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

13th Waning of Tabodwe 1383 ME
28 February 2022

AS it is necessary to continuously control infection of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), it is hereby announced that public requests, orders, notifications and directives (except for easing the restrictions) released by the Union-level organizations and Union ministries up to 28 February 2022 have been extended until 31 March 2022 for prevention, control and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

All need to take care of infection of COVID-19 and Omicron on the day of offering religious titles and dry rations: Vice-Senior General

AS the offering of religious titles has been held at the national level on a grand scale since ancient Myanmar's monarchical eras, subcommittees and committees need to systematically hold the ceremony in harmony, Chairman of the Panel of Patrons Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win at the coordination meeting between members of the panel of patrons and those from the Leading Committee on Organizing the 2022 religious title offering and rice offering ceremony of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting, the Vice-Senior General said the religious title offering and rice offering ceremonies will be held in Nay Pyi Taw in March 2022 with the formation of the panel of patrons and the leading committee under Notification No 26/2022 dated 26 January 2022.

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State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win presides over the coordination meeting of the panel of patrons and the Leading Committee on Organizing the 2022 religious title offering and rice donation ceremony, in Nay Pyi Taw on 28 February 2022.

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Objectives of 77th 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

Judgements given on 4 special civil appeal cases; 4 special civil appeal cases heard

A special appeal tribunal, consisting of Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo and Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union U Myo Maung, U Kyi Thein, U Khin Maung Gyi, and U Tin Hone was convened yesterday morning at Office No. (1) of Supreme Court of the Union and passed the judgements on four special civil appeal cases, special civil appeal case No. 32/2020 (Yangon), 33/2020 (Mandalay), 34/2020 (Mandalay) and 40/2020 (Magway).

In addition, a total of four special civil appeal cases, special civil appeal case No. 19/2020 (Shan), 38/2020 (Taninthayi), 45/2020 (Kayin), and 46/2020 (Taninthayi) were heard in line with the COVID-19 prevention and control guidelines. — MNA

1,693 new cases of
COVID-19 reported on
28 February,
total figure rises to 587,891

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **587,891** after **1,693** new cases were reported on 28 February 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **534,774** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **19,368** after **3** died.—MNA

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Statement on Ceasefire and Perpetual Peace

13th Waning of Tabodwe 1383 ME
28 February 2022

1. The Tatmadaw has been assuming the State responsibilities in accord with the Constitution (2008) for more than one year. The State Administration Council laid down and is implementing the five-point road map for ensuring peace and stability of the State, unity, development and flourishing of a discipline, multiparty democratic system, and adopted a policy that **“Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreement set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)”** as the fourth point of the road map. In order to implement such a process, the State Administration Council is realizing the peace process in continuation in accord with the NCA.
2. It is very important to restore perpetual peace so as to build a Union based on democracy and federalism. The State Administration Council could mark the Diamond Jubilee Union Day together with all ethnic national people of the Union as a very significant ceremonial observance in the history of the nation and strived for fostering the Union spirit, which is of great importance in strengthening and integration of the Union, in the souls of all ethnic national people.
3. The gala ceremony was attended by seven NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations and four more ethnic armed organizations which have not signed the NCA yet. On the occasion, they attended the preliminary perpetual peace discussions to talk about the peace issues in order to build the Union based on democracy and federalism.
4. The Tatmadaw ceased the fire from 21 December 2018 to 28 February 2022 when 20 statements on a ceasefire were issued. After meeting with the Cambodian Prime Minister who is also in the capacity of the Alternate Chair of the ASEAN who paid a working visit to Myanmar on 7 and 8 January 2022, a joint statement of both countries was released to extend the ceasefire till the end of this year. Moreover, the speech to mark the one-year responsibilities discharged by the State Administration Council expressed the guarantee for the ceasefire till the end of 2022.
5. As such, this statement was hereby expressed that the suspension of Tatmadaw's military operations was extended from 1 March 2022 to 31 December 2022 with the aim of restoring the perpetual peace across the nation, enhancing the peace process, and effectively carrying out the prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19 pandemic throughout the nation, except the period when security and administrative mechanism of the State were encroached and attacked in addition to defence and administrative issues of the State in the entire nation.
6. As we all need to follow the democratic practices to seek the solutions in discussions for leading to the destiny of perpetual peace the entire people aspire, all ethnic armed organizations and stakeholders are requested to beef up the practical participation in the implementation of the peace processes with might and main.

Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

International flight restrictions extended until 31 March

THE Ministry of Health has issued a directive on the temporary restriction of international commercial passenger flights to Myanmar on 29-3-2020 since it is crucial to control the spread of the COVID-19 disease in Myanmar.

With the permission of the Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), “Temporary Measures to

Prevent Importation of COVID-19 to Myanmar through Air Travel” was revised as “Temporary Measures to Prevent Importation of COVID-19 to Myanmar through Air Travel Issue-2” on (31-1-2022) till 23:59 hours on (28-2-2022) of Myanmar Standard Time.

Until now, the prevalence of the COVID-19 epidemic has risen in most parts of the world. With the permission of the Central Committee on Prevention,

Control and Treatment of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the effective period of the above directive has been extended to 23:59 hours of Myanmar Standard Time on 31 March 2022 to further prevent the risk of COVID-19 transmission via international air passengers into Myanmar.

Ministry of Transport and Communications

Further State Responsibilities to be discharged

- When the government declared State of Emergency and took State responsibilities under Section 417 of the Constitution, we put all our hearts and souls into the State responsibilities but we encountered domestic/foreign interferences.
- Individual human rights include respect for each other; Appreciation is the most important thing. Citizens can also claim their rights if they have a country.
- Despite the destruction of the country, there is no example in the world that protects the rights of individual citizens. The right of citizens can only be claimed unless there are destructive elements.
- The idea that one must prioritize the interests of other people over their own sake is such hypocrisy for democracy.
- The actions against the government seem to be an opinion that is also against the citizens who are working for the country conscientiously.
- The defence services of the country mean to protect the public at the lowest level and our three main national causes at the highest level. We, the military members, discharge defence duties for the sakes of people with our own wishes but not for private intentions.

(Excerpt from the speech made by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on one-year State responsibilities discharged by the State Administration Council on 1-2-2022)

All need to take care of infection of COVID-19 and Omicron ...

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This year, he added that there will be 284 title recipients including 272 members of the Sangha at home and 12 members of the Sangha abroad in addition to 41 nuns. A total of 27 local laypersons and one woman abroad, totalling 28 will accept the titles. Nine of them are missionary persons and 19 will be recipients of the Sasana Nuggaha title. A foreign title recipient woman will receive Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja title.

The Vice-Senior General stressed that all need to take care of infection of COVID-19 and Omicron on the day of offering religious title and dry rations. Hence, the ceremony must be held in accord with the COVID-19 restrictions. The ceremony will be held in accord with the provisions of Sections 361, 362 and 363 of the Constitution (2008).

Chairman of the Leading Committee Union Minister for



The Vice-Senior General views the religious titles to be offered.

Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko reported on plans to offer religious titles and Chairman of

the working committee Deputy Minister U Aye Tun on holding the religious title offering and

rice offering ceremonies.

Officials presented preparations for holding the cere-

mony. The meeting came to an end with the remarks by the Vice-Senior General. — MNA

Letter of Appreciation delivered to Myanmar delegation who attended the Public Hearing related to Preliminary Objections raised by Myanmar

THE Myanmar delegation led by the Agent of Myanmar, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing, the Alternate Agent of Myanmar, Union Minister for Legal Affairs Attorney-General of the Union Dr Thida Oo and the international counsels and advocates attended the public hearing relating to the preliminary objections raised by Myanmar concerning the

application filed by the Gambia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) alleging the Republic of the Union of Myanmar of violating the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Peace Palace, The Hague, the Netherlands from 21 to 28 February 2022.

It has been observed that the Agent of Myanmar, Un-

ion Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing and the international counsels and advocates — Dr Christopher Staker, Professor Stefan Talmon and Professor Robert Kolb made effective arguments before the Court from the legal perspective that the Court lacks jurisdiction and/or The Gambia's Application is inadmissible.

On behalf of the Steering

Committee on Lawsuit at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the Chairperson of the Steering Committee, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin delivered the Letter of Appreciation to the members of the Myanmar delegation, responsible persons and staff from the headquarters and the Myanmar Embassy in Brussels and well-wishers who supported

the Myanmar delegation, for their tireless and commendable efforts in defending the interest of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and its people, and to the international counsels and advocates— Dr Christopher Staker, Professor Stefan Talmon and Professor Robert Kolb for their outstanding legal work at the Court with dedication and professionalism.—MNA

CASE CONCERNING APPLICATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE
PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE

(THE GAMBIA V. MYANMAR)

25 FEBRUARY 2022

SPEECH BY PROFESSOR STEFAN TALMON
SECOND PRELIMINARY OBJECTION**Madam President, Mr Vice-President, distinguished Members of the Court**

1. My task today is to respond to The Gambia's observations made in response to Myanmar's second preliminary objection – The Gambia's lack of standing in this case.

2. On Wednesday, you heard that Myanmar's argument was “absurd”, “abject”, “ahistorical”, “erroneous”, “tenuous”, “concocted”, and “unfortunate”¹ – what you did not hear was any positive argument that The Gambia has standing in these proceedings.

