

# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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## Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

## All ethnic armed organizations have been invited to Diamond Jubilee Union Day for restoration of perpetual peace except for organizations declared as terrorist groups: Vice-Senior General



State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win presides over the third coordination meeting of the Central Committee on Organizing Diamond Jubilee Union Day in Nay Pyi Taw on 7 February 2022.

**T**HE third coordination meeting of the Central Committee on Organizing Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022 took place at the office of the State Administration Council Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon, with an address by Chairman of the

Central Committee Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win. In his speech, the Vice-Senior General said that relevant subcommittees are making preparations to successfully observe the Diamond Jubilee

Union Day. All ethnic armed organizations have been invited to Diamond Jubilee Union Day for the restoration of perpetual peace except for organizations declared as terrorist groups. The Vice-Senior General invited discussions of relevant subcommittees on their difficulties in

preparatory tasks, requirements and progress of preparations to successfully hold Diamond Jubilee Union Day. Central Committee member Union ministers, the chairman of the management committee chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, subcommittee chair-

men deputy ministers, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and officials clarified progress of preparations for the ceremony. The Vice-Senior General fulfilled the requirements of needs in the discussions. — MNA

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## National Objectives of Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022

- (1) All ethnic nationals to safeguard non-disintegration of the Union, national unity and sovereignty forever
- (2) To perpetually ensure strengthening dynamic Union Spirit which is a genuine patriotic spirit
- (3) To further strive for the perpetual existence of the country through strong and united strength of all ethnic national brethren
- (4) To build the Union based on democracy and federalism in the realization of genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy
- (5) To equalize development of all regions and states while making efforts for the enhancement of health, education and job opportunities of the ethnic nationals

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

#### Announcement 1/2022

6<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe 1383 ME

6 February 2022

### Invitation to Perpetual Peace and Diamond Jubilee Union Day Ceremony

1. The State Administration Council is implementing the five-point Road Map for ensuring stability and development and flourishing the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy. The government adopted the policy that “emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)” as the fourth point of the Road Map. To do so, the State Administration Council is continuously implementing the peace process as part of emphasizing peace in line with the NCA.
2. The Tatmadaw issued 20 statements related to a ceasefire from 21 December 2018 to 28 February 2022 to conduct ceasefire. After meeting with the Cambodian Prime Minister taking ASEAN alternate chair on his working visit to Myanmar on 7 and 8 January 2022, a joint declaration was issued to continue the ceasefire till the end of this year.
3. The message of greetings 2022 made by the Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister stated, “The year 2022 is of importance. Coming 12 February is the Diamond Jubilee Union Day and the 4 January 2023 will be the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day. Hence, it is important to further strengthen the sovereignty of the State and progress of the nation with development fruits. So, we have to start the new paces for restoration of the peace this year. As it is mentioned in the fourth point of the five-point road map, all stakeholders and organizations are invited to join the peace talks.” Although Myanmar has regained 75 years, the strengthening of sovereignty and development of the nation do not have the improvement as expected due to occurrences of internal armed conflicts and the country loses the strengths and capabilities. It is necessary to restore the perpetual peace to apply these strength and capabilities for the State development at full capacity.
4. Restoration of perpetual peace is very important for building the Union based on democracy and federalism. In this regard, the majority of political parties focused their discussions on the construction of the Union based on democracy and federalism within five years. The National Unity and Peace Restoration Central Committee, the work committee and the coordination committee were formed for working the national unity and perpetual peace. The peace co-ordination committee has so far held meetings with NCA signatories 16 times, non-NCA signatories nine times, political parties seven times and religious leaders and peace negotiators two times, totalling 34.
5. The State Administration Council is arranging the management for holding meetings with ethnic armed organizations for restoring the perpetual peace. Except for the groups declared as terrorist groups, the government invited not only NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations but also non-NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations to talks about the perpetual peace. The schedule was especially expressed that the meetings would not be pre-restricted for topics of the talks with the aim of freely exchanging views among them.
6. Among three future tasks of the State, **two national tasks** are “to ensure the prosperity of the State and the food sufficiency” and **the two political tasks** are “to strengthen the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy and build the Union based on democracy and federalism.” As such, the new steps will be made for the peace as of this year as part of implementing the process for ensuring **the integration of peace and sovereignty**.
7. It is necessary to focus on talking about the perpetual peace through seeking the way to solve the answer in negotiation in accord with the democratic practices in order to politically solve the political problems in successive eras as internal affairs of our country. On the occasion coincided with the Diamond Jubilee Union Day, all ethnic armed organizations are especially invited to the Diamond Jubilee Union Day grand ceremony as well as the pre-coordination meeting on perpetual peace talks to build the Union based on democracy and federalism during the ceremony of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day. The entire ethnic national people are requested to negotiate with all stakeholders to attend the free and unrestricted peace talks and the Diamond Jubilee Union Day for restoration of the perpetual peace of the government.

State Administration Council

## Judgements passed on one special criminal appeal, 5 special civil appeals; 5 special civil appeals cases heard

A special appeal tribunal, comprising Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo, and Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union U Kyi Thein, U Khin Maung Gyi, U Tin Hong and Daw Khin May Yi, passed the judgements

on one special criminal appeal, No. 4/2021(Taninthayi), and five special civil appeals, No. 98/2019(Sagaing), No. 25/2020(Shan), No. 26/2020(Shan), 27/2020(Yangon) and 30/2020(Yangon).

In addition, a total of

five special civil appeals No. 29/2020(Sagaing), 31/2020(Rakhine), 36/2020(Mandalay), 39/2020(Sagaing) and 44/2020(Yangon), were heard keeping in line with COVID-19 prevention and control guidelines. — MNA

## 508 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 7 February, total figure rises to 538,409

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **538,409** after **508** new cases were reported on 7 February 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **514,223** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at **19,310** without casualties for 15 days consecutively.—MNA

## Further State responsibilities to be discharged

- There are many examples of the consequences of the instability of the state in the world.
- Tatmadaw is not an institution for seeking its own sakes or for only one organization. It is an institution to protect all national people. It conducted defence services by cooperating with the people in successive eras and it faithfully served to be a firm multiparty democracy pathway for 10 years. I pledge that we will carry out it in line with such a process.
- If we review the situations, the desires of the local/foreign terrorists and their supporters lead to the absolute destruction of the country rather than democracy. The state defence is to protect the people and we cannot let the anarchy and we cannot neglect it. Therefore, we have to sacrifice in some places.

*(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)*

## 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shan State Day celebrated

THE Diamond Jubilee Shan State Day Ceremony was organized at Awayya Hot-air Ballon Ground in Taunggyi yesterday.

The event was attended by State Administration Council Members Jeng Phang Naw Taung, Saw Daniel, U Sai Lone Hsai and U Shwe Kyein, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, U Htay Aung and U Saw Tun Aung Myint, Shan State Chief Minister Dr Kyaw Tun and other relevant officials.

SAC member U Sai Lone Hsai read out the message sent by SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shan State Day and State Chief Minister Dr Kyaw Tun delivered a speech.

Then, the SAC members, the chief minister and officials presented the certificates of honour and excellent awards in management, security and the rule of law, agriculture, health,



The Diamond Jubilee Shan State Day in progress in Taunggyi.



The SAC members and dignitaries view the display booths at the event.

social and research sectors to winners.

Then, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung donated 150 sets of solar panels to the state chief minister.

Afterwards, the SAC members, Union ministers and Shan state chief minister then cut the ribbon to launch a Vegetable Fair to mark Shan State Day in Heho Inkhauung of Kalaw Township.

SAC member U Sai Lone Hsai made a greeting speech, while the state chief minister and the deputy minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation delivered remarks.

Then the officials handed over bags of fertilizers to the farmers from Kalaw, Pinlaung, Nyaungshwe, Ywangan, Pindaya, Yaksawk, Hsihseng and

Hopong townships.

The state chief minister gave fruit baskets to SAC members and Union ministers.

The SAC members, Union ministers, chief minister and officials inspected the display of booths of the Agriculture Department and processes for citizenship scrutiny cards of the Immigration and Population Ministry. — MNA

## Pansay Creek Bridge on TadaU-Inwa Road opened to mark Diamond Jubilee Union Day

THE Pansay Creek Bridge on the TadaU-Inwa Road, Kyaukse District, Mandalay Region was opened yesterday with a ceremony to mark Diamond Jubilee Union Day.

Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Maung Ko, Commander of the Central Command Maj-Gen Ko Ko Oo, officials and invitees from the Ministry of Construction attended the ceremony.

First, the chief minister, the commander of the Central Com-

mand and officials cut the ribbon to inaugurate the bridge and the stone plaque at the opening ceremony.

