

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 333, 2nd Waning of Taboung 1383 ME

www.gnln.com.mm

Friday, 18 March 2022

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.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar accepts Letters of Credence of Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw on 17 March 2022.

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, accepted the Letters of Credence of Mr Saud Bin Abdullah

Al-Subaie, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at the Credentials Hall of the Office of the State Administration Council Chairman, Nay Pyi Taw at

10:00 am yesterday.

Then, they frankly discussed matters pertaining to diplomatic relations and friendship between the two countries, trade promotion and political developments in

Myanmar.

After the meeting, the Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister and the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia posed for the documentary photo.

Present on the occasion were U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs and U Wunna Han, Director-General of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. — MNA

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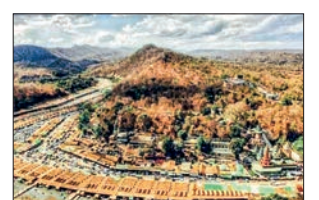
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Objectives of 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

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

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar accepts Letters of Credence of Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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The Senior General accepts the Letters of Credence of the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Myanmar.



The Senior General, dignitaries and the Ambassador pose for the documentary photo.

State Administration Council Press Release

Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who reside in various regions for many reasons

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, with worries, have evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries due to the incitements and intimidation of NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful associations and terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, stimulation of CDM, and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities on 1 February 2021.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of unlawful association and terrorist group CRPH and NUG, and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in those areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. **The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.**
4. As those who evade their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from the evaded areas to various parts of Myanmar.
5. As such, the information was released that if those who evaded to various areas, except for persons who committed any kinds of crime, wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord due to multiple worries, the citizens abroad can contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates in accord with the easing restrictions under the law.

*Information Team
State Administration Council*

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Tatmadaw is a guardian for implementing multiparty democracy

ALL need to carry out all tasks with their capability holding a concept that Tatmadaw is a guardian for implementing multiparty democracy to be firm and maintain all situations of the State.

(Excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in meeting with officers, other ranks and families of Mongpyin Station of Triangle Region Command and Kholan Station of Eastern Central Command on 18-2-2022)

Chairman of Financial Commission Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses commission meeting (1/2022)



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presides over the meeting 1/2022 of the Financial Commission in Nay Pyi Taw on 17 March 2022.

THE meeting (1/2022) of the Financial Commission was held yesterday afternoon at the Office of the Chairman of the State Administration Council in Nay Pyi Taw. The meeting was addressed by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in his capacity as the Chairman of the Financial Commission.

Those present at the meeting included Vice-Chairman of the Financial Commission Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Secretary of the Commission Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Win Shein, Union Minister for Legal Affairs Daw Thida Oo, Auditor-General of the Union Dr Kan Zaw and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win. Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council and regions/states chief ministers joined the meeting through videoconferencing.

Firstly, Chairman of the Commission Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, in his opening remarks, said the Union level organizations must draw up the budget for the financial year 2022-2023 based on the five-point roadmap and the nine objectives

of the State Administration Council following the policy and directives.

He stressed the need to make efforts to get the planned revenue as planned and to prioritize expenditures only to support the urgent economic recovery of the country, despite the obstacles and challenges for economic growth due to COVID-19 and political events.

He called on the relevant department and organizations to take the lead and provide support to develop production processes based on agriculture and livestock with modern methods, also urging to effectively implement infrastructure buildings, health, education and social activities with the allocated funds.

He said as this is the time to try to revive the country's economy, the government's spending must be able to support manufacturing, trading and services which are the key to economic development. We must focus on improving the socio-economic life of the people, he said.

Our government will continue to increase budgets for the development of the country's human resources, he added. He also stressed the need to in-

evitably continue spending on healthcare, including vaccines as the COVID-19 pandemic has not completely eradicated.

He called on the regions and states to give priority to regional development works that directly benefit the people rather than administrative expenditures. He also instructed to maintain the budget deficit-to-GDP ratio within a reasonable range so that it will be able to prevent the burden of foreign debt.

Afterwards, the Vice-Chairman of the Commission the Deputy Prime Minister said that although the revenue may be reduced due to the economic impact due to COVID-19 and political events, it is being scrutinized based on the actual availability. In terms of expenditures, according to the Government Priority Plan included in the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP), priority was given to activities that would have immediate benefits, a multi-faceted impact, essential infrastructure and human resource development activities. The Vice-Chairman also presented that expenditures that do not comply with the state policy and directives were scrutinized and reduced.

In the 2022-2023 financial year (FY), as in the previous year, K100 billion for the central government and K15 billion for regions/states including Nay Pyi Taw Council have been allocated for emergency funding for unpredictable natural disaster prevention and relief and rehabilitation, he said. In addition, as in the previous year, a total of K135 billion has been earmarked for the external national disaster management fund with K20 billion.