Distinction between invocation of responsibility and standing

3. Let me start by saying that The Gambia in its oral presentation – as in its written observations – constantly and consistently conflates or, better, mixes up the invocation of responsibility and the standing of a State in proceedings before this Court. For example, The Gambia speaks of “standing ... to invoke the State responsibility of the perpetrator of genocidal violence [*la qualité pour invoquer la responsabilité de l'Etat auteur des violences génocidaires*].”² Let me be clear: the invocation of responsibility and standing are two distinct concepts. The ILC expressly noted this in its commentary on the Articles on State Responsibility, which I quoted on Monday.³

4. Myanmar addresses the question of the invocation of responsibility only because The Gambia erroneously equates a right to invoke the responsibility of a State with standing before this Court and draws the conclusion that whenever there is a right to invoke the responsibility of a State there must automatically be standing. This simply is not the case.

Invocation of responsibility and the nationality of claims rule

5. But let me address The Gambia's argument with regard to the invocation of responsibility.

6. First, contrary to The Gambia's assertion; Myanmar has not “accepted that The Gambia could invoke its international responsibility” [*admettait ... que la Gambie pouvait invoquer sa responsabilité internationale*] in the



present case.⁴ No such admission was made and no such conclusion can be drawn from the Court's finding in its Provisional Measures Order that “Myanmar accepts that ... The Gambia has an interest in Myanmar's compliance with [*erga omnes partes*] obligations [*Le Myanmar admet que ... la Gambie a un intérêt à ce qu'il s'acquitte de ces obligations [erga omnes partes]*.”⁵

7. Second, and more importantly, The Gambia cannot invoke Myanmar's responsibility with regard to alleged acts of genocide committed against non-nationals outside their own territory because of the nationality of claims rule.

8. The Gambia cannot explain away Article 44, subparagraph (a), of the Articles on State Responsibility which provides: “The responsibility of a State may not be invoked if ... the claim is not brought in accordance with any applicable rule relating to the nationality of claims [*La responsabilité de l'Etat ne peut pas être invoquée si ... La demande n'est pas présentée conformément aux règles applicables en matière de nationalité des réclamations*].”

9. The text of the provision is clear and unequivocal and so is the ILC's commentary. There is no exception to the nationality of claims rule for certain treaties or certain types of obligations.

10. The Gambia seizes on the phrase “any applicable rule relating to the na-

tionality of claims” [*aux règles applicables en matière de nationalité des réclamations*] and the statement in the commentary that the “rule of nationality of claims... is a general condition for the invocation of responsibility in cases where it is applicable [*la règle de la nationalité des réclamations ... est une condition générale de l'invocation de la responsabilité dans les cas où elle est applicable*].”⁶ Let me first highlight that the ILC itself calls the nationality of claims rule “a general condition for the invocation of responsibility [*une condition générale de l'invocation de la responsabilité*]” – so the nationality of claims requirement is the rule, not the exception, in all cases in which it is applicable.

11. It is correct that the nationality of claims rule is not applicable in all cases of State responsibility, but it is applicable in all cases in which a State invokes the responsibility of another State for an injury caused by an internationally wrongful act of that State to a natural or legal person. Thus, the rule is clearly applicable to the present case. The Gambia invokes the responsibility of Myanmar not for its own injuries but for injuries allegedly caused to individuals in Myanmar's northern Rakhine State.

12. So, what arguments has The Gambia put before you for its contention that in case of the Genocide Convention, the

nationality of claims rule is not applicable. First, it argued that “nothing in the Convention suggests that it would be” [*rien dans le texte de la convention ne donne à penser qu'elle le serait*] applicable.⁷ But, one must ask: must there be an indication or even express provision in the Convention on the application of the nationality of claims rule? The Genocide Convention deals with primary obligations. The nationality of claims rule, in the context of State responsibility, is a secondary rule: it deals with the general conditions under international law for a State to be considered responsible. These secondary rules apply to a breach of all treaties, so there is no need to deal with these general conditions in each and every individual treaty. The Gambia has not provided any example of a treaty that expressly provides for such application – the reason is simple: there is none. The application of the nationality of claims rule does not depend on the treaty, but on whether injuries have been caused to individuals.

13. The Gambia, secondly, advances that the application of the nationality of claims rule in the case of the Genocide Convention “would be contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention [*contraire à l'objet et au but de la convention*].”⁸ However, The Gambia does not explain why the application of a general, secondary rule would be contrary to the Convention's object and purpose. First of all, The Gambia does not clarify the object and purpose of the Convention but simply states that genocide is contrary to “the spirit and purpose of the United Nations [*l'esprit et aux fins des Nations Unies*]” and that it “shocks the conscience of mankind” [*bouleverse la conscience humaine*].⁹ This says nothing about the object and purpose of the Convention and why a general, secondary rule of international law should not be applicable in the present case.

14. It is submitted that the object and purpose of the Convention were to “condemn and punish genocide as a ‘crime under international law’ [*de condamner et de réprimer le génocide comme « un crime de droit des gens »*]”

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1 CR 2022/2, p. 30, para. 9; p. 31, para. 11; p. 59, para. 5; p. 34, para. 18; p. 31, para. 11; p. 63, para. 19; p. 32, para. 14; respectively.

2 CR 2022/2, p. 31, para. 9.

3 See CR 2022/1, p. 34, para. 38.

4 CR 2022/2, p. 29, para. 4.

5 Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar), Provisional Measures, Order of 23 January 2020, I.C.J.

Reports 2020, p. 3 at p. 16, para. 39.

6 Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, Commentary on Article 44, ILC Yearbook 2001, vol. II/2, p. 121, para. 2; POM, vol. III, Annex 69, p. 562.

7 CR 2022/2, p. 32, para. 13.

8 CR 2022/2, p. 32, para. 13.

9 Ibid.

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by establishing individual criminal responsibility for acts of genocide and to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice.¹⁰ The Convention must be seen against the background of the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crimes trials and not against any inter-State claims before this Court. Myanmar's argument is thus by no means "ahistorical".¹¹ The object and purpose of the Convention do not demand that any Contracting State can invoke the responsibility of every other Contracting State with regard to alleged acts of genocide committed against non-nationals outside their territory.

15. If the nationality of claims rule were, in fact, contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention, one may ask why reservations to Articles VIII and IX of the Convention should not also be contrary to the Convention's object and purpose – they too prevent the Contracting States from bringing alleged acts of genocide before the Court.

16. The application of the nationality of claims rule to the invocation of responsibility in case of injury to individuals may – in the words of The Gambia – lead to "unfortunate" [*malencontreuse*] results,¹² but The Gambia has not presented any convincing arguments why it should not be applicable in the present case.

17. The nationality of claims rule precludes The Gambia from invoking Myanmar's responsibility with regard to alleged acts of genocide committed against persons who are not its nationals. Thus, even if the invocation of responsibility had any bearing on the question of standing – which it has not – this could not establish standing in the present case.

Common interest insufficient to establish standing

Madam President, Members of the Court

18. The Gambia asserts that in case of the Genocide Convention standing does not require an individual legal interest, but that a common interest in compliance with the Convention suffices.¹³

19. It is correct that the Court held in its Provisional Measures Order that all States Parties to the Genocide Convention had such an interest and, on that basis, found that "The Gambia has *prima facie* standing to submit to it the dispute with Myanmar [*la Gambie a prima facie qualité pour lui soumettre le*

différend qui l'oppose au Myanmar]"¹⁴ The Court reached this decision on the basis of its findings in *Belgium v. Senegal* which – as I have demonstrated on Monday – can be distinguished both on grounds of fact and the law.

20. I would also like to reiterate the Court's own statement in paragraph 85 of the Provisional Measures Order that "the decision given in the present proceedings in no way prejudices ... any questions relating to the admissibility of the Application or to the merits themselves. It leaves unaffected the right of the [parties] to submit arguments and evidence in respect of those questions [*la décision rendue en la présente procédure ne préjuge en rien ... aucune question relative à la recevabilité de la requête ou au fond lui-même. Elle laisse intact le droit des [parties] de faire valoir leurs moyens et éléments de preuve à cet égard*]." ¹⁵

21. As The Gambia has noted, new argument has been submitted at this hearing on the question of admissibility which in Myanmar's view shows that The Gambia lacks standing in the present case.

22. If I may add, this would not be the first case where the Court decided at the provisional measures stage on a *prima facie* basis that it had jurisdiction or a claim was admissible, only to hold later that it was without jurisdiction or that the claim was inadmissible.¹⁶ It is thus far-fetched to assert that by welcoming the Provisional Measures Order the UN General Assembly and the member States confirmed that they "do consider The Gambia's standing to be established."¹⁷

23. The Gambia tries to dismiss Myanmar's argument based on paragraph 91 of the Court's judgment in *Barcelona Traction* because the paragraph does not expressly mention the Genocide Convention.¹⁸

24. This paragraph, however, deals with the general question of standing in case of violations of obligations *erga omnes partes* taking such obligations under universal human rights instruments only as an example. The Court held that the *erga omnes partes* character of these obligations may have been established to protect a common interest but that these instruments

"do not confer on States the capacity to protect the victims of infringements

of such rights *irrespective of their nationality* [*ne reconnaissent pas qualité aux Etats pour protéger les victimes de violations de ces droits indépendamment de leur nationalité*]." ¹⁹

25. The question may thus be asked why the nationality of claims rule is applicable to obligations *erga omnes partes* in universal human rights instruments, but should not be applicable to the same such obligations under the Genocide Convention. The Gambia has offered no answer to this question.

26. In the *Barcelona Traction* case, the Court contrasted the situation under universal human rights instruments with the situation under the European Convention on Human Rights, another treaty established to protect the collective interest of all States Parties. The European Convention in its Article 33 expressly vests a right in all Contracting States to refer any alleged breach of the Convention to the European Court of Human Rights. This shows that, absent an express authorization of standing, the mere fact that a treaty is established to protect the common interest does not suffice to establish the standing of all Contracting States in any given case.