After that, the Chief Minister, the commander and members sprayed scented water on the stone plaque and inspected the bridge.

The bridge construction began on 25 November 2020. It is a 31 feet wide and 300 feet long bridge built at the cost of K1,150 million, officials said. —MNA



## MoEE Union Minister addresses ASEAN-India High-Level Conference on Renewable Energy



THE Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Ministry of External Affairs, India, in collaboration with the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and

the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE), are jointly hosting the ASEAN-India High-Level Conference on Renewable Energy virtually under the theme of

“Experience and Innovations for Integrated Renewables Market” on 7 and 8 February.

Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Aung Than Oo

delivered an opening speech at the opening ceremony of the two-day conference.

In his speech, the Union minister said 56 per cent of Myanmar’s electricity is produced from natural gas while 40 per cent is from hydropower, three per cent from coal and one per cent from renewable energy. The country has set a target of nationwide electrification by 2030 and is estimated to generate nine per cent of power from renewable energy such as solar energy and wind energy.

The government starts running 13 solar power projects that can produce 370MW and also arranges to develop further 3 solar power projects to produce

390MW. Moreover, the Floating Solar projects, Rooftop Solar project and small-medium scale hydropower projects are also being implemented across the nation. The government makes efforts to trade electricity through neighbouring countries—China, India, Laos and Thailand. Being an ASEAN member country, Myanmar will also set a target of 23 per cent of renewable energy share in Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES) by 2025.

Then, the senior officials and experts exchanged views on cooperation works on the renewable energy sector between ASEAN and India and their experiences regarding renewable energy. — MNA

## MoHT Union Minister opens virtual reality tour gallery in Bagan

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung, together with administration officials and chairman of the Hotelier Association (Bagan Zone), cut the ribbon to open the Virtual Reality Tour Gallery at the Bagan Information & Training Centre (BITC) yesterday.

During his tour to Bagan, the Union minister also met with officials and staff from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism in the Bagan-NyaungU region at the BITC and underlined the need to comply with the rules and regulations issued by relevant ministries, to take special care not to damage the appearance and image of the ancient culture during the development work as well as not to obscure the ancient cultural image when planting trees for the greenery of Bagan.

Afterwards, the Union min-

ister attended the Hotels and Tourism Development Meeting with officials from relevant departments, organizations and the Hotelier Association (Bagan Zone) and made necessary instructions. After the meeting, the Union minister presented the National Certification Cards under the Enchanting Myanmar Health & Safety Protocol to the hotels which have been allowed to reopen under the COVID-19 rules and regulations, and officials from the Aureum Palace Hotel & Resort and Popa Mountain Resort Hotel received the certificates. An official handed over the regional-level certificates to the chairman of the Hotelier Association (Bagan Zone).

In the afternoon, the Union minister arrived in Taunggyi and met the director and officials of the Directorate of Ho-



The Virtual Reality Tour Gallery is opened in Bagan.

tels and Tourism in Shan State. During the meeting, the Union minister urged them to work together with relevant departments, private entrepreneurs

and the people for the long-term sustainability of the Inlay Lake, which is a natural heritage and a tourist attraction in Shan State. The Union minister highlight-

ed the need to get rid of water hyacinth waste in the lake and to mobilize entrepreneurs and the local people to make them natural fertilizers. — MNA

Motto of 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Union Day 2022

\* **Unity is strength: Ethnic nationals join hands as strengths of the Union**

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# Officials welcome back Myanmar returnees at various borders

MYANMAR nationals from abroad are welcomed back at various border crossings this month.

On 7 February, a total of 200 returnees — 117 males and 83 females — came back home through Myawady, Kayin State.

Healthcare officials from rel-

evant public hospitals and members of the Tatmadaw Medical Corps conducted COVID-19 tests and provided quarantine entry documents for the returnees.

Next, instructions of the Ministry of Health were explained systematically and departmental officials provided necessary

assistance.

The township administration then escorted them to their respective places in passenger vehicles, and the infected people were confined to separate places to facilitate necessary medical and administrative matters, officials said. — MNA



Returnees check in for the reception process.

## CRIME NEWS

# K107 million worth of illegal timbers, vehicles, goods seized

AS the action is being taken against illegal trades under the law with the supervision of the Il-

legal Trade Eradication Steering Committee K107,420,340 worth of illegal timbers, vehicles, consumer goods and food were con-



Confiscated timbers.

legal Trade Eradication Steering Committee K107,420,340 worth of illegal timbers, vehicles, consumer goods and food were con-

iscated in Kayin State, Sagaing Region and Bago Region on 7 February. Customs Team on duty at the Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) Combined checkpoint seized 30 iPad Pro units (estimated value

of K28,000,000) from a vehicle (estimated value of K75,000,000) and action is taken under the Customs Law.

The combined inspection teams led by the Forest Department under the management of the Sagaing Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections in the region and confiscated 3.6568 tonnes of illegal teak (estimated value of K1,097,040), and action is taken under the Forest Law.

Similarly, 13.7944 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated value of K3,323,300) were also seized from Bago and Toungoo districts. Therefore, there was a total of four cases (estimated value of K107,420,340) on 7 February, the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee stated. — MNA



Seized goods.



# Woman convicted of trafficking girls to China jailed

THOSE who trafficked girls to China were sentenced to 11 years in prison for human trafficking, according to the authorities.

Ma Kyu Kyu Khaing from Kyankhin Kwatthit, Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region told Ma ..., 30-year-old and Ma ..., 18-year-old from North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region that her sister had married a Chinese man in China and was fine. Next, both of them were trafficked to Chinese

men for allegedly earning K3.5 million if they marry a Chinese man.

The case was filed at the North Okkalapa Myoma Police Station; under Section 24 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law 919/2019, and also filed at the Eastern District Court.

On 3 February, Ma Kyu Kyu Khaing was sentenced to 11 years in prison under Section 24 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. — MNA

# K30 billion worth of ICE (Methamphetamine) seized in PyinOoLwin



Four arrestees are seen along with seized drugs and vehicles.

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti Drug Police Force confiscated 1.5 tonnes of ICE (Methamphetamine) worth K30 billion during a search of a Hino vehicle driven

by Aung Aung (a) Shwe Taw and accompanied by Aye Min Aung (a) Sanda and Kyaw Min (a) Min Min, at Nyaunggon checkpoint on the Mogok-PyinOoLwin road in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Re-

gion, on the evening of 5 February.

According to the investigation, the police arrested Ma Moe Moe Aung who participated in trafficking drugs, by a Toyota Crown at the Watwun village joint-inspection station at 9 pm on the same day.

According to the statements of the arrested illegal drugs traffickers, they were transporting the narcotic drugs from Shan State (South) to the Myanmar-Thailand border in Kayin State. It is reported that action is being taken against them under the law and investigation is being continued to identify and arrest connected suspects, according to the Myanmar Police Force. — MNA

# Elephant Camp near Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda reopens



Elephants enjoy their feeds at the Shwesettaw Mann Creek Elephant Camp.

SHWESETTAW Mann Creek Elephant Camp in Minbu District, Magway Region resumed its tourism service on 5 February, along with Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival, said U Aung Win Naing, manager of the Elephant Camp.

The elephant camp is aimed to attract local travellers and tourists in the forms of forest-based tourism and eco-tourism in the protected area

of the Myanma Timber Enterprise. Myanmar implemented elephant-based tourism, created eco-tourism sites and opened elephant camps near rivers and mountain ranges.

“A jetty, recreating sites, decoration and bungalows have been prepared near Mann Creek to enjoy elephant bathing and river view. Additionally, elephant lovers can also donate online for elephant buffet pricing K30,000-

K50,000-K100,000 per day,” said U Aung Win Naing.

The camp is open between 7 am and 6 pm. There are 11 elephants in the camp. A local visitor is charged K1,000 while the entrance fee for a tourist is K5,000. The elephant rides cost K5,000 for a local traveller and K10,000 for a tourist. There are

11 bungalows for accommodation. A bungalow can be rented at K30,000 per day.

The camp was opened on 9 February 2019 and is situated outside the Padaung-Pyawbwe forest reserve eight miles away from the road to Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda in Minbu District. The COVID-19 negative conse-

quences shut down the camp from 25 March 2020. It was reopened along with the festival of Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda at which the footprints of the Buddha were enshrined. Moreover, the third anniversary of the camp was also marked at the opening ceremony of the camp. — Maung Maung (Minbu)/GNLM



Scenic view of the elephant camp along the Mann Creek.

## Myanmar exports slide down to \$4.99 bln as of 28 January

MYANMAR Customs Department's statistic indicated that Myanmar's exports as of 28 January in the current mini-budget period (Oct 2021-Mar 2022) slumped to US\$4.99 billion, up from \$5.49 billion recorded in the corresponding period of last FY2020-2021.