Afterwards, Secretary of the Commission Union Minister U Win Shein explained the Union Budget, Union Budget Bill for the 2022-2023 financial year and the Union Tax Bill (2022). The Auditor-General of the Union discussed recommendations to be taken in the future according to the findings of the audit of the budgets of the union ministries and region/state governments.

Regarding the presentations, the Senior General said the revenue in the 2021-2022 mini-budget decreased due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and various other reasons, and many ways have been considered to remedy it. He highlighted the need to try to gain revenue, to promote manufacturing and ex-

ports to gain foreign income, to develop productions based on agriculture and livestock.

He also said it is necessary to implement big projects that will benefit the country, and projects that are not currently needed for implementation need to be reduced, and unprofitable businesses and projects need to be re-examined, adding that the State will invest in essential activities for health and safety.

In his concluding remark, the Senior General said the budget of the Union for the 2022-2023 financial year, which was discussed and approved by the Commission meeting, will be further submitted to the State Administration Council through the Union Government with the recommendation of the Financial Commission, and efforts will be made for the timely enactment of the Union Budget Law.

He also urged all states/regions to abide by the rules and regulations in spending the fund, to systematically work to be able to audit all expenditures, to put the interest of the State and the people first and to implement their budgets effectively with good public financial management skills. — MNA

Cambodia holds 19th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM-19)

CAMBODIA hosted the 19th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM-19) yesterday.

The meeting was attended by Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, Chief of Staff (Army) Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun and Chief of Military Security Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo and other delegations led by General Vong Pisen of Cambodia, Major-General Dato Seri Pahlaw Haji Muhammad Haszaimi Bin Bol Hassan of Brunei, Lieutenant-General Eko Margiyono of Indonesia, Major-General Khamlieng Outhakaisone of Laos, General Tan Sri Dato' Sri Hj Affendi bin Buang RMAF of Malaysia, Lieutenant-General Andres Castor Centino of the Philippines, Lieutenant-General Melvyn Ong of Singapore, General Chalermphon Srisawasdi of Thailand and Senior Lieutenant-General Nguyen Tan Cuong of Viet Nam.

First, the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces took a commemorative photo with the military leaders of ASEAN nations and delivered an opening speech.

Then, Lieutenant-General HUN MANITH and Major General PEN SOKRETHVITHYEA of Cambodia, the host country of AMIM-19 and AMON-12 read out



The 19th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM-19) is in progress in Cambodia.

the meeting minutes respectively.

The military leaders of ASEAN countries then discussed the topic of Solidarity for Harmonized Security.

During the meeting, General Maung Maung Aye, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) talked about the important role of the security sector to ensure the sustainable development of three pillars such as economic, political and social sectors under the name of ASEAN, non-traditional security issues around the world and solid cooperation among the armed forces of ASEAN nations.

He continued that this year's theme is Solidarity for Har-

monized Security and there should be mutual trust and unity between the armies in the fight against security threats and other various challenges. Moreover, the powerful countries urged interference in domestic affairs of other countries directly or indirectly that go beyond the non-interference principle of ASEAN.

As the ASEAN is a community for unity, peace and collective responsibilities, the member countries should work together for the current hardships and coming challenges by respecting the sovereignty of other countries.

He then presented the political changes of Myanmar; declara-

tion of State of Emergency for the voting frauds of 2020 multiparty general election, formation of the State Administration Council and undertakings under the five-point roadmap and nine objectives of the SAC, destructive acts of terrorist groups NUG, CRPH and PDF, important situations to hold a free and fair multiparty general election to implement the genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system and nation based on democracy and federalism.

He also underlined the efforts to hold the multiparty general election within the fixed period despite the destructive elements of terrorist groups that affect the

State stability and security, including the law enforcement actions to ensure the State stability and peace of the country.

Then, the leaders approved the Two-Year Activity Working Plan (2022-2024), finalized the Joint Statement of ACDFM-19 and signed in the Joint Statement.

Afterwards, the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces made a concluding remark and transferred the chairmanship of ACDFM-20 to Indonesia.

Finally, the delegate of the Indonesian armed forces made a greeting speech and concluded the meeting. — MNA

General Maung Maung Aye attends gala dinner hosted by Commander-in-Chief of Royal Cambodian Armed Forces



The songs from ASEAN nations are played and traditional dances performed at the dinner.

CHIEF of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, who will attend the 19th ASEAN Chiefs

of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM-19) in Cambodia, attended the gala dinner hosted by Commander-in-Chief of



The gala dinner in progress.

the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces General Vong Pisen at Sokha Hotel in Phnom Penh yesterday evening.