27. The Gambia also seeks to dismiss the Court's finding in paragraph 185 of the *Bosnian Genocide* case that a claim with regard to non-nationals "could raise questions about the legal interest or standing of the Applicant [*pourrait soulever certaines interrogations quant à l'intérêt juridique ou à la qualité pour agir du demandeur*]"²⁰ For The Gambia this passage is irrelevant because the Court did not decide these questions. But this misses the point. The fact that the Court felt it necessary to raise the question shows that the finding of a common interest of the parties of the Genocide Convention does not settle the question of standing.

The Gambia's novel definition of standing

Madam President, Members of the Court

28. Let me now turn to the Gambia's novel definition of standing. While the Court has defined standing as "legal right or interest regarding the subject-matter [*droit ou intérêt juridique au regard de l'objet de la demande*]" of a party's claim.²⁰ The Gambia now offers you a new definition. Standing now supposedly requires "nothing more

than the interest in respecting the rules at the heart of the dispute [*rien d'autre que l'intérêt pour le respect des règles qui sont au cœur du différend*]"²¹

29. This new definition calls for several observations.

30. First, this is a purely results-driven definition. A new definition has been concocted only to prove that the requirements of the new definition are met in the present case.

31. Second, the case of the "SS Wimbledon" is a bad starting point for any new general definition of standing, as standing in that case, was based on Article 386, paragraph 1, of the Versailles Peace Treaty which provided that in the event of a violation of certain provisions of the Treaty, "any interested Power [*toute Puissance intéressée*]" could bring the case before the Permanent Court of International Justice.²² Article 386, like Article 33 of the European Convention on Human Rights, thus provided an exceptional authorization of standing.

32. Third, there is no support for this new definition in the jurisprudence of the Court. On the contrary, the Court uses the terms "standing [*la qualité pour agir*]" and "legal interest [*l'intérêt juridique*]" interchangeably as shown in the *Bosnian Genocide* case.²³

Madam President, Members of the Court.

33. Let me conclude again with a general observation.

34. Listening to The Gambia's conclusions on Wednesday, and its assertion that it has the standing to bring this case against Myanmar because any other finding would "seriously undermine the value of the Convention" reminded me of a line in the poem "The Impossible Fact" by German poet Christian Morgenstern: "For, he reasons pointedly / That which must not, cannot be."

35. But this is not the method of reasoning to be applied by the Court. Myanmar, therefore, invites the Court to find, in accordance with the established law on the admissibility of claims, that The Gambia lacks standing in the present case, and that, accordingly, its application be dismissed as inadmissible.

36. I thank the Court for its kind attention.

37. Madam President, may I now ask you to call on Professor Kolb to present Myanmar's third preliminary objection.



10 Reservations to the Convention on Genocide, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1951, p. 15 at p. 23; United Nations General Assembly Resolution 96(I), 11 December 1946, MG, vol. II, Annex 4.

11 CR 2022/2, p. 59, para. 5.

12 CR 2022/2, p. 32, para. 14.

13 CR 2022/2, p. 32-33, paras. 15, 16.

14 Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar), Provisional Measures, Order of 23 January 2020, I.C.J. Reports 2020, p. 3 at p. 17, para. 42.

15 Ibid., p. 30, para. 85.

16 See Anglo-Iranian Oil Co (United Kingdom v. Iran), Order of 5 July 1951, I.C.J. Reports 1951, p. 89 at p. 93, and *ibid.*, Jurisdiction, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1952, p. 93 at p. 114; Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial

Discrimination (Georgia v. Russian Federation), Provisional Measures, Order of 15 October 2008, I.C.J. Reports 2008, p. 353 at p.388, para. 117, and *ibid.*, Preliminary Objections, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2011, p. 70 at p. 140, para. 184.

17 CR 2022/2, p. 58, para. 5.

18 CR 2022/2, p. 34, para. 20.

19 *Barcelona Traction*, Light and Power Company, Limited, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1970, p. 3 at p. 47, para. 91 (*italics added*).

20 South West Africa, Second Phase, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1966, p. 6 at p. 18, para. 4.

21 CR 2022/2, p. 35, para. 24.

22 Case of the "SS Wimbledon", Judgment of 17 August 1923, P.C.I.J. Series A, No. 1, p. 20.

23 Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2007, p. 43 at p. 120, para. 185.

Ministry of Health holds appointment ceremony of fresher nurses



A ceremony to appoint fresher nurses was held at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Health yesterday.

First, Union Minister Dr Thein Khaing Win said that it can

provide the needs of nurses/midwives in conducting COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities out of the five-point roadmap of the State Administration Council. The min-

istry drafts the National Health Project, Rural Health Development Project, 30-year Myanmar Health Vision as per the National Health Policy to increase the healthcare coverage throughout

the country, including rural areas. The government also emphasizes health-related human resources to provide health projects. In reform processes of the government, it sets to conduct systematic human resource production, usage, deployment and management and to produce adequate qualified human resources.

The Ministry of Health also produces qualified doctors, nurses, midwives and medics yearly to provide health services for the people.

The Union minister also instructed the new appointments to serve assignments dutifully, follow the professional ethics, communicate the people warmly and keep the mindset of Florence Nightingale, founder of nursing and four Myanmar nurses who won Nightingale awards and not

to abandon the patients at any circumstances.

Then, Deputy Minister Prof Dr Aye Tun handed over the appointment certificates to the representatives of the graduated nurses from the nursing schools of Nay Pyi Taw, Monywa and Loikaw.

A total of new 684 nurses were appointed yesterday —65 from the nursing schools of Nay Pyi Taw, Monywa and Loikaw at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Health while another 619 from 22 nursing/midwifery training schools in respective regions and states. Moreover, the remaining 165 midwives who will complete training soon will be appointed as quickly as possible and further nursing and midwifery training and bridging courses will be also conducted. — MNA

Kayah State ex-chief minister U L Phaung Sho, municipal and social affairs ex-minister U Aung Kyaw Htay charged under anti-corruption law

THE Anti-Corruption Commission inspected the complaints against Kayah State ex-chief minister U L Phaung Sho. According to the inspection, Kayah State former chief minister U L Phaung Sho and municipal and social affairs former minister U Aung Kyaw Htay transferred a government-owned land plot (authorized by the government) worth more than K65 million in 2017 with the reason of achieving religious title conferred by the government and got the land back via donation.

The Kayah State former chief minister received K11 million from the

winning bidders of tenders for the construction of a two-storey building with four rooms on each floor in Loilemlay and Nangmelkhon as the general administrative department staff housing in the 2018-2019FY, LED Board and Transformer of state Sports and Physical Education Department and a two-storey staff housing with eight rooms on each floor for state Highways Department. He also took a bribe of K8.2 million from a company that won the tender of constructing the platform of Loikaw internal road in the 2019-2020FY, slab culvert and two-storey office building of the

Agriculture Department.

In the 2018-2019FY, he did not follow Directive No 1/2017 of the President's Office in inviting tender for the installation of electric lights in Kayah State government office and guesthouse and CCTV at Loikaw Airport. Therefore, it caused losses in revenue and the savings fund of the government.

Kayah State former chief minister U L Phaung Sho and municipal and social affairs former minister U Aung Kyaw Htay were charged under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption Law at the Loikaw Myoma police station on 27 February.

According to the further inspection, U L Phaung Sho used more than K234 million out of K311 million received from the rental of 18 Kayah State-owned heavy machinery vehicles, which were bought at K1,040 million of State budget through the tender system, without registering in the departmental financial data.

Moreover, the arrangements are being made to take further action under the law for leasing Kayah State Day Ground, where Kayah State Day celebrated, to a company without inviting tender, according to the ACC. — MNA

Sagaing Region former chief minister Dr Myint Naing gets 21-year prison sentence with labour

THE Sagaing Region High Court sentenced former chief minister Dr Myint Naing to 21 years in prison with labour for seven criminal cases (from 1/2021 to 7/2021) yesterday, according to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

According to the investigation, Dr Myint Naing, during his tenure as the Chief Minister of the Sagaing Region Government, breached rules and regulations in conducting tenders with the capital fund for the 2020-2021 financial year, which has led to leaks of tender floor prices, making the state loss of benefits as 66 companies with a tender value of over K20,000 million won the tender according to the original floor

price.

He was found guilty for concealing the report of the investigation team on taking bribes of U Wai Lin Hlaing, staff officer of the Water Resource and Improvement of River Systems Department and Personal Assistant of former Minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Oo, and staff officer of the Department of General Administration U Myat Thant Zin, who carried out calling for tenders with the regional fund for the financial year 2020-2021, so that no action can be taken against them under the Anti-Corruption Law.

Due to his permission to a person to use 5.78 acres of lake owned

by the Sagaing Region Department of Fisheries after receiving bribes, the State has lost K867 million. He was also found guilty for asking for a Hijet vehicle worth K11 million to be used at his refuge from a company owner who had businesses in Monywa. Without the permission of the Central Committee on Management of Fallow Lands and Virgin Lands, a house was built on 2.85 acres of state-owned land adjacent to the refuge as the house of the in-charge of the refuge.

The former chief minister failed to follow and supervise the rules and regulations of the Myanmar Mining Law and Rules. Of the 243 small-scale gold

blocks and 47 blocks permitted from the 2018-2019 financial year to the 2019-2020 financial year, the State lost more than K2,900 million in revenue due to his permission to operate without collecting advance tax to the State budget.

Therefore, a case was filed against him under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption Law in the Sagaing Region High Court on 17 May 2021 and was heard in seven criminal cases from Criminal Case No.1/2021 to 7/2021. As he was found guilty for the cases, he was sentenced to 21 years in prison (three years for each case) with labour, according to the Anti-Corruption Commission. — MNA

India's policy changes indifferent to Myanmar green gram market

ALTHOUGH India imposed import restrictions on green gram which were previously traded with the relaxations, it will not pose a big impact to Myanmar's green gram market, according to the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

India is the main buyer of Myanmar's black gram and pigeon pea, whereas it constitutes only 12 per cent of overall green gram exports.

