailand while Malaysia will face host Viet Nam.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM



Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.

- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

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



Myanmar Wushu team win gold medal in 31st SEA Games

Maung Thein Than Oo competed in the Nan-gun event of Wushu sport in the 31st Southeast Asian Games in Viet Nam and won the fourth gold medal for Myanmar.

The Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs on behalf of the Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presented US\$3,000 as reward to gold medalist Maung Thein Than Oo.

In the afternoon, Wushu Sanshou event continued, Ma Hsu Hlaing Win in the 60-kilo competition won one silver medal.

In the women's Sanshou 52-kg event, Ma Cherry Than earned one bronze medal and in the men's Sanshou 70-kilo competition,



Maung Myo Min Htet won another bronze medal.

In the afternoon, Myanmar national men's football team played against Indonesia team and Myanmar faced a 1-3 loss to Indonesia in their last

group match played at Viet Tri Stadium in Phu Tho, Viet Nam.

At the same time,

31st SEA Games medals list

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Vietnam	57	41	39	137
Thailand	21	18	44	83
Philippines	19	23	36	78
Indonesia	17	26	18	61
Malaysia	16	11	33	60
Singapore	9	15	17	41
Myanmar (Burma)	4	5	9	18
Cambodia	1	4	10	15
Brunei	1	1	1	3
Laos	0	1	10	11



Myanmar national women's football team played against Singapore team and won by 1-0 and team Myanmar has already advanced to the semifinals.

Myanmar competed in the track and field, Archery, Billiards,

Chess, Football, Futsal, Golf, Volleyball, Wushu and bodybuilding competitions yesterday.

Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee U Min Thein Zan, Director-General of the Department of Sports and Physical Education U Tun

Myint Oo, Team Administrators and coaches, Myanmar sports teams and officials attended the sporting events.

Myanmar is currently ranking the 7th in the SEA Games with four gold medals, five silver medals and nine bronze medals.—MNA