The figures reflected a sharp decline of over \$463 million compared with a year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

The negative pandemic consequences deal a severe blow to the agriculture, livestock and mineral sectors as it disrupted the transport and shut down the events. Following the closure of Sino-Myanmar border posts triggered by COVID-19 impacts and changes in China's Customs regulations, the export sees a drastic drop in the agriculture sector this year. Moreover, Myanmar's live cattle trade is mainly relying on China. The legitimate market has halted since late 2020. Nonetheless, Chinese traders are constantly purchasing the cattle on the black market across

border between Myanmar and China, despite the suspension of cross-border trade.

At present, the CMP garment sector raises its head again after the vaccination programme to the factory workers.

Of the seven export groups, agricultural exports showed a drop of \$531 million against a-year ago-period and mineral exports fell by \$192.83 million and livestock export declined by \$12 million. Other exports of forest products, fishery products and finished industrial goods rose.

Between 1 October 2021 and 28 January 2022, export values were registered at \$1.345 billion for agro products, \$3.45 million for livestock, \$312.58 million for fishery products, \$202 million for minerals, \$50.4 million for forest products, over \$1.86 billion for manufactured goods, and \$217.6 million for other goods.

This year, Myanmar's top export countries are listed China, Thailand, Japan, India, the USA, Spain, Germany, the UK, ROK and the Netherlands. —KK/GNLM

## Over 286,000 people in Mdy receive CSCs in 9 months through Pankhinn project

AUTHORITIES are providing citizenship scrutiny cards to the public under the Pankhinn project in the Mandalay region. So far, over 286,000 people from Mandalay Region have already received CSCs in 9 months, said U Zaw Win Myint, the deputy head of Mandalay Region Office, under the Ministry of Immigration and Population.

Authorities have targeted to issue citizenship cards to a total of 380,016 people from 28 townships in the Mandalay region under the Pankhinn project. This project has started carrying out on 3 May 2021. By the end of January 2022, more than 286,000 people from over 15,600 households from 8 townships were received ID cards. The re-

maining of the over 93,700 people will accept so soon.

“To complete the project as soon as possible, the Ministry of Immigration and Population in Mandalay is providing public awareness to the people in numerous ways. More than 560,000 pamphlets were distributed in the wards and village-tracts from 28 townships. Besides, the awareness talks are also being conducted by the LED billboard trucks in the wards and townships. The Pankhinn project is one of the most unique projects that the ministry has ever done. Authorities will issue the ID and household registration to citizens after attaining 18 years old. Under the Pankhinn project, the project is funded by the State

budget to cover the cost of photography and blood tests for the people who apply for the citizen ID and household registration,” he added.

There are 28 townships in 7 districts in the Mandalay region. So far, eight townships have completed the Pankhinn project by the end of January. Those townships are Meiktila, Mahlaing, Thazi, Yamethin, Pyawbwe, Patheingyi, Kyaukpadaung and Mogok townships.

The CSCs are issued under various projects to ensure the socio-economic security of the people. This project will last till 3 November in Mandalay region, it is learnt. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/GNLM

Motto of 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Union Day 2022

**\* Let's forge Union Spirit to bring about peace and tranquillity!**

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## Paddy fetches up to K800,000 per 100 baskets



Myanmar rice has a firm market locally and internationally. Domestic consumption constitutes 80 per cent of overall rice production and the remaining is sent to the external market. **GNLM FILE PHOTO**

ALTHOUGH the floor price for paddy is set at over K500,000 per 100 baskets, the paddy is priced up to K800,000 per 100 baskets depending on the varieties this year, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

“Myanmar rice has a firm market locally and internationally. Domestic consumption constitutes 80 per cent of overall rice production and the remaining is sent to the external market. MRF is striving for ensuring rice security market equilibrium and steady rice supply to the remote places in need in coordination with the stakeholders in the sup-

ply chain. The floor price is set at K540,000 per 100 baskets. The prevailing price is worth approximately K600,000-K700,000 per 100 baskets. The prices of Ayamin and Ayapadaytha paddy varieties are up to K800,000. White rice of Thailand origin is primarily grown in Bago Region, with the hope to receive good prices as it is increasingly shipped to the European market,” MRF official U Ye Min Aung was quoted as saying.

Contract farming between farmers and companies or institutions can contribute to long-term benefits. The investments should be made by looking forward to

future benefits. The farmers need to increase the sowing acreage as paddy prices go higher, he added.

MRF has been providing technical assistance to enhance the milling industry. Additionally, a tripartite partnership scheme among the farmer, private institution and the government has been planned since 2008 and it is the right time to initiate this. The federation expects to boost rice production, milling and trade.

China is the main trade partner of Myanmar’s rice, which is also shipped to countries in the European Union and Africa. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

## Myanmar maritime trade tops US\$7.64 bln as of 28 January

THE value of Myanmar’s maritime trade between 1 October and 28 January 2022 of the current mini-budget period of 2021-2022 jumped to US\$7.64 billion, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The figure reflected an increase of \$485 million as against last financial year. Sea trade rose from \$7.159 billion during the year-ago period, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

While maritime exports were valued at \$3.513 billion, imports registered \$4.13 billion. Compared to the same period in the 2020-2021FY, imports fell by \$103.37 million, while exports registered an increase of \$588.49 million.

Meanwhile, the value of trade through the border this FY was estimated at \$2.107 billion, which dropped drastically from \$4 billion registered last FY.

Myanmar’s sea trade generated \$19.8 billion out of an overall

trade value of \$29.5 billion in the previous FY2020-2021, the Ministry of Commerce’s statistics indicated.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, fishery products, minerals, livestock, forest products, finished industrial goods, and other products, while it imports capital goods, consumer goods, and raw industrial materials. The country currently has nine ports involved in sea trade. Yangon Port is the main gateway for Myanmar’s maritime trade and includes the Yangon inner terminals and the outer Thilawa Port.

Yangon inner terminals and the outer Thilawa Port received a higher number of larger ships of above 30,000 DWT (Deadweight tonnage) after the draft limit is extended up to 10 metres with the new navigation channel accessing to inner Yangon River. — KK/GNLM



The country currently has nine ports involved in sea trade. Yangon Port is the main gateway for Myanmar’s maritime trade and includes the Yangon inner terminals and the outer Thilawa Port.

## Short-haul trucking cost surges from shortage of Chinese truckers



China shut down all the checkpoints linking to the Muse border amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the checkpoints, Kyinsankyawt has resumed trading activity from 26 November on a trial run.

THE pricing of short-haul trucking service has exorbitantly soared owing to the shortage of Chinese truckers, said U Min Thein, vice-chairman of the Muse Rice Wholesale Centre.

In a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus on the border, China banned border crossing. Only Myanmar goods can be exported to China through the Kyinsankyawt border with the use of a Chinese short-haul trucking service.

“Myanmar trucks are restricted to enter China side. However, there is a shortage of Chinese truck drivers. Approximately 300-400 short-haul trucks with a loading capacity of 1,000 rice bags are readied in the Myanmar side yet they are banned to pass the crossing. If the restriction is lifted, the trucking cost will fall for sure. At present, the traders are offering competitive prices for their goods, forcing Chinese drivers to manipulate the pricing. Only Chinese drivers and operators

can take advantage of this case. Myanmar truckers cannot help doing it,” U Min Thein stressed.

As a result of this, the cost of Chinese short-haul trucking tremendously rose to K10 million per truck, whereas the trucking was worth only K700,000-K800,000 when Myanmar truckers were allowed to enter China, he was quoted as saying.

Only when China eases the restriction can the trucking rate drop. Only 140 truckloads of goods, including 100 watermelon trucks, are shipped to China via the Kyinsankyawt checkpoint at the moment. Earlier, about 400 trucks went to China.

Therefore, the volume of rice and broken rice export plunges from 60,000 to 10,000 per day.

China shut down all the checkpoints linking to the Muse border amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the checkpoints, Kyinsankyawt has resumed trading activity from 26 Novem-

ber on a trial run. Myanmar daily delivers rubber, various beans and pulses, dried plum, watermelon, muskmelon and other food commodities to China through Kyinsankyawt.

Myanmar has officially opened five cross-border posts with China; Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti and Kengtung. Muse is a major trading hub with the neighbouring country, China.

Between 1 October 2021 and 28 January 2022 in the current mini-budget period, the border trade between Myanmar and China amounted to US\$446.68 million, comprising \$425.88 million worth of exports and imports valued at \$20.8 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce’s data.