India restricted the importation of green gram to practise protectionism during the harvest time of India and intervene in the price not to fall below the minimum support price set by the State.

Despite the closure of the border posts, Myanmar's green grams are primarily delivered to China and Singapore through maritime trade. Additionally, it is also shipped to Indonesia, Malaysia and European countries.

With the foreign market access improving, the government and the association concerned



Despite the closure of the border posts, Myanmar's green grams are primarily delivered to China and Singapore through maritime trade. Additionally, it is also shipped to Indonesia, Malaysia and European countries.

suggested the growers increase green gram acreage starting from the previous years.

India's policy changes on green gram import will not affect Myanmar's market so the drastic price drop is unlikely to occur, Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization analyzed.

India put limitations on the

importation of green grams relaxations, according to Notification S.O 624 (E) of India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued on 11 February.

For black gram and pigeon pea, India extended relaxations of conditions regarding clearance consignment until 31 March 2022. However, import restric-

tion on the green gram as per the notification has been effective starting from 11 February.

The policy changes wreaked havoc on those green grams imported from Myanmar that have a bill of lading after 11 February.

Myanmar's Ministry of Commerce will negotiate with its Indian counterparts through

government-to-government relations.

Furthermore, the association concerned must strive for market stability and penetrate more external markets including European Union, which can offer a better price.

There are approximately 9.9 million acres of various beans and pulses across the country, with an annual production of 4.1 million tonnes. Myanmar shipped about 700,000 tonnes of green gram to 64 foreign trade partners in the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

Between 1 October 2021 and 4 February 2022 of the mini-budget period, 147,326 tonnes of green gram were delivered to the global market. Of them, 18,842 tonnes were sent to the Indian market. The prevailing prices of green gram move in the range of K1,900-K2,350 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) depending on the varieties, according to Bayintnaung wholesale market data. — NN/GNLM

Kyaukse growers enjoy bumper yield of turmeric plantation



Kyaukse township cultivated a total of 1,008 acres, including about 249 acres of turmeric in the Thintwe agricultural technology training centre, 750 acres in the Thindee agricultural technology training camp and nine acres in the Tamote agricultural technology training camp

THE local farmers from Kyaukse township, Mandalay region grew about 1,008 acres of turmeric plantation in the 2021-2022 financial year. The plantation is currently started harvesting and yielding abundantly. The turmeric price has also risen and brought the growers joy, said U Kyaw Win, a turmeric grower from Sapaetaw village.

The turmeric plants are grown with a patch that is three feet wide and one and a half feet high. There are two types of

turmeric species. Each species should be cultivated 5 inches apart from each other. Turmeric is a crop that grows well in the soil. So, it needs to be well covered with the soil and needed to be put in irrigation water to keep the soil moist.

Kyaukse township cultivated a total of 1,008 acres, including about 249 acres of turmeric in the Thintwe agricultural technology training centre, 750 acres in the Thindee agricultural technology train-

ing camp and nine acres in the Tamote agricultural technology training camp, according to the Township Department of Agriculture Land Management and Statistics.

Turmeric roots are widely used to make medicines. Spice is an important ingredient in treating arthritis, stomach ache and diarrhoea. Turmeric is used not only as a principal spice but also as a component in religious ceremonies in Southeast Asia. — Thet Maung /GNLM

Myanmar registers trade surplus as of 18 February

MYANMAR'S lower import as of 18 February in the current six-month mini-budget period (October 2021-March 2022) resulted in a positive trade balance of US\$249.3 million, according to data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

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

Between 1 Oct and 18 February, the country's exports were estimated at \$6.103 billion, imports were valued at \$5.85 billion this FY. The external trade drastically sank to \$11.958 billion from \$12.72 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

Myanmar witnessed a slump in exports and imports triggered by the coronavirus impacts. Myanmar's maritime trade climbed up yet the country witnessed a drop in the border trade following the closure of some border posts by main trade partner China.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and

finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

Moreover, import fall led to the largest trade surplus of \$677 million in the last FY2020-2021, with \$15.36 billion worth of exports outperforming \$14.69 billion worth of imports.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Ministry of Commerce is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. The country mainly imports essential goods, construction materials, capital goods, hygienic material and supporting products for export promotion and import substitution. The ministry has already notified the importers of the compulsory licencing for some imported items. Import licence can be sought from 1 February 2022, with an aim to respond to the post-COVID-19 economic recovery, ensure systematic import and export process and manage foreign capital inflows. —KK/GNLM

Sustain peace, prosperity and sovereignty of countries forever

THE absolute power of a country to exercise the highest authority under the law for addressing the internal affairs in its own territory without any outside control is identified as sovereignty. Wikipedia states that sovereignty is the supreme authority within a territory.

A sovereign country is criteria of covering the sovereignty of the State inside and outside the nation, with the exact amount of population, government for governing the areas and capability to associate with other sovereign countries. Generally, the sovereign country does not rely on other countries and accept any influence.

Despite well standing without recognition of any sovereign countries, a sovereign country will face difficulties in signing the agreements and treaties as well as enhancement of the diplomatic relations. It is because any country cannot stand tall in the global community in the long run as it is included in the global family. Roughly, the ward of a country indicates the sovereign country. Initially, the work of the country refers to the geographical area, and later, it modifies the sovereignty and addresses the geographical conditions. Indeed, sovereignty is not just a word in the dictionary but the highest status of the State to systematically operate the country as well as to protect the interests of the people. Only when the country is sovereign can the government bring about the interests of the State and the people. The sovereignty consists of executive, legislative and judicial powers for the nation. Apart from the three highest powers, the country must have defence and economic capabilities for keeping abreast of other countries. The political capabilities based on the three highest powers of the State can contribute to the development of defence and economic capabilities to enable the country to strengthen in the global society. If so, such a country will have the capability to face complicated international issues.

Any sovereign country with political capability cannot stand tall in the international community without powerful defence and economic capabilities. It is because these three capabilities are contributing to one another in overcoming various challenges of the country and the people.

Every country needs to pay respect to the sovereignty of other countries as well as can win the respect of others. Consequently, the global society will be peaceful and prosperous forever and will bring peace and tranquillity to the global people.

COVID vaccine effectiveness declines after 6 months without boosters: Study

A new study, released in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine by Providence, confirmed the overall effectiveness of vaccines in preventing severe infection resulting in hospitalization from COVID-19.

But the study also showed a substantial decline in protection after six months.

Completed by a team of clinicians and scientists in the Providence Research Network, the study examined data from nearly 50,000 hospital admissions between April and November of 2021, finding that vaccines were 94 per cent effective at preventing hospitalization 50-100 days after receiving the shot but fell to 80.4 per cent 200-250 days later, with even more rapid declines after 250 days.

The study was published in the journal 'The Lancet Respiratory Medicine'.

Effectiveness of vaccines

In addition to examining the effectiveness of vaccines over time, the Providence study was also able to identify factors associated with reduced vaccine effectiveness.

Key risk factors for a severe "breakthrough" infection included advanced age (80+), comorbidities such as cancer, transplants, chronic kidney disease, hypertension, or heart failure, the amount of time that had elapsed since being vaccinated, and the type of vaccine one received.

For the latter factor, the study found that the Moderna vaccine offered the best overall protection over time, while the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine offered initial protection equivalent to Moderna's but declined more rapidly over time. Persons receiving the Janssen vaccine also had higher odds of experiencing a severe breakthrough infection compared to Moderna.

"This data helps us understand differences in waning protection by vaccine type and identify the key risk factors for severe breakthrough infections to help inform the targeting of potential vaccine booster programmes," said Amy Compton-Phillips, M.D., Providence chief clinical officer.

"Unlike most other studies, our data stretched beyond six months, where we found evidence of rapidly waning protection, especially for patients 80 or older. We were also able to identify important differences by vaccine type and patient characteristics that should help inform potential booster programs," he added.

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

A network of researchers The Providence study, one of the largest of its type, showcased the value of connecting a network of researchers with large scale health care data to help health systems, public health agencies, policymakers, and patients and community members learn and react more quickly to emergent or endemic health challenges.

A network of researchers

Overall, the data supported the importance of vaccinations for protection against hospitalization, and also clearly evidences the need to boost that protection after 200 days, particularly for patients age 80 and up or with specific medical conditions that increase their risk of severe infection.



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

Additional protection may be warranted for everyone, but especially for these populations," said Ari Robisceck, M.D., Providence chief medical analytics officer.

"In addition to promoting general vaccine uptake, clinicians and policymakers should consider prioritizing booster shots toward those most at risk for severe Covid-19," he added.

SOURCE : ANI

China's dynamic zero-COVID policy people-centred, effective



A medical worker registers information for a child before she receives the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination site in Haidian District of Beijing, capital of China, 5 December 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA/REN CHAO

At a time when COVID-19 continues to ravage the globe, Chinese people's lives are being protected by the country's "dynamic zero-case policy".

Numerous touching stories have demonstrated how the Chinese government puts each and every life first in the face of the pandemic.

However, vulnerable groups in some countries have become the victims of their government's lax response. Take for instance, low-income and uninsured people in the United States are facing hurdles to obtain COVID-19 antiviral drugs, NBC News has reported.

Data from Johns Hopkins University Data from Johns Hopkins University showed that the total number of COVID-19 cases in the United States has topped 78 million, accounting for nearly 20 per cent of the total confirmed cases globally.