The Muse border post witnessed \$4.057 billion worth of the Sino-Myanmar border trade last financial year 2020-2021, including exports worth \$2.9 billion and imports worth \$1.15 billion. — NN/GNLM

# Preserve traditional cultural heritage for perpetual existence

**M**YANMAR is a country integrated with different cultures. Located between two big countries endowed with high cultural standards in their respective traditions, preservation of Myanmar's traditional fine arts which are legacy of forefathers is a national duty of the government and all citizens while plucking those countries' fruits and best works suitable for Myanmar society.

Aimed at ensuring the perpetual existence of Myanmar's traditional performing arts, the government arranges to resume the Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competitions for the 23rd time in coming October as part of efforts to preserve traditional singing, dancing, song composing and music playing professions.

Indeed, the performing arts competitions are trying to occupy the applause and hearts of audiences while contestant performers need to try for giving their hearts and souls made of their performances, initiatives, innovation and creation to the people. That is why the exchange of hearts and souls between the performers and audiences will be designed to preserve the Myanmar traditional culture.

such as harp and the crocodile-shaped string instrument, the instrument made of leather such as drums, Dobet and Ozi, oboe and flute, and clapping as well as bamboo claps are tangible heritage and the playing and singing techniques, the intangible heritage.

Not only prize winners but outstanding performers from the competitions are standing on their own in creating performances as their professional works as well as their livelihoods. On the other hand, they all are discharging the national duty for preserving Myanmar's traditional culture for perpetual existence as long as the country and the people of Myanmar without focusing on the income from performances.

Indeed, the performing arts competitions are trying to occupy the applause and hearts of audiences while contestant performers need to try for giving their hearts and souls made of their performances, initiatives, innovation and creation to the people. That is why the exchange of hearts and souls between the performers and audiences will be designed to preserve the Myanmar traditional culture.

The relevant committees will arrange the necessary assistance for the competitions and transport services for contestants on their returns and downtown trips. The already formed singing, dancing, song composing, music playing, marionette, theatrical performances, modern/nationalistic songs, the narration of stories assessment working groups will assess the presence of contestants in respective events to choose the best performers.

At present, the prize-winning contestants turned out by 22 performing arts competitions are taking a firm position in the artiste arenas as professional performers in presenting their creations, initiatives and performances to the people.

The performing arts competitions have been preserving Myanmar's intangible heritage such as singing, dancing, composing songs and playing traditional musical instruments. Five kinds of Myanmar's traditional musical instruments namely small brass gongs, string musical instruments

# Highest risk patients for severe COVID-19 least likely to get monoclonal antibodies, says study

**E**VER since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, researchers have been giving every possible information to help in better treatment.

According to new research, people over age 65 at the highest risk for severe COVID-19 have often been the least likely to receive monoclonal antibodies (mAbs). — a highly effective treatment for the disease — both across and within US states. The research was co-authored by researchers from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The analysis was published online in JAMA.

**Monoclonal antibodies** "Monoclonal antibodies should first go to patients at the highest risk of death from COVID-19, but the opposite happened — the healthiest patients were the most likely to get treatment. Unfortunately, our federal and state system for distributing these drugs has failed our most vulnerable patients," said Michael Barnett, assistant professor of health policy and manage-



People queue to be tested for Covid-19 at a street-side testing booth in New York on 17 December 2021.

PHOTO: ED JONES | AFP

ment at Harvard Chan School and lead author of the study. Monoclonal antibodies are very effective at treating mild to moderate COVID-19 infection among non-hospitalized patients. But

during the pandemic, mAbs have been in short supply. Federal guidelines prioritize patients at higher risk of being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19, including older people and those with chronic conditions.

more than 1.9 million Medicare beneficiaries who had been diagnosed with COVID-19 between November 2020 and August 2021, and compared rates of receiving mAbs by age, sex, race and ethnicity, region, and number of chronic conditions.

**Medicare beneficiaries**

They found that, among Medicare beneficiaries who weren't hospitalized or who didn't pass away within seven days of their diagnosis, only 7.2 per cent received mAb therapy. The likelihood of receiving mAbs was higher among those with fewer chronic conditions — 23.2 per cent of those with no chronic conditions received mAbs, versus 6.3 per cent, 6.0 per cent, and 4.7 per cent of those with 1-3, 4-5, and 6 or more chronic conditions, respectively. The researchers also found that Blacks were less likely to receive mAbs than whites — 6.2 per cent versus 7.4 per cent. In addition, there were significant differences among states when it came to mAb treatment. For example, Rhode Island and Louisiana administered mAbs to the

highest proportion of non-hospitalized patients with COVID-19 (24.9 per cent and 21.2 per cent), while Alaska and Washington administered the lowest proportion (1.1 per cent and 0.7 per cent). Southern states had the highest rates of mAb therapy (10.6 per cent of beneficiaries), while states in the West had the lowest rates (2.9 per cent).

**mAb therapy**

Speculating as to why mAb therapy often failed to reach the highest-risk COVID-19 patients, the researchers said it's possible that higher-risk patients may have had difficulty navigating the multiple steps needed to receive mAbs, from receiving a timely diagnosis to referral and scheduling an infusion within 10 days. As for differences among states, they suggested that mAb supply may have been low or less used by clinicians in some regions of the US. "We need new approaches to prevent these inequities from happening again with newer treatments on the horizon," said Barnett.

SOURCE: ANI

# S African biotech firm makes Africa's first mRNA vaccine

**A** South African biotech firm said Thursday it has produced the first mRNA Covid vaccine made on the continent using Moderna's sequence and that it will be ready for clinical trials in November.

Cape Town-based Afrigen Biologics and Vaccines is leading the pilot project, backed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the COVAX initiative, to tweak Moderna's shot.

"At laboratory scale we have a vaccine that we now need to test," Afrigen's managing director Petro Terblanche, told AFP, adding that the first shot was ready during the second week of January.

Tests on animals will start next month, "but the human studies will only start around November 2022," she said after meeting a group of officials sponsoring the project.

Afrigen researchers sequenced the publicly available genetic code that Moderna used to make their vaccine, made the DNA and the RNA, and produced their own shot.

**Great vaccine**

"We are the first to take the sequence developed by Stanford University and used by Moderna for their great vaccine, to design and develop a vaccine produced at laboratory scale," she said.

And "we have completed the process from the design to a final formulation, but it's small scale, but it's a good start, it's a fabulous start," the laboratory chief said.

"This is the first yet very important step in empowering low- and middle-income countries to create a fully integrated vaccine production sector."

She spoke after the UN-backed global Medicines Patent Pool gave the firm a 39 million euro (\$45 million) grant.

Their mRNA vaccine can be kept at warmer temperatures, making it easier to store in low- and middle-income settings. The original jab requires expensive -25°C to -15°C refrigeration.

**'Health security, vaccine equity'**

Charles Gore, MPP's executive director, said in a statement that his organization was "delight-

ed to support Afrigen and its African partners to greatly expand local manufacturing capacity and reduce today's gross inequity." The grant will cover the technology transfer hub's work for five years, through 2026.

The French government funds the MPP's activities linked to the hub.

"We will keep supporting this project... it's a very important one for the world and for Africa," the French ambassador to Pretoria, Aurelien Lechevallier, said after touring the lab.

The MPP is an international organisation that supports development of medicines for low- and middle-income countries.

**Tech transfer hub**

Set up in July, the tech transfer hub will train other countries and hand out production licences to poor nations left out in the race for the life-saving shots.

"Its aim is to allow for greater and more diversified vaccine manufacturing capability, strengthen African regional health security and respond more equitably" to the current and future pandemics,

a statement said.

Africa is the least vaccinated continent in the world.

More than a year after the world's first Covid shot was administered and two years into the pandemic itself, just 11.3 per cent of Africans have been fully immunised.

The problem has exposed

Africa's huge dependence on imported vaccines and its tech weakness compared with Europe, China and the United States.

To date only one per cent of the vaccines used in Africa are produced on the continent of some 1.3 billion people, which has reported some 239,000 Covid deaths since the start of the

pandemic.

Other players involved in the Cape Town hub set up in July are Biologicals and Vaccines Institute of Southern Africa (Biovac), the South African Medical Research Council, and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

SOURCE: AFP



Cape Town-based Afrigen Biologics vaccine candidate would be the first to be made based on a widely used vaccine without the assistance and approval of the developer. PHOTO: RODGER BOSCH/AFP

Motto of 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Union Day 2022

## \* Joining hands in unison among ethnic nationals of the Union



### Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 7 February 2022)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over Andaman Sea and South Bay and generally fair elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 8 February 2022:** Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in (North and East) Shan, Kayin and Mon 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:** Decrease of night temperatures in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and Shan, Kayah and Kayin states.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8 February 2022:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8 February 2022:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8 February 2022:** Generally fair weather.