The United States' failed pandemic response has further exposed the absurdity of smear campaigns by some Western media against China's effective and timely COVID-19 response.

Some foreign virologists label China's strategy as extreme and unsustainable, and believe that it will bring "disastrous consequences" by devastating society and economy.

While every anti-epidemic strategy is dynamic and in no way impervious to change, China's approach, focusing on people's life and safety, has proved to be the most suitable containment measure for the world's most populous country.

Given the current situation, any reckless approach allowing the virus to go unchecked will undoubtedly result in massive infections in a country of 1.4 billion people.

If China were to follow the model of "coexistence with the virus," it would be reporting "hundreds of thousands" of daily new cases "even in a highly underestimated outbreak scenario and under the most optimistic assumptions," noted a study by the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.

There is no denying that stringent containment measures — quick lockdowns, mass screenings and large-scale inoculations — have a temporary impact on people's daily lives and local businesses. But a strict approach is also the fastest way to curb COVID-19 and ensure the resumption of normal life.

Zero-COVID strategy

Thanks to the zero-COVID strategy, life in China has largely roared back to normalcy starting from 2021. Social gatherings, music festivals, sports events and domestic travel have resumed despite temporary restrictions in the midst of sporadic outbreaks.

For the Chinese policymakers, there is no compromise when it comes to people's lives; they don't come with a price tag. Saving people's lives, which shall be the basis of freedom in any culture, also serves as a prerequisite for vanquishing the virus and reviving the economy.

Last year, in defiance of the great impact of the coronavirus pandemic, China recorded an 8.1-per-cent growth year on year, outpacing other major economies.

The strong domestic measures China has taken to control COVID-19 for the past two years have provided a solid basis to revitalize its economy, said Lawrence Loh, director of the Centre for Governance and Sustainability at the National University of Singapore.

Such an approach has kept China's casualties low since the start of the epidemic and propelled its economic recovery faster than that of other countries. Should China take a laid-back approach, the impact on the global pandemic fight and economic development would be unimaginable.

SOURCE : XINHUA

MYANMAR Daily Weather Report

(ISSUED at 7:00 pm Monday 28 February 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 1 March 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Kayin, Mon states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in upper Sagaing, Bago regions and Chin, Rakhine, Kayah states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of continuation of isolated rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi region.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 March 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 March 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 March 2022: Generally fair weather.

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

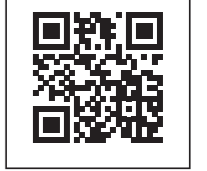
(ISSUED at 14:35 hour M.S.T.)

A slight earthquake of magnitude (4.5) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (13) miles north of Sagaing), latitude 22.08°N, longitude 96.01°E, depth (4) kilometers, about (8) miles west-northwest of Mandalay seismological observatory was recorded at (14) hr (24) min (55) sec M.S.T on 28 February, 2022.

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Tourism committees implement Shan state tourism development

SHAN State Tourism Committee (1/2022) meeting was held in Shan state government office meeting hall in Taunggyi town at 11 am on 28 February.

Shan State Tourism Committee Chairman State Chief Minister Dr Kyaw Tun said that the National Tourism Development Central Committee, Tourism Committee and Regional Tourism Work Committee have been formed under the Myanmar Tourism Law. These three committees are working on tourism development in Myanmar. Besides, for the development of tourism in Shan State, the members of the regional tourism committee are mainly implementing 13 points of the regional tourism committee as stipulated in the law. The tourism sector has



dropped significantly because of the current global pandemic. So, there is a need to operate the tourism sector with domestic travellers while there are no

international travellers. In carrying out the working process, more attention is needed to be paid to the COVID-19 rules and regulations.

There are about 420 hotels and lodges in Shan state. Out of them, only 311 hotels and lodges have been granted the regional level certificate while

eight houses have been granted the national level certificate.

For safety training, about 65 hotels and 1,296 trainees on three trips have been trained. Besides, 99 per cent of the hotels and guesthouses' staff have been vaccinated.

Then, Shan state Regional Tourism Committee secretary directorate of hotels and tourism director U Htein Aung Naing explained the current tourism situation.

Issues are being raised at the Shan State Tourism Committee (1/2022) meeting to make decisions and they are discussed in general.

After that, State Chief Minister Dr Kyaw Tun added some points for discussion and made concluding remarks, it is learnt. —Maung Maung Than (Taunggyi)/GNLM

Weaving and textile skills training courses conducted free of charge in Meiktila



The one-year training course covers machine weaving, bleaching and colouring, hand weaving, hand threading and traditional jap weaving, clothing design, clothing math, machine threading, fibre raw materials.

THE Weaving and Vocational Training School in Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region, is launching the weaving and textile skills

training courses to develop a new generation of skilled weavers, according to the school principal U Tha Wa.

The school offers free traditional weaving and machine weaving courses annually with the purpose of preserving the traditional Myanmar weaving and the traditional weaving of the ethnic nationalities, as well as to produce a new generation of weavers and to develop modern weaving techniques.

From 1 January 2022, 20 trainees are attending a one-year training course for weaving and textile skills and nine trainees are attending for a 6-month training course for hand weaving.

The one-year training course covers machine weaving, bleaching and colouring, hand weaving, hand threading and ethnic traditional weaving, textile design,

textile math, machine threading and fibre raw materials. In the six-month weaving course, the trainees are learning machine weaving, bleaching and colouring,

hand weaving, clothing design, clothing math, hand threading and ethnic traditional weaving daily from 8 am to 4 pm.—Thein Myint Kyaw (Meiktila)/GNLM



Trainees are seen learning weaving skills.

CRIME NEWS

Illegal teak logs, vehicle seized

THE Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee focuses on strict control of illegal trade under the law.

On 26 February, the Chin State Forest Department conducted inspections under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force and seized 0.9088 tonne of illegal Kanyin (*Dipterocarpus alatus*) worth K74,521 in Paletwa Township of Mindat District, and took action under the Forest Law.

On 27 February, the Cus-

toms Department of the Yaypu checkpoint in Shan State also confiscated K8,323,200 worth of illegal teak (2.7744 tonnes) and one Mitsubishi Fuso vehicle worth K50 million that carried this illegal wood. The officials took action under the Forest Law.

Similarly, the Bago Region Forest Department and combined inspection teams seized 4.4560 tonnes of timbers worth K356,320 in the forest reserve of

Thayawady District on 28 February and took action under the Forest Law.

Moreover, the Mon State Forest Department seized 4.9241 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K186,590 in the Kyaikhtyoe forest reserve in Thaton District and took action under the Forest Law. Therefore, a total of five arrests (estimated value of K58,940,361) was made on 26, 27 and 28 February, according to the committee. — MNA



Confiscated teak logs.

“Rain-bomb” hits eastern Australia, 8 killed in floods, others missing

DAYS of intense rain have caused flash flooding in Australia’s eastern states of Queensland and New South Wales, claiming at least eight lives with some people still missing, while evacuations, power outages and school closures have added to concerns.

Queensland State Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk on Monday compared the severe weather to cyclones the state has faced in the past, calling it an “unpredictable rain bomb”.

“No one has seen this amount of rain in such a short period of time over our entire southeast catchment zone,” Palaszczuk told reporters in the state capital Brisbane on Monday, where at least 15,000 homes are expected to have been affected by the floods.

The death toll rose to eight

on Monday, after a man believed to be in his 50s died when his car was washed away in floodwaters, Queensland Police said. A number of people are still missing, authorities added. The Queensland town of Gympie about 170 kilometres north of Brisbane has been one of the worst-hit by the floods, after the Mary River peaked at 22.9 metres on Sunday morning, the highest level since 1893, according to local media.

While intense rain began to ease in southeast Queensland on Monday, meteorologists warned the risk for significant flooding is “still very real”, with water levels expected to remain high for several days. Attention is now turning to Australia’s most populous state of New South Wales, as the weather system moves south across the state border. Commu-



A Queensland Fire and Rescue Swift Water Rescue crew move through the flooded streets in the city of Paddington in suburban Brisbane on 28 February 2022. PHOTO: AFP

nities in the state’s north have been ordered to evacuate, with some areas already hit hard by flash flooding. In the town of Lismore, just south of the Queensland border, residents resorted

to climbing onto building roofs as floodwaters rose rapidly to the highest level ever recorded, and continue to rise.

The Australian Defence Force has been deployed across

flood-affected areas to assist with rescue efforts, and disaster payments are being made available for impacted communities, Australia’s Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Monday. — Kyodo ■

Virus-hit Hong Kong considering lockdown: health chief



A woman sells Covid-19 test kits on a street in Hong Kong’s Sham Shui Po area on 27 February 2022, as yet another record high number of new Covid-19 infections were recorded in the city. PHOTO: AFP

HONG Kong may impose a China-style hard lockdown that confines people to their homes, authorities signalled Monday, with the city’s zero-Covid strat-

egy in tatters and bodies piling up in hospitals.

Two years of strict zero-Covid policies kept the coronavirus largely bay but a breakthrough

of the highly transmissible Omicron variant exposed how little authorities had done to prepare for a mass outbreak.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam previously ruled out a city-wide lockdown and instead has ordered all 7.4 million residents to be tested in March.

But in a U-turn, health secretary Sophia Chan confirmed on Monday that it was still an option.

Asked by a presenter at Commercial Radio whether a lockdown was still ruled out she replied: “No. We are still discussing.”

“From a public health perspective, to bring out the best effect of compulsory universal testing, we need to reduce people’s movements to some extent,” she added. — AFP ■

Kishida says Japan won’t seek nuclear sharing with US

PRIME Minister Fumio Kishida said Monday it is not acceptable for Japan to make a nuclear sharing arrangement with the United States, rejecting the idea of hosting US nuclear weapons as a deterrent amid Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Kishida said in parliament, “It is unacceptable given our country’s stance of maintaining the three nonnuclear principles,” following a call by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe the previous day to discuss the option of nuclear sharing.

Although it relies on the US nuclear umbrella, Japan maintains its three principles of not producing, possessing or allowing nuclear arms on its territory. In World War II, the

Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were devastated by US atomic bombs.

Kishida, elected from a Hiroshima constituency, has called for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Appearing on a TV programme on Sunday about Japan’s security environment in the face of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Abe said, “It is necessary to understand how the world’s security is maintained. We should not put a taboo on discussions about the reality we face.”

Abe, who heads the largest faction of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, also said, “As a country that experienced atomic bombings, we must uphold the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons.” — Kyodo ■

North Korea hails ‘significant’ test in satellite development

NORTH Korea said it had carried out a test of “great significance” for developing a reconnaissance satellite, state media reported Monday, a day after Seoul said it had detected a ballistic missile launch.

Despite sweeping international sanctions, Pyongyang carried out a record-breaking blitz of

weapons tests in January before pausing launches during the Beijing Winter Olympics.

On Sunday South Korea’s military said it had detected the launch of a ballistic missile, with Yonhap later reporting it could have been fired from a mobile launcher at a steep angle, possibly indicating a medium-range

ballistic missile.

But North Korea’s official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said government agencies had conducted a test “of great significance in developing the reconnaissance satellite” on Sunday. KCNA said the test helped “confirm the characteristics and working accuracy of high

definition photographing system, data transmission system and attitude control devices”.

That included “conducting vertical and oblique photographing of a specific area on earth with cameras to be loaded on the reconnaissance satellite,” KCNA added. Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of North Korea’s

ruling Workers’ Party, carried two photographs that appeared to show the Korean peninsula seen from space. The development of a military reconnaissance satellite — along with the recently tested hypersonic weapons — is one of the key defence projects listed by leader Kim Jong Un last year. — AFP ■

Removing Russian banks from SWIFT could be double-edged sword for Europe

SEVERAL European countries, the United States and Canada issued a joint statement on Saturday saying they will remove some Russian banks from SWIFT, the payment system used for most international financial transactions.

The expulsion, which some people believe will deal a heavy blow to the Russian economy by crippling Russian banks' ability to settle international transactions, could be bad for Europe, as it will at the same time bring energy supply shocks to the European Union (EU). That is probably why a few European countries like Germany and Italy were hesitant about endorsing it at first.

SWIFT EXPULSION

SWIFT is a Belgium-headquartered global provider of secure financial messaging services. It was formed in 1973 by 239 banks from 15 countries to solve the problem of cross-border payments communication. More than 11,000 financial institutions are now using SWIFT for their

financial transactions, including around 300 from Russia.

According to the joint statement released Saturday, in concert with the European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, Britain and Canada, the United States is supporting the expulsion of "selected Russian banks" from SWIFT "within the coming days," so as to "further isolate Russia from the international financial system and our economies". "It will stop them (the Russian banks) from operating worldwide and effectively block Russian exports and imports," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen tweeted on Sunday.

Many media reports have predicted that such an expulsion, if endorsed for all major Russian banks, is likely to wreak havoc on Russia's financial system and economy by triggering bank runs and greatly undermining Russia's exports, and have therefore touted the expulsion as a "nuclear option". However, some experts

said the move did not necessarily mean that Russian banks will be rendered incapable of conducting international transactions, as they can still finalize the process with other banks through other systems, or even by fax or Email given that SWIFT is only a messaging system.

The expulsion will only make the whole process slower and costlier, they said. In fact, Russia has started to develop its own financial transfer system — the System for Transfer of Financial Messages (SPFS) — since 2014, as an alternative to SWIFT, a move in anticipation of possible expulsions from the West. At the end of 2020, there were 23 foreign banks connected to the SPFS from Armenia, Belarus, Germany, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Switzerland. As of May 2021, the SPFS had been handling around 20 per cent of Russia's domestic payments.

SUPPLY SHOCKS

Citing analysts, some media reports said there was in the beginning reluctance

among several leaders from EU countries to take the step of expulsion due to their countries' heavy reliance on Russian energy exports. For example, the Financial Times reported Thursday that German Chancellor Olaf Scholz believed such a move "should not be included in an EU sanctions package".

British online newspaper The Independent reported on Saturday that Germany, France and Italy opposed a request from Britain to shut Russia out of SWIFT. "The German finance minister, Christian Lindner, admitted Berlin refused to go further because of 'a high risk that Germany will no longer be supplied with gas or raw materials', it said. According to Russia's central bank, the country's exports totalled 489.8 billion US dollars in 2021, more than 50 per cent of which were energy products. Over 40 per cent of the EU's natural gas comes from Russia. Germany, the largest economy in the EU, gets 55 per cent of its gas imports from Russia. — Xinhua ■

Japan automakers' 2021 domestic output hits lowest level in 45 years



This photo taken on 28 November 2021 shows a car showroom of the Japan's Nissan Motor in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KAZUHIRO NOGI / AFP**

TOTAL domestic output by Japanese automakers in 2021 fell to its lowest level in 45 years, dropping 2.7 per cent from a year earlier to 7.85 million vehicles, amid a supply shortage caused by the corona-

virus pandemic, industry data showed Monday.

According to the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, total output in Japan decreased for the third straight year. The prolonged

global semiconductor crunch could continue to hit the auto industry this year.

The figure is about 42 per cent lower from its peak of 13.49 million units produced in 1990. Automakers may face difficulty in sustaining employment and maintaining factories if the level of output remains low.

The industry data was compiled based on figures from eight major automakers, including Toyota Motor Corp. and Honda Motor Co, and four manufacturers of commercial vehicles such as Isuzu Motors Ltd. Total output of passenger cars dropped 4.9 per cent from 2020 to 6.62 million vehicles, but the data showed that those of trucks and buses increased. — Kyodo ■

Philippines expects more tourists as COVID-19 restrictions ease

THE Philippines is expecting more tourists to visit the country after the government relaxed COVID-19 restrictions, the tourism department said on Monday. Pandemic rules in Metro Manila and 38 other areas across the Southeast Asian country will shift to alert level 1, the lowest on a scale of 5, starting 1 March to allow more economic activities.

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat said easing the restrictions will boost tourism and make it easier for foreign and domestic travellers to visit the country's tourist spots.

"The tourism department anticipates with optimism the

revival of many tourism jobs and opportunities that were once lost to the pandemic," Puyat added. The pandemic has badly hit the tourism sector in the Philippines, forcing hotels and airlines to lay off staff. Almost 1.1 million workers were affected in the tourism industry across the country, according to official data. The lowering of the COVID-19 alert level came two weeks after the country allowed fully vaccinated travellers from 157 countries and regions that have visa-free arrangements with the Philippines to enter after nearly a two-year ban imposed due to the pandemic. — Xinhua ■



A child receives the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for children aged 5-11 as a performer dressed as superhero character Spider-Man looks on at a gym in San Juan City, suburban Manila on 7 February 2022. **PHOTO: TED ALJIBE / AFP**

Malaysia's parliament convenes with eye on COVID-19, economic recovery

MALAYSIA'S first parliament session of the year convened on Monday as the country seeks to recover from the effects of COVID-19 while coping with an Omicron fuelled pandemic surge.

The session will run from 28 February to 24 March following an opening by Malaysia's King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad

Shah in which he called on all members of parliament (MPs) to cooperate in ensuring the country's recovery. "For 2022, let us continue to strengthen our strategies and resilience to face the challenges posed by COVID-19," he said. "The nation's economic recovery needs to be accelerated so that our nation will not be left

behind. Ease the people's affairs to help them rebuild their lives with a sense of security, peace, and wellbeing for the sake of our beloved country," he added. The country is seeing a surge in new COVID-19 infections, with 32,070 cases being reported last Thursday, the highest since the pandemic began in 2020. — Xinhua ■

Oil and safe havens rally, rouble sinks on Russia sanctions

OIL prices and safe havens surged Monday while the rouble and European equities sank after world powers imposed fresh sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, fanning fears about a possible global energy crisis that could further stoke inflation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to send troops across the border last week has sent shivers through trading floors as investors fret over a protracted war in the resource-rich region.

Adding to the unease among investors was news that Putin had put his nuclear forces on a higher alert in reaction to the latest stiff measures.

Equities rallied Friday and oil dipped as dealers assessed that the punishments imposed on Moscow were light enough to not hit its crucial oil exports — Russia is the world's third-biggest producer — at a time when supplies are thin and demand is surging.

But the picture was changed at the weekend, when the United States and European Union said they would exclude some Russian banks from the international bank payments system SWIFT and personally targeted Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

They also banned all transactions with Russia's central bank, sending the rouble crashing, with Bloomberg saying

it was indicated to be nearly 30 per cent down in offshore trading Monday. News that the central bank had hiked interest rates to 20 per cent — the highest since 2003 — helped pare the unit's losses only briefly.

"Removing some Russian banks from SWIFT could result in a disruption of oil supplies as buyers and sellers try to figure out how to navigate the new rules," Andy Lipow, of Lipow Oil Associates in Houston, noted.