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NEWS  
IN BRIEFBaby dies in  
Trinidad coast guard  
migrant interception

A baby died in her mother's arms after the Trinidad and Tobago coast guard fired on a boat carrying migrants from Venezuela, authorities said Sunday.

The Caribbean nation's coast guard ship TTS Scarborough attempted to intercept a boat that illegally entered the country's territorial waters from Venezuela on Saturday a little before midnight, a coast guard statement said.

The ship hailed the other vessel to make it stop and fired warning shots when it did not, the statement said, adding, "This measure also proved futile."

The unknown vessel "continued with aggressive manoeuvres, first coming into contact with the ship's boat and then making attempts to ram it."

The statement said that coast guard personnel feared for their lives and fired on the engines of the boat to shut them down.— AFP ■

Ecuador capital  
flooding toll raised  
to 28

THE heaviest flooding to hit Ecuador in two decades claimed 28 lives in the capital Quito this week and left 52 people injured, the city's mayor said Sunday.

The floods inundated homes, carried off cars and swept away volleyball players and spectators on a sports field.

Rescuers are still searching for a missing 38-year-old woman who lived in the popular La Comuna neighbourhood.

Rain that drenched Quito for 17 straight hours caused flooding and surges of mud that damaged roads, agricultural areas, clinics, schools, a police station and an electric power substation.

"The total number of dead is 28, 52 people were injured, seven of whom were hospitalized," Quito mayor Santiago Guarderas told a press conference. Earlier in the week, Guarderas said Monday's rains overwhelmed a hillside water catchment structure that had a capacity of 4,500 cubic metres but was inundated with more than four times that volume.— AFP ■

## Cuba marks six decades under US sanctions



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 1 May 1998 a worker holds up a sign condemning the US economic embargo against the communist nation during the traditional Labour Day parade in downtown Havana. 7 February 2022 commemorates the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the embargo imposed by the US to Cuba. PHOTO: ADALBERTO ROQUE / AFP

CUBA on Monday marks 60 years under a US economic blockade that has deeply affected the communist nation's fortunes and shows no signs of being lifted.

Decreed by US president John F Kennedy on 3 February 1962, the embargo on all bilateral trade came into effect four days later. Its purpose, said Kennedy's executive order, was to reduce the threat posed by the island nation's "alignment with the communist powers."

Despite failing to force a change in tack from Havana since then, the sanctions remain in place six decades later, and are blamed by Cuban authorities for damage to the country's economy

amounting to some \$150 billion.

Cuba is experiencing its worst economic crisis in 30 years, with inflation at 70 per cent and a severe shortage of food and medicines as the Covid-19 pandemic dealt a hefty blow to a key source of income: tourism. Long lines for essential goods are common, as food imports have been slashed due to dwindling government reserves. Havana blames the sanctions for all the island's woes. The message that "the embargo is a virus too" has been hammered home by authorities for months, as they organize caravans of cars, bikes and motorcycles to criss-cross the country and denounce the sanctions.— AFP ■

## Mexico breaks up migrant camp near US border

AUTHORITIES on Sunday broke up a camp of about 380 migrants, mostly from Mexico and Central America, in Tijuana, near the US border.

Mexican migration officials announced that they were trying to relocate the people in the area just south of San Diego, California.

Migrants were told they would be allowed to bring to shelters three changes of clothes but not additional items.

"There were people who began to leave and began to climb of their own free will, without using public force, onto the trucks that go to the different shelters," the city's mayor, Montserrat Caballero, told reporters.

She said that the agents who

participated in the operation were unarmed.

But the move sparked annoyance among many migrants who lived in the camp, which had been there for just under a year.

"What they are doing to us is wrong and inhumane," said Rosalía Mejía, a woman from the southern Mexican state of Guerrero, who had been living in the camp for six months with her three children.

"I'm going to go to a relative if possible," she added.

A Honduran woman named Maritza also demanded the action of the authorities.

"We came from our country because there is a lot of crime, they take us out of there and now they take us out of here,"



A policeman remains on a motorcycle next to migrants as authorities dismantle an improvised camp outside El Chaparral crossing port in Tijuana, Baja California state, Mexico, near the border with the US, on 6 January 2022. After almost a year, authorities dismantle the camp and remove migrants to several shelters in the city. PHOTO: GUILLERMO ARIAS / AFP

claimed the woman, who has been living in Tijuana for a year

and six months in a tent with her two children.— AFP ■

## End of the road in Colombia for Escobar's 'cocaine' hippos?

MORE than 100 African hippos descended from fewer than a handful imported as exotic pets by drug lord Pablo Escobar, face an uncertain future in Colombia.

After the government added Escobar's so-called "cocaine" hippos Friday to a list of "introduced, invasive species," experts say killing them may be the only viable option.

From the few individuals once housed at Escobar's Hacienda Napoles estate, the hippos' numbers have ballooned, with 130 now roaming free north of Bogota around the Magdalena River.

Officials say the grazing giants, endemic to sub-Saharan Africa, threaten local wildlife and humans living along the river,



Handout photo released by CORNARE of hippos at a care centre in Doradal, Antioquia Department, northeast of Bogota, on 15 October 2021. Twenty-four out of 80 hippos that roamed the former ranch of late drug lord Pablo Escobar, in northwestern Colombia, were sterilized due to the "uncontrolled" growth of this "invasive" species, authorities reported. PHOTO: CORNARE / AFP

whom they have already come into conflict with.

Attempts have been made to sterilize the animals, which can

weigh as much as 1.8 tonnes, but doing so is expensive and difficult.

"Sacrifice (culling) remains on the table," said David Echeverri, head of the Cornare state environmental agency in charge of the sterilization effort.

"It is a necessary option... it could be the only way to stop the problem from getting worse," he told AFP.

Escobar, once head of the deadly Medellin Cartel, became one of the richest men on the planet, according to Forbes, thanks to the drug trafficking empire he built.

With his wealth he built a menagerie, acquiring hippos, flamingos, giraffes, zebras and kangaroos for his ranch.— AFP ■

## Japan aims for 1 million daily booster shots amid new infection wave

JAPAN aims to soon start providing 1 million booster shots per day to stem a new wave of infections spurred by the highly transmissible Omicron variant of the coronavirus, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Monday.

New cases exceeded 100,000 a day nationwide for the first time last week, but only 4.8 per cent of Japan's 125 million people had received a third shot as of last Friday, according to the government.

The percentage is much lower than in Britain, France and Germany, where over 50 per cent of the population has had a booster shot. "By setting a clear goal, the government as a whole will work to deliver shots to those who hope to be vaccinated as soon as possible," Kishida said at a parliamentary session.

"The third shots are the key to preventing the development of symptoms and severe illness against the highly contagious Omicron variant," he said, adding booster shots at companies and universities will start from mid-February.

Junya Ogawa of the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan criticized Kishida in the Diet saying his announcement of aiming for 1 million shots per

day is "one or two steps behind". But Kishida countered that a six-month interval between second and third shots is necessary.

Prior to the session, Kishida instructed health minister Shigeyuki Goto and other Cabinet ministers concerned to bring forward vaccination campaigns implemented by local municipalities, boost inoculation capacity at workplaces and promote the delivery of shots to essential workers including teachers.

On Monday, the Self-Defence Forces began operating a mass vaccination centre again in Osaka, western Japan.

"I wanted to lower my risk of falling gravely ill. My anxiety is eased," said Kosei Inokuma from Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture. The 22-year-old university student from the neighbouring prefecture has medical conditions that could see him develop severe symptoms if he is infected with the virus.

The Osaka site joins a similar venue in Tokyo relaunched last week that has tripled its pace of inoculations from the previous week to 2,160 shots a day. The pace is set to reach 4,080 on Tuesday and then 5,040 on Thursday.— Kyodo ■



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida attends a House of Representatives budget committee session in the parliament in Tokyo on 7 February 2022. PHOTO: KYODO

Thailand reports 10,470 new COVID-19 cases, 12 more fatalities

THAILAND on Monday reported 10,470 new COVID-19 cases and 12 more fatalities in the previous 24 hours, according to the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA).

This is the third day in a row that the country has recorded more than 10,000 daily cases. The last time that Thailand continued to report more than 10,000 daily caseloads was in mid-October 2021. The capital Bangkok, Samut Prakan, Chon Buri, Nonthaburi and Phuket provinces reported the most cases during the past 24 hours, according to the country's COVID-19 task force.— Xinhua ■

Canada PM Trudeau says tests positive for Covid-19

CANADIAN Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Monday he has tested positive for Covid-19, while calling out truckers protesting against vaccine mandates.

"I feel well and have no symptoms," the 50-year-old premier told a news conference.

Trudeau had announced last week he was isolating after being exposed to the coronavirus. Two of his three children have also since tested positive, he said.—AFP ■

## Malaysia prepares for COVID-19 surge as Omicron cases spike

MALAYSIAN authorities are taking steps to prepare for a possible surge in fresh COVID-19 infections as the Omicron variant is fuelling a spike in cases, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said on Monday.

Among the measures are the reactivation of the national COVID-19 rapid response task force which oversees field hospitals, the number of available

hospital beds and coordination with private healthcare facilities, Khairy said in a press briefing.

Khairy assured the public of sufficient capacity of the existing healthcare facilities, saying 33 per cent, or 3,233 of the 9,776 hospital beds in the country, are currently in use, and 14 per cent or 116 of 850 intensive care hospital beds in the country are in use.

"For the time being, the use of beds at healthcare facilities is not overloaded. We are also able to convert more beds as needed," he said.

He added that 120 hospitals are available in the country to treat COVID-19 patients and there are 43 low-risk quarantine centres hosting another 10,810 beds.

He also said the majority

of fresh infections are asymptomatic or mild infections, but it is necessary to take steps to ensure the healthcare system is not overwhelmed. Malaysia has witnessed a surge of new infections over the past week, with 11,034 new cases being reported on Monday. The previous time the country had seen five-digit new infections was in October last year.— Xinhua ■

## Coronavirus: Latest global developments

HERE are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis:

### Canada truckers 'out of control'

Ottawa's mayor declares a state of emergency over the "out of control" anti-vaxxer and anti-mask truckers' protest which has paralyzed the Canadian capital for two weeks.

### China locks down city

China locks down the 3.5 million inhabitants of the city of Baise near the border with Vietnam after more than 70 cases were discovered in the past three days.

### 'Fortress Australia' to open

Australia will reopen its borders to tourists from 21 February, ending one of the world's strictest and longest-running



Truckers and supporters continue to protest against mandates and restrictions related to Covid-19 vaccines in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, on 5 February 2022. PHOTO: AFP

pandemic bans dubbed "Fortress Australia".

Spotify won't silence Ro-

gan

The head of music streaming giant Spotify Daniel Ek con-

demns its controversial podcaster Joe Rogan's use of a racial slur but insists silencing the presenter also criticized for virus misinformation is not the answer.

### PNG's wasted visit

Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister James Marape returns home from the Beijing Winter Olympic after a positive test scuppers a face-to-face meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

### Honduras president positive

The first woman president of the Central American country, Xiomara Castro, 62, who was elected last month, tests positive for the virus, but says she will keep working.

Masked hockey

Russia and Canada's women ice hockey teams wear masks during their Beijing Winter Games match, which Canada won 6-1.

### Over 5.7 million deaths

Coronavirus has killed at least 5,737,468 million people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources on Monday.

The US has recorded the most Covid deaths with 902,624, followed by Brazil with 632,193, India 502,874 and Russia 336,023.

Taking into account excess mortality linked to Covid-19, the WHO estimates the overall death toll could be two to three times higher.—AFP ■

# Asian markets mixed as US jobs data ramps up rate-hike bets

ASIAN markets fluctuated Monday as a forecast-busting US jobs report reinforced optimism that the world's top economy was well on the recovery track but also ramped up interest rate hike expectations.

The much-anticipated non-farm payrolls data on Friday saw the Labour Department sharply revise up the previous three months' readings, while also revealing a wage growth surge.

With all-important inflation reports this week tipped to show prices rising at a pace not seen for four decades, traders are becoming increasingly anguished about the US central bank's plans to bring them un-



Pedestrians walk past an electronic quotation board displaying the closing share prices of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo on 7 February 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

der control while being careful not to jeopardise the recovery. There is mounting talk that

officials will have to hike borrowing costs at least four times this year — with some predict-

ing as many as seven could be on the cards.

The move to tighter policies, which is likely to start in March, will bring an end to the era of ultra-cheap cash that has helped fuel a near two-year markets rally. And that has been acting as a hefty weight on stocks at the start of the year.

The Federal Reserve is in a difficult spot, "trying to manage the real economy where we see that hot inflation and the financial economy, which quivers every time we talk about rate rises", Karen Harris, of Bain & Co, told Bloomberg Television.

With the jobs reading showing the economy remained resilient in the face of the Omicron

variant, supply chain snarls and surging prices, Wall Street mostly rose, helped by a thumping rise in Amazon.

The S&P 500 and Nasdaq closed on a positive note, though the Dow dipped.

Asia was mixed. Shanghai led the gainers as investors returned from their week-long Lunar New Year break to play catch-up with a broadly strong week across world markets, while Singapore, Taipei, Bangkok and Jakarta were also in positive territory.

However, Hong Kong dropped after surging more than three per cent Friday, with Tokyo, Seoul, Mumbai and Manila also down. — AFP ■

## Swiss call for 'calm and creativity' to fix EU ties

SWISS President Ignazio Cassis called Sunday for "calm and creativity" to fix Switzerland's thorny relations with the European Union.

Ties between Brussels and Bern have been strained since non-EU member Switzerland suddenly decided in May 2021 to end years of discussion towards a broad cooperation agreement with the bloc. Cassis said that in sorting out Bern's future relationship with Brussels, Switzerland must get away from "purely technical and institutional questions" and instead focus on matters of content.

"It is only when we have enriched the content, when politics and society recognize the material gains that Switzerland can expect, that an institutional rapprochement will be accepted," he told the *SonntagsZeitung* newspaper.

The situation needs "a little

calm and creativity", he added. Landlocked Switzerland is surrounded by the EU, which is its main economic partner. The years of talks on a framework agreement hit an impasse after the EU refused to budge on Swiss demands to exclude key issues relating to state aid, wage protections and freedom of movement. EU-Swiss ties are currently governed by a patchwork of agreements, and for more than a decade discussions were ongoing towards an overarching accord that would have harmonised the legal framework governing the relationship. The agreement would also have established a dispute settlement mechanism.

But Switzerland is reluctant to meet EU demands for budget contributions and alignment on European rules as the price to keep free access to the vast EU market. — AFP ■

## Bottlenecks squeeze German output in December

GERMAN production fell in December, pulled down by a suffering construction sector, official figures published Monday showed, as Europe's largest economy struggled to shake off the drag caused by widespread supply bottlenecks.

Output was down 0.3 per cent in the last month of the year, cancelling out a revised 0.3 per cent rise in November, according to figures from the federal statistics agency Destatis. Over the whole of 2021, industrial production was three per cent higher than in 2020, but still 5.5 per cent lower than 2019, before the onset of the coronavirus crisis.

Production of capital goods was up 2.5 per cent in December, while intermediate goods were up 0.6 per cent. The production of consumer goods fell by 0.5 per cent, and



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 1 March 2019 a worker fits seats into a Seat Tarraco on a production line at German car manufacturing giant Volkswagen's headquarters in Wolfsburg, northern Germany. Hit by the global crisis of shortages of semiconductors, German car manufacturer Volkswagen intends to eliminate from mid-April almost all night manufacturing at its historic site in Wolfsburg, its unions announced on 4 February 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

construction fell by 7.3 per cent.

The poor figures in construction masked a result that was "not as bad as it looks at first glance", as industrial output

excluding energy and construction actually grew for the second month in a row, said Carsten Brzeski, head of macro at the ING bank. — AFP ■

## 'Fortress Australia' reopens borders to tourists on 21 February

AUSTRALIA will reopen its borders to tourists from 21 February, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced Monday, ending some of the world's strictest and longest-running pandemic travel restrictions.

"It's almost two years since we took the decision to close the borders to Australia," Morrison said, announcing borders will reopen to all visa holders "on the

21st of February of this year". "If you're double vaccinated, we look forward to welcoming you back to Australia," he said. Australia's ports and airports slammed shut to tourists in March 2020 with the aim of protecting the island continent against the surging global pandemic. Since then, Australians have mostly been barred from leaving and only a handful of visitors have been granted ex-

emptions to enter. The rules have stranded nationals overseas, split families, hammered the country's multi-billion-dollar tourist industry and prompted often bitter debates about Australia's openness to the rest of the world.

"Bout time," said Melbourne resident Marshall McDonald. "It's exciting. It almost feels like the end of a period of hermit kingdom-ness ending."

Every month of "Fortress Australia" policies has cost businesses an estimated US\$2.6 billion, according to the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "Our borders will have been closed to international tourists for 704 days," the chamber said in a statement. "This decision will allow our flailing tourism sector to recover, saving businesses and saving livelihoods."