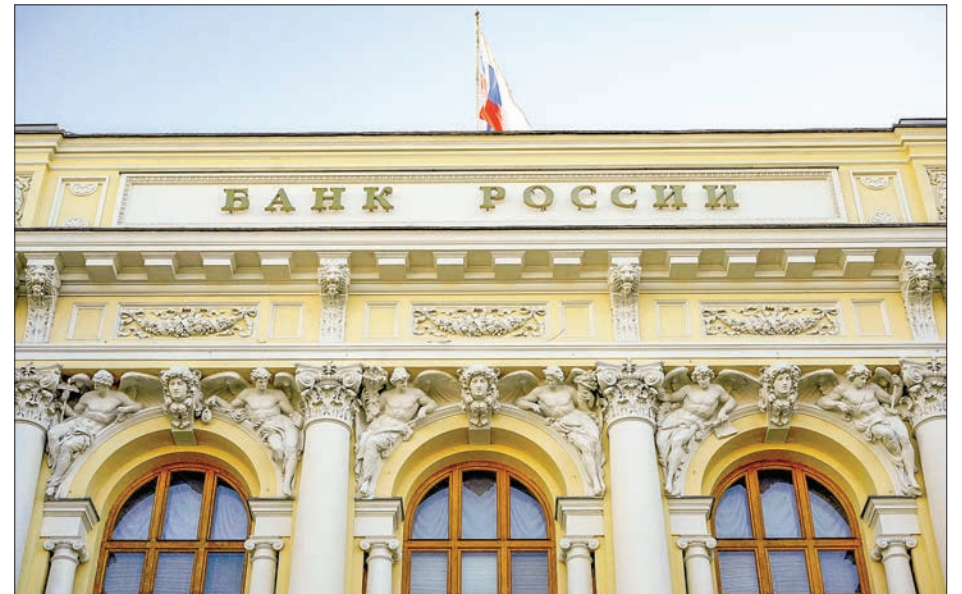
Crude surged, with WTI climbing towards the \$100 mark, while Brent bounced back above that level after slipping on Friday. Other commodities rallied, with wheat, aluminium and nickel also sharply higher.

European stocks opened sharply lower, with London off more than one per cent while Frankfurt and Paris gave up about two per cent.

However, most Asian equity markets recovered from morning selling as traders focus on a planned meeting of Ukraine and Russian officials on the border with Belarus hoping for an easing of the offensive.

Traders will be closely watching a meeting this week of OPEC and other major producers led by Russia, where they will discuss plans for further output. — AFP ■

Russia's central bank hikes key rate to 20 pct



A view of the Russian Central Bank headquarters in downtown Moscow on 28 February 2022. Russia's central bank announced on 28 February 2022 it was raising its key interest rate to 20 per cent from 9.5 per cent as the West pummelled the country with sanctions over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. PHOTO: AFP

RUSSIA'S Central Bank announced Monday it has decided to increase its key interest rate to 20 per cent.

"The Bank of Russia Board of Directors decided to increase the key rate to 20 per cent per annum from 28 February," it said in a statement. "External conditions for the Russian economy have drastically

changed," it said, adding that the increase of the key rate will ensure a rise in deposit rates to levels needed to compensate for the increased depreciation and inflation risks, and this is needed to support financial and price stability and protect the savings of citizens from depreciation.

Further key rate deci-

sions will be made taking into account risks posed by external and domestic conditions and the reaction of financial markets, as well as actual and expected inflation movements relative to the target and economic developments over the forecast period, according to the statement. — Xinhua ■



Working pumpjacks are seen in the Montebello Oil Field in Montebello, California, on 23 February 2022. PHOTO: AFP

DESIGN 103 INTERNATIONAL LIMITED (MYANMAR BRANCH) Notice of Closure of Myanmar Branch

It is hereby notified that in pursuance of Head Office's Board of Directors' Resolution dated January 17, 2022 the above Myanmar Branch has been closed down with effect from February 28, 2022 since the existence of Myanmar Branch was no more required in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Notice to Creditors

The creditors of the above-named Myanmar Branch are required to send their names, addresses and the particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their attorneys, if any, to the undersigned Liquidator in person or via email or by their attorneys to come in and prove their debts or claims supported by evidence documents on or before April 1, 2022 or in default thereof they will be excluded from the settlement of such debts or claims.

Daw Hnin Su Mon, Liquidator
B.Com (Q), C.P.A, D.B.L, ACCA,
Member of Myanmar Association of Insolvency Practitioners Inc.
Room No. 2D, Rose Condominium, No. 182/194, 1st Floor, Botahtaung Pagoda Road,
Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar.
Email: hninsumon@winthinassociates.com

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NEGAR VOY.NO. (SCY1120)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NEGAR VOY. NO. (SCY1120)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-3-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
**M/S LAND AND SEA INTERMODAL LOGISTICS
SDN BHD LINE**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GUANG PING VOY.NO. (050N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GUANG PING VOY.NO. (050N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-3-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ST COLUMBA

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ST COLUMBA VOY NO. (002/2022)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-3-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **IBTT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

NEWS IN BRIEF

Italy 'strongly' advises its citizens to leave Russia

ITALY on Monday "strongly recommended" Italian citizens leave Russia by any commercial means possible after the European Union shut its airspace to Russian aircraft over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

THE EU closed its airspace Sunday after many of its 27 member states, including Italy, individually announced intentions to prohibit Russian planes from entering or flying over their countries. "IN view of this measure and possible further restrictions in the next few hours, it is strongly recommended that compatriots present in the country on a temporary basis... make timely arrangements to return to Italy," the foreign ministry said. — AFP ■

'Another war': Afghan flees Russian bombs in Ukraine

AFTER leaving Afghanistan a year ago, Ajmal Rahmani believed he had found a haven of peace in Ukraine.

This week, he and his family had to flee again — this time to Poland to the sounds of Russian bombs.

"I run from one war, come to another country and another war starts. Very bad luck," Rahmani told AFP shortly after crossing into Poland.

His seven-year-old daughter Marwa clutched a beige-coloured soft toy dog as Rahmani spoke.

Together with Marwa, his wife Mina and son Omar, 11, the family walked the last 30 kilometres (19 miles) to the crossing on foot because of the gridlock on the Ukrainian side of the border.

After arriving at the Medyka on the Polish side, the family waited with other refugees for a bus that will take them to the nearby city of Przemysl. — AFP ■

Norwegian energy giant Equinor to pull out of Russia

NORWAY'S state-owned energy giant Equinor said Monday it would stop its investments in Russia and pull out of its joint ventures in the country following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Equinor had \$1.2 billion in assets at the end of last year in Russia, where it has had a partnership with Russian oil company Rosneft since 2012.

"In the current situation, we regard our position as untenable," Equinor's president and chief executive Anders Opedal said in a statement.

"We will now stop new investments into our Russian business, and we will start the process of exiting our joint ventures in a manner that is consistent with our values," he added. — AFP ■

Nigeria condemns reports of racism at Ukraine border

NIGERIA on Monday urged border officials in Ukraine and neighbouring countries to treat its citizens equally amid mounting reports of racial discrimination against Africans fleeing the Russian invasion.

Nigerians, Ghananians and other Africans, many of them students, have joined hundreds of thousands of people trying to escape Ukraine across borders into Poland and other nations.

"There have been unfortunate reports of Ukrainian police and security personnel refusing to allow Nigerians to board buses and trains heading towards the Ukraine-Poland border," said presidential advisor Garba Shehu in a statement.

"In one video widely circulating on social media, a Nigerian mother with her young baby was filmed being physically forced to give up her seat to another person." — AFP ■

China calls for de-escalation as Ukraine talks begin



A civilian crosses an empty street in downtown Kyiv, on 27 February 2022. PHOTO: AFP

BEIJING on Monday called for de-escalation and "restraint" over the Ukraine crisis as Russia and Ukraine prepared to meet for their first talks since Moscow's invasion of its western neighbour.

Russia invaded on Thursday and quickly announced it had neutralized key Ukrainian military facilities, with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday ordering his country's nuclear forces onto high alert.

Representatives from Moscow and Kyiv are set to meet on the border with Belarus on Monday, after Western allies hit Russia with a slew of sanctions and pledged arms for Ukraine.

China has trod a cautious diplomatic tightrope on the crisis as it tries to balance its core

foreign policy line — that a country's sovereignty is sacrosanct and others should not interfere — with its support for close ally Moscow.

Instead it has called for Russia's "reasonable" security demands to be heard, repeatedly refusing to condemn Putin's actions or use the term "invasion".

Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin on Monday urged both sides to "remain calm and exercise restraint to prevent further escalation of the situation".

"China pays close attention to changes in the Ukraine situation and supports all efforts to de-escalate the situation and resolve it politically," Wang said at a regular press briefing.

Beijing voted to abstain from a Friday UN Security Council

resolution condemning Russia's actions in Ukraine, which was vetoed by Russia.

China's President Xi Jinping told Putin in a call last week that he hoped the crisis could be resolved with a "balanced, effective and sustainable European security mechanism through negotiations". But as Beijing tries to stick to a neutral position, Chinese nationals in Ukraine have claimed to face rising hostility as public perceptions of the Asian country sour given China's position on the invasion. The Chinese embassy in Kyiv on Sunday warned citizens not to "provoke" locals and to refrain from revealing their nationality, just days after telling those leaving Kyiv to display a Chinese flag on their vehicles. — AFP ■

Brazil 'neutral' in Russia-Ukraine conflict, Bolsonaro says

BRAZILIAN President Jair Bolsonaro said Sunday that South America's biggest country will remain "neutral" over Russia's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine.

The far-right Bolsonaro, who undertook a controversial visit to Moscow on 16 February to meet with President Vladimir Putin just as Russian leaders were finalizing plans for their full-scale invasion, said his Russian counterpart confided some "secret" issues about Ukraine in their lengthy conversation.

Bolsonaro said he told Putin that Brazil will maintain a position of neutrality in the war, and that it remains "in favour of

peace".

"We are not going to take sides," Bolsonaro told reporters. "We are going to continue our neutrality and help as much as possible in the search for a solution." Brazilians "want peace, but we cannot bring (the war's) consequences here," he added, recalling that Brazil is a major purchaser of Russian fertilizers.