In recent months, rules have been gradually relaxed for Australians, long-term residents and students. The latest decision will see almost all remaining caps lifted. It comes after the country's long-standing "Covid-zero" policy was abandoned, vaccination rates rose and the once stellar track-and-trace system collapsed under a wave of Omicron cases.— AFP ■

# Toshiba plans to split into 2 firms, instead of 3 under initial plan

TOSHIBA Corp said Monday it has decided to divide into two companies instead of the three announced in November to cut costs associated with the reorganization, abandoning its initial plan, which drew stiff opposition from activist shareholders.

Toshiba, a Japanese household name with a history of nearly 150 years, said in a statement that the revision of the original plan is aimed at ensuring stability in its finances.

Under the new plan, Toshiba will spin off its device business, including its semiconductor and hard drive sectors, and put together infrastructure and asset-management units.

The company also said it will sell 55 per cent of its 60 per cent stake in Toshiba Carrier Corp, its air-conditioning subsidiary,



The logo of Japanese industrial group Toshiba is seen on top of a building at its headquarters in Tokyo on 7 February 2022. PHOTO: AFP

to US firm Carrier Corp for about 100 billion yen (\$867.4 million) after reviewing its business portfolio.

It had planned to break up into three companies — two spinoffs that would each focus on infrastructure and devices and a third

that would own a stake in flash-memory chip company Kioxia Holdings Corp.

The rare reorganization of the tech behemoth was seen as an attempt to appease shareholders disgruntled by lackluster efforts to boost growth and

corporate value.

Toshiba has a variety of businesses, from nuclear power and elevators to hard disk drives and semiconductors. In fiscal 2020, which ended in March 2021, it had over 3 trillion yen in sales. — Kyodo ■

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ASIATIC KING VOY.NO. (019W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ASIATIC KING VOY.NO. (019W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **8-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S GOLD STAR LINES PTE LTD

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PACIFIC GRACE VOY.NO. (2202S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PACIFIC GRACE VOY.NO. (2202S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **8-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (227)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (227N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **7-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINES

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALVAN VOY.NO. (SCY1119)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ALVAN VOY. NO. (SCY1119)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **8-2-2022** 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 INTERNATIONAL LOGITICS SDN BHD LINE

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCL 19

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 19 VOY. NO. (002)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **9-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MMKH** 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

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NASSJO VOY.NO. (203S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NASSJO VOY.NO. (203S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **8-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (244N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (244N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **8-2-2022** 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING

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# Diplomatic flurry to avert Russia-NATO clash over Ukraine

WITH war clouds gathering over Ukraine, international diplomacy goes into overdrive on Monday with the French and Russian presidents to talk in Moscow and the German chancellor heading to the White House to meet with US leader Joe Biden.

Also on Monday, the German, Czech, Slovak and Austrian foreign ministers were expected in Kyiv, which has played down dire US warnings that Moscow had stepped up preparations for a major incursion into Ukraine.

US officials have said the Kremlin has assembled 110,000 troops along the border with its pro-Western neighbour but intelligence assessments have not determined whether President Vladimir Putin has actually de-



Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz (R), France's President Emmanuel Macron (C) and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky (L) arrive for a meeting as part of the Eastern Partnership summit at The European Council Building in Brussels on 15 December 2021. **PHOTO: KENZO TRIBOUILLARD / POOL / AFP**

ecided to invade.

They said Russia is on track to amass a large enough force

— some 150,000 soldiers — for a full-scale invasion by mid-February.

Such a force would be capable of taking the capital Kyiv in a matter of 48 hours in an onslaught that would kill up to 50,000 civilians, 25,000 Ukrainian soldiers and 10,000 Russian troops and trigger a refugee flood of up to five million people, mainly into Poland, the officials added.

On top of the potential human cost, Ukraine fears further damage to its already struggling economy.

And if Moscow attacks Ukraine it could face retaliation over the Nord Stream 2 pipeline — set to double natural gas supplies from Russia to Germany — with Berlin threatening to block it.

Russia is seeking a guaran-

tee from NATO that Ukraine will not enter the alliance and wants the bloc to withdraw forces from member states in eastern Europe.

## 'Apocalyptic predictions'

Moscow denies that it is planning to invade Ukraine, and Kyiv's presidency advisor said the chances of a diplomatic solution to the crisis remained "substantially higher than the threat of further escalation".

On Twitter, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba sought to calm tensions, saying: "Do not believe the apocalyptic predictions. Different capitals have different scenarios, but Ukraine is ready for any development." — AFP ■

## Morocco to bury 'little Rayan' who died trapped in well

MOROCCO prepared Monday to bury "little Rayan", the five-year-old boy who died trapped in a well despite a days-long rescue operation that gripped the world.

The child's fate drew global attention after he fell down a narrow, 32-metre (100-foot) dry well last Tuesday, and sparked an outpouring of sympathy online.

His funeral is to be held in his home village of Ighrane, in the impoverished Rif mountains of northern Morocco where the tragedy took place, a local official and a relative told AFP.

On Saturday night, crowds had cheered in joy when rescue workers reached Rayan after a round-the-clock digging operation, clearing away the final handfuls of dirt.

But hope turned to grief as news spread that the rescue was

too late, and Rayan was dead.

"The silence is terrible this morning in the village," a relative said.

The news was announced by the royal cabinet of the North African nation, after King Mohammed VI called the parents with his condolences.

"We thank his majesty the king, the authorities and all those who have helped us," Rayan's father Khaled Aourram said on Saturday evening. "Praise God, have mercy on the dead."

Rayan's body was taken to a military hospital in Rabat, according to a cousin, although no report has been given of any autopsy. The race to rescue Rayan was followed live across the world, and as soon as the tragic conclusion was announced, tributes poured in.— AFP ■



A member of the Moroccan security forces gestures to the crowd to move back, as the ambulance carrying the body of five-year-old Rayan Oram who fell into a well shaft on 1 February leaves the scene in the remote village of Ighrane in the rural northern province of Chefchaouen, late on 5 February 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Soviet-era outpost helps Russia retain a foot in Norwegian Arctic

WITH its bust of Lenin, cultural centre and KGB offices, the abandoned Soviet outpost of Pyramiden may seem like a time-warped Arctic oddity but is valued by Moscow as it vies for clout in the warming region.

Russia has made the development of the Arctic a strategic priority, pinning its hopes for supremacy in the region on a fleet of giant nuclear-powered icebreakers.

The tiny ex-mining settlement of Pyramiden, meanwhile, helps Moscow retain a footprint in Norway's Svalbard archipelago, high above the Arctic Circle.

Norway — a NATO member — was afforded sovereignty of Svalbard under the 1920 Treaty of Paris



A photo shows a view of the abandoned ex-Soviet miners village of Pyramiden sitting in front of the glacier Nordenskiöldbreen in Svalbard, Norway, on 21 September 2021. **PHOTO: OLIVIER MORIN / AFP**

but all signatories, which included the Soviet Union, were given equal rights to explore and exploit its mineral resources.

Russia began coal mining

in Barentsburg, another settlement in the archipelago, in 1931, and later in Pyramiden, where the Russian community grew to up to 1,200 between 1960 and 1980.— AFP ■

## 35<sup>th</sup> AU Summit concludes, outlining African priorities for 2022

UNDER the theme of "Building Resilience in Nutrition on the African Continent: Accelerate the Human Capital, Social and Economic Development," the Assembly of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government on Sunday concluded its 35th ordinary session, outlining African priorities for 2022 and beyond.

The two-day summit, which followed a hiatus in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was

marked with calls for continued African solidarity in addressing the impact of COVID-19 on the continent and the urgent need to address the emerging scourge of unconstitutional changes of governments and the scourge of terrorism across the continent. Senegalese President Macky Sall, who took over the one-year term rotating AU chairmanship from President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Felix Tshisekedi, emphasized

the need to exert concerted efforts in responding to continental threats such as instability, climate change and the devastating impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. "We need to focus our attention on building our countries and also ensuring continental integration; and there cannot be development and integration, where there is no peace, no security and no stability," the Senegalese president said.— Xinhua ■

# Commodities drive Indonesia economic recovery in 2021

INDONESIA'S economy returned to growth last year as surging commodity prices helped drive a recovery from a coronavirus-triggered recession, data showed Monday, though officials warned the outlook depended on how well the fast-spreading Omicron variant is managed.

Southeast Asia's biggest economy expanded 3.69 per cent on-year, the country's statistics agency said, having contracted in 2020 for the first time since 1998 during the region's financial crisis.

The healthy rebound came largely on the back of declining coronavirus cases and robust ex-

ports, as prices for key commodities such as palm oil, coal and nickel rose significantly, Central Statistics Bureau head Margo Yuwono told a news conference.

And in an optimistic sign, the economy grew a forecast-beating 5.02 per cent on-year in the final three months.

"We hope the momentum of the economic recovery will be maintained in 2022 as long as we all agree that health protocols are critical so daily cases will decline and mobility will get better," Yuwono said.

The country's trade surplus for 2021 reached \$35.34 billion, its highest in 15 years, the statistics agency reported earlier.



A worker pushes a wheelbarrow carrying palm fruits at a palm oil plantation in a protected area of the Rawa Singkil wildlife reserve as part of the Leuser Ecosystem in Trumon, Southern Aceh province, on 24 October 2021. PHOTO: AFP

Indonesia was hit hard in July as the Delta variant swept the country, forcing the gov-

ernment to impose tighter social-distancing restrictions that hobbled businesses.— AFP ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### China locks down city of 3.5 million near Vietnam border

A Chinese city of 3.5 million near the border with Vietnam was on lockdown Monday after more than 70 coronavirus cases were discovered there over the past three days.

China, the only major world economy still sticking to a staunch zero-Covid policy, is on high alert for any outbreaks as it hosts the Beijing Winter Olympics.

Local officials in the city of Baise in the southern Guangxi region announced Sunday that no one would be allowed to leave the city, while residents of some districts would be confined to their homes.

"Citywide traffic controls will be implemented," vice-mayor Gu Junyan told a briefing. "In principle, vehicles and people cannot enter or leave the city... with personnel control strictly enforced and no unnecessary movement of people."— AFP ■

# S Korea reports 35,286 more COVID-19 cases



People take COVID-19 self test at a testing site outside the Seoul Olympic Stadium in Seoul, South Korea, 6 February 2022. PHOTO: SEO YU-SEOK/XINHUA

SOUTH Korea reported 35,286 more cases of COVID-19 as of midnight Sunday compared to 24 hours ago, raising the

total number of infections to 1,044,963, the health authorities said on Monday.

The recent resurgence

was driven by cluster infections in the Seoul metropolitan area amid the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, which became a dominant strain.

Of the new cases, 6,873 were Seoul residents. The number of the newly infected people living in Gyeonggi province and the western port city of Incheon was 9,780 and 2,366 respectively.

The virus spread also raged in the non-metropolitan region. The number of new infections in the non-capital areas was 16,112, or 45.9 per cent of the total local transmission.

Among the new cases, 155 were imported from overseas, lifting the total to 26,494.

The number of infected people who were in a serious condition stood at 270, down two from the previous day.

Thirteen more deaths were confirmed, leaving the death toll at 6,886. The total fatality rate was 0.66 per cent.

The country has administered COVID-19 vaccines to 44,682,457 people, or 87.1 per cent of the total population, and the number of the fully inoculated people was 44,112,713, or 86.0 per cent of the population.

The number of those who received booster jabs was 28,177,228 people, or 54.9 per cent of the population.— Xinhua ■

### Murder trial of Australian police officer begins

THE high-profile trial of an Australian constable accused of murdering a 19-year-old Aboriginal man began Monday, with a jury told the teen died after being shot at "point-blank range".

Zachary Rolfe, 30, is charged with murder over the death of Kumanjayi Walker, who was shot three times during an attempted 2019 arrest in a case that prompted nationwide protests.

Rolfe has pleaded not guilty to that charge, and to alternative charges of manslaughter and engaging in a violent act causing death.

If he is found guilty of the most serious charge, he will be the first police officer convicted of murder over the death of an Indigenous person in custody.

Monday's proceedings started with jury selection, before the prosecution began its opening statement. Rolfe is being tried in Darwin, about 1,500 kilometres (930 miles) north of the remote Indigenous community of Yuendumu, where Walker died on 9 November 2019.— AFP ■

# IAEA team to visit Fukushima next week to review water release plan

A team of International Atomic Energy Agency experts will visit the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant next week to review Japan's plan to discharge treated radioactive water into the sea, the government said Monday. During their stay in the country from 14 to 18 February, the experts will evaluate the safety of releasing the treated water; with their visit to the Fukushima plant slated for 15 February, according to Japan's foreign and industry ministries.

The planned release, slated to begin in the spring of 2023, has been opposed by China and South Korea, as well as local fishing communities. The on-



The Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO) Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is seen from the coast of Futaba town in Fukushima prefecture on 10 March 2021, on the eve of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 9.0-magnitude earthquake which triggered a tsunami and nuclear disaster which killed over 18,000 people. PHOTO: AFP

site assessment by the experts led by Gustavo Caruso, director and coordinator of the IAEA's De-

partment of Nuclear Safety and Security, was initially scheduled for mid-December but postponed

due to the rapid spread of the highly contagious Omicron variant of the coronavirus. The team will also exchange views with the Japanese government and Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc., the operator of the Fukushima plant, on cooperation in dealing with the treated water, the industry ministry said, adding the IAEA will hold an online press conference on 18 February.

Water pumped in to cool melted fuel at the plant, crippled by the 2011 massive earthquake and tsunami in northeast Japan, has been accumulating at the complex. It has mixed with rain and groundwater at the site, becoming contaminated.—Kyodo ■

## 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 players to compete in World Snooker Championships

MYANMAR players will compete in the 2022 World Snooker Championships and the Asian Billiards and Snooker Championship to be held in Qatar in March.

The Myanmar Billiards and Snooker team is under training

for the 31<sup>st</sup> SEA Games in May and will be competing with players training for the world-class tourney.

The World Snooker Championships will be held from 1 to 11 March. The Asian Billiards and Snooker Championships will be

held from 12 to 19 March.

The Myanmar Billiards Team will compete in the Snooker Senior Level and Billiards Tournament of individual events.

Aung San Oo, Pauk Sa and Min Sithu Tun will represent the Myanmar Billiard Team, while

Aung Phyo and Win Ko will be in the Snooker Team.

In recent years, the Myanmar Billiards and Snooker Team have become one of the successful teams in the World Snooker and Billiard Championships and Asian Championships.

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the tournament could not be held normally in 2020 and 2021 but will be held again this year.

Nay Thwe Oo, a Myanmar billiard player, won the last Asian Billiards Championship in 2019. —Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM



Senegal's forward Sadio Mane looks at the trophy prior to the ceremony after winning after the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) 2021 final football match between Senegal and Egypt at Stade d'Olembe in Yaounde on 6 February 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Senegal's Cup of Nations triumph sees potential fulfilled at last

AFTER years of underachievement, Sadio Mane's Senegal finally lived up to their billing as Africa's outstanding team with victory in the Cup of Nations, even if they did it the hard way in the final against Egypt.

Mane could have been the fall guy in his showdown with Liverpool teammate Mohamed Salah after his seventh-minute penalty was saved at the Olembe Stadium in Yaounde.

However, after a turgid final finished 0-0 in extra time, he redeemed himself by converting the decisive spot-kick in the shoot-out which the Lions of Teranga won 4-2 before Egypt captain Salah had the chance to take his team's last shot.

"You know what made the difference when I missed the first penalty? All my teammates came up to me and said 'Who cares, we are a team, we win together and

we lose together'," Mane said.

He and his fellow Senegalese players had just burst into coach Aliou Cisse's press conference, singing and dancing as they celebrated finally ending decades of disappointment.

Africa's top-ranked national team and 20th in the world, Senegal lost the last Cup of Nations final in 2019, falling 1-0 to Algeria in Cairo, never recovering from a second-minute goal. — AFP ■

## Dutch speed skater Wust is first to win at five Olympics

DUTCH speed skater Ireen Wust has become the first person to win a gold medal in an individual event at five different Olympics after retaining her 1,500 metres title in Beijing on Monday.

Wust, 35, smashed the Olympic record to beat Miho Takagi of Japan in 1min 53.28sec, with her Dutch teammate Antoinette de Jong taking the bronze.

She won her first gold medal at the 2006 Turin Olympics and has taken a title at every

Winter Games since — a unique achievement in summer or winter Olympics.

It was also a record-extending 12th Olympic speed skating medal for Wust, who has six golds in total.

Her victory was all the more remarkable because she had come into the Games just seventh in the World Cup rankings, which are topped by Takagi.

"This is just amazing. There's a lot of different emo-

tions going through my mind right now. I mean, it's just bizarre that I was able to pull it off once again," Wust said.

"In Torino, I won my first Olympic title. I was the youngest back then (19). To do it again four, eight and 12 years later is just bizarre. "There's something magical that gets to me when it comes down to the Games. There's something at the Games that brings out the best in me." — AFP ■



Gold medalist Netherlands' Ireen Wust celebrates during the flower ceremony for the women's speed skating 1500m event during the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games at the National Speed Skating Oval in Beijing on 7 February 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**