Bolsonaro, who has expressed admiration for Putin, has largely avoided criticizing Russia over its aggression, even as Putin's Ukraine operation has been broadly lambasted by the West.

Last Thursday he upbraided his own vice-president, Hamil-

ton Mourao, for saying Brazil did not agree with the invasion of Ukraine.

Bolsonaro on Sunday said Brazil actively worked to help water down a United Nations Security Council resolution that criticized Russia, referring to the change of the word "condemns" to "deplores" in the final version of the measure.

Brazil voted in favour of that resolution, which was vetoed by Russia. But Brazil did not sign a declaration by member countries of the Organization of American States in which they strongly condemned Russia's invasion. — AFP ■

Ukraine, Russia talk as sanctions rain down on Moscow

RUSSIA and Ukraine met Monday for their first talks since the outbreak of war last week, with Kyiv demanding an “immediate ceasefire” and the West ratcheting up its financial sanctions in a bid to force the Kremlin to buckle.

The meeting came as Russian shelling killed 11 people in Ukraine’s second largest city of Kharkiv after days of fighting that have seen the biggest cities, including Kyiv, stay out of Russian hands. The war has already forced more than 500,000 people into neighbouring countries, the UN said Monday, as fears mount of a protracted conflict in eastern Europe.

Negotiators from Moscow and Kyiv held talks on the border between Belarus and Ukraine on day five of Moscow’s invasion, but Ukrainian demands for a ceasefire “and the withdrawal of troops” were almost certain to be rejected.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had sought to play down expectations beforehand, saying: “I do not really believe in the outcome of this meeting, but let them try.”

Sanctions imposed by the West over the weekend had an immediate impact on Moscow financial markets on Monday, with the Russian rouble falling to a record low and the central bank more than doubling the key interest rate to 20 per cent.

The United States also announced Monday that it had banned all US transactions with Russia’s central bank and would freeze its foreign reserves, while traditionally neutral Switzerland also said it would adopt the same measures as the EU.

The sanctions are intended to change the calculus of Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin, but on the ground the roughly 100,000 Russian troops thought to be inside



Members of delegations from Ukraine and Russia, including Russian presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky (2L), Ukrainian presidential aide Mykhailo Podolyak (2R), Volodymyr Zelensky’s “Servant of the People” lawmaker Davyd Arakhamia (3R), hold talks in Belarus’ Gomel region on 28 February 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. PHOTO: SERGEI KHOLODILIN / BELTA / AFP

Ukraine pressed ahead with their invasion from the north, east and south on Monday. “The Western

sanctions on Russia are hard, but our country has the necessary potential to compensate the

damage,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists Monday. — AFP ■

Tokyo-based Ukrainian singer prays for peace, family’s safety

TOKYO-based Ukrainian opera singer Oksana Stepanyuk is praying for peace and the safety of her family in her home country as it faces a Russian invasion.

“I wish I could rush to my family and be by their side,” the 44-year-old singer said after she spoke to her mother on the phone. “I want this situation to end immediately.”

Stepanyuk told Kyodo News in an interview on Saturday that her parents live in a village in central Ukraine. When she called her family on Thursday as Russian forces began their attack, her mother said, “I am scared of the sirens.”

Stepanyuk was able to confirm their safety afterwards, but

she heard military aircraft had started flying near her hometown on Saturday. “The situation changes every day. I have no idea what will happen next,” she said. Also a well-known player of bandura, a Ukrainian folk string instrument, Stepanyuk said, “Ukraine is an independent country with freedoms and sophisticated culture.” The country “has produced many talented musicians and composers,” she said, citing names of maestros such as Vladimir Horowitz, a famous Kyiv-born 20th-century classical pianist. “I wonder whether such freedom remains in place in the future.” Noting Ukraine and Russia are deeply related historically and



Ukrainian opera singer Oksana Stepanyuk poses for a photo in Kunitachi, western Tokyo, on 26 February 2022. PHOTO: KYODO

that there are many instances of mixed-nationality marriages, she said, “I sing for love and peace so people’s lives are saved. I want everyone to pray for peace.” — Kyodo ■

EU to ban Russian flights over Europe over Ukraine crisis

EUROPEAN Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced on Sunday that the EU would shut its airspace to Russian airlines in response to its “special military operation” in Ukraine since early Thursday.

“We are shutting down the EU airspace for Russians,” Von der Leyen said in a statement on Sunday, “We are proposing a prohibition on all Russian-owned,

Russian registered or Russian-controlled aircraft.”

“These aircraft will no more be able to land in, take off or overfly the territory of the EU,” she said, adding that the ban would “apply to any plane owned, chartered or otherwise controlled by a Russian legal or natural person.”

“So let me be very clear. Our airspace will be closed to every

Russian plane - and that includes the private jets of oligarchs,” she stressed.

Earlier on Sunday, France also said it would shut down its airspace to Russian airlines and Russian registered aircraft, French national airline Air France announced on its website to suspend flights to and from Russia, effective from Sunday until further notice. — Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ukraine says Kyiv still under control

THE Ukrainian army said on Monday that the situation in Kyiv was still under its control.

As the Ground Forces of the Ukrainian army posted on Facebook, Ukrainian forces still had Kyiv in control as it defeated the repeated attempts by Russian troops to storm into the outskirts of Kyiv at night.

Meanwhile, the Russian troops had failed to control any big regional cities and Ukrainian forces had repelled the Russians on all fronts last night, the local National News Agency of Ukraine cited Fedir Venislavsky, a member of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on National Security, as saying.

Although Russian troops have launched air raids on several cities including Kharkiv, Kyiv and Chernihiv, Ukrainian air defence systems withstood the attacks, said the report. — Xinhua ■

France asks its nationals to leave Russia, Belarus immediately

DUE to the closure of European Union airspace to Russia, French Foreign Affairs Ministry asked on Sunday its nationals to leave immediately Russia.

“Due to the increasing restrictions on air traffic between Russia and Europe, it is strongly recommended that non-resident French nationals in Russia make arrangements to leave the country without delay by existing air links,” the French ministry said in the latest travelling notice.

According to the ministry, most European companies, including Air France, have suspended from this Sunday evening flights in and out of Russia after the European Union has decided to close its airspace to Russia.

In a second travelling notice concerning Belarus, the ministry also asked its nationals to leave immediately Belarus though land borders. — Xinhua ■

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 placed in Group F of AFC Asian Cup 2023 Qualifiers



Myanmar team striker Maung Maung Lwin (No. 7) poises to kick the ball during the 2022 World Cup Qualifiers against Tajikistan at Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay on 14 November 2019. **PHOTO: MFF**

MYANMAR national football team is placed in Group F of the AFC Asian Cup 2023 Qualifiers, according to the official draw-lots ceremony of the tourney, which was held virtually in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 24 February.

The qualifiers matches will be held in June and Myanmar is grouped with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Singapore in Group F.

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Myanmar were in the same group in the previous 2022 World Cup qualifiers in 2019 and 2020 and Myanmar earned 6 points in this qualification.

According to the official draw, six groups were decided for the AFC Asian Cup China

2023 qualifiers final round.

Kuwait, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, India, Malaysia and Kyrgyzstan will host the final round of the AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifiers.

Among the 24 teams, the six group winners and five best second-placed teams will join the hosts China, Australia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, South Korea, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam in the final tournament.

The main tournament will kick off on 16 June 2023 in China, according to the Myanmar Football Federation. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

'This is the start': Klopp eyes quadruple after Liverpool win League Cup



Liverpool's Irish goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher (L) reacts as Chelsea's Spanish goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga misses his penalty to lose the English League Cup final football match between Chelsea and Liverpool at Wembley Stadium, north-west London on 27 February 2022. **PHOTO: JUSTIN TALLIS / AFP**

JURGEN Klopp challenged Liverpool to chase a historic quadruple after the Reds won the

League Cup final in a dramatic penalty shoot-out against Chelsea on Sunday.

Klopp's side clinched the first of the four major trophies they are competing for this term when Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga smashed his penalty high over the crossbar. Kepa was the only player to miss in the shoot-out as Liverpool converted all 11 of their kicks and Chelsea netted 10. It was a fittingly tense conclusion to a thrilling encounter that finished 0-0 after extra-time despite both sides creating numerous chances.

Liverpool had a Joel Matip goal controversially disallowed for a dubious offside against Virgil van Dijk in the second half. Chelsea were denied three times by the offside flag, with Blues boss Thomas Tuchel furious that Romelu Lukaku's effort didn't survive a VAR check. — AFP ■

Italy great Buffon extends Parma deal until 2024

GIANLUIGI Buffon signed a new deal with Parma on Monday that will keep the veteran former Italy captain at the Serie B club until 2024.

The one-year extension to his deal means Buffon, who is Parma's first choice goalkeeper, will continue as a professional footballer until beyond his 46th birthday.

"Gigi is a great player, one of Italy's three best goalkeepers and his renewal is a great pleasure for us," said Parma president Kyle Krause.

"His passion and dedication for Parma and the city are obvious every time you see him."

Italian football icon Buffon returned to Parma from Juventus last summer two decades

after leaving the club where he started his professional career.

The 44-year-old has a record 176 caps for his country, and also holds the record for Serie A matches played with 657 starting with his debut with Parma in 1995 as a 17-year-old.

He has won 27 trophies, including the 2006 World Cup and the 1999 UEFA Cup for Parma as part of possibly the best team in the club's history.

Parma were among Italy's top clubs in the 1990s under the ownership of dairy company Parmalat, winning three major European titles.

After Parmalat collapsed in 2003 following a huge financial fraud scandal, the club went bankrupt. They sank to Serie D in 2015. — AFP ■