The dinner was also attended by Myanmar Tatmadaw representatives, Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed For-

ces from ASEAN nations and wives, and delegations.

At the dinner ceremony, the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces gave a welcome address and the attendees enjoyed the dinner together. During the dinner, a music band played songs from the ASEAN nations, along with the performances of a variety of traditional dances. After the dinner, General Maung Maung Aye, Commanders-in-Chief of Armed Forces from ASEAN nations and wives exchanged gifts with General Vong Pisen and took a group photo. — MNA

445 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 17 March, total figure rises to 607,844

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 607,844 after 445 new cases were reported on 17 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 561,667 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,418 after 1 died. —MNA

Ministry of Foreign Affairs celebrates Diamond Jubilee event

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin and Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing organized an down alms donation to five monks led by Sayadaw Suddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Vilasa of Yadana Hman Monastery of Pyinmana Township marking the Diamond Jubilee of the ministry yesterday.

Then, they organized a ceremony to honour Yadana Hman Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vilasa who received the Suddhamma Jotikadhaja title of the government and donated K20 million cash contribution of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of International Cooperation, Myanmar embassies and other staff officers for heavy maintenance works to the

main building of Yadana Hman Monastery.

At noon, the ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Union minister delivered the remarks and began the final round of debating contests and impromptu talks.

Then, the staff officers and low-rank employees who dutifully served the duties for the country and the ministry, the staff who successfully completed the 2020-2021 training of Central Institutes of Civil Service (CICS) (Lower and Upper Myanmar), best writer for Thar Kaung Taman Magazine for 2021, winners of debating contest and impromptu talks were awarded and other funfairs were organized following the COVID-19 health rules. — MNA



Diamond Jubilee event of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in progress.

Coordination meeting on field survey reports of PyinOoLwin Coffee Project held



A coordination meeting was held at the meeting room of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation to review the field survey reports of the PyinOoLwin Coffee Project implementation.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo, Union Minister for

Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi, Deputy Minister Dr Aung Gyi, the permanent secretaries, directors-general and officials attended the meeting.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo discussed that the implementations have been

made to develop Myanmar's commercial coffee production in the region and expand the coffee cultivation, naturally grown in the shade, not only for economic profit but also for conservation of the environment as well as climate change around the PyinOoLwin area since 2002.

In addition, Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo stressed that the field surveys were carried out jointly with related departments to inspect the use of residential buildings and other industries in the areas where coffee is allowed to be grown under the existing laws. The private entrepreneurs who have acquired agricultural lands need to cooperate with the departments concerned as per the principles and rules set by relevant departments when implementing the PyinOoLwin Coffee Project and then the project must be implemented to be successful based on the findings of field surveys, he added.

Then, Union Minister U Khin Maung Yi underlined that coffee growers in the forest area

of PyinOoLwin Coffee Project will be monitored to follow the policy and rules of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. It is necessary to cooperate with related ministries and the Mandalay region government for the successful implementation of the PyinOoLwin Project according to the results of field survey teams.

Afterwards, the participants discussed the work completion and field surveys in their related sectors, over-using of specified roads and buildings on the permitted lands for coffee cultivation and cultivation of other crops and non-coffee cultivation lands to be managed under the law. — MNA

People invited to celebrate 77th anniversary of Armed Forces Day

PEOPLE wishing to honour the Tatmadaw parades which will march on the 77th Armed Forces Day along the way from the training ground to the military parade ground can pre-register by telephone.

People can claim their citizenship scrutiny cards by registering in person with their ID card (original) and two colour licence-sized photos on 24 and 25 March.

Please be informed that people can contact the following address.

Security Sub-committee
Nay Pyi Taw Command
Nay Pyi Taw
Phone- 032-30009

Fly Alliance to fly Yangon-Dawei-Yangon daily

THE Myanmar National Airlines, Mann Yadanabon Airlines and Air Thanlwin Airlines of Fly Alliance will provide flights for Yangon-Dawei-Yangon daily, in turn, starting 23 March 2022, according to the Fly Alliance.

The passengers who bought tickets for Yangon-Dawei-Yangon

from these three airlines can take the flight for the same trip according to the fixed date or change the airlines indefinitely.

The promotion period is between 23 March and 30 April and the customers can change the airlines accordingly to their choice.

— MNA

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions



Locals get vaccinated against COVID-19 in Bago Township, Bago Region.

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

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

with chronic diseases, people in IDP camps and over 12-year-old students, respectively.

On 16 March and Yesterday, doctors and nurses from people's hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19

vaccines to 3,983 people from ten townships in Shan State (North), 2,399 people from four townships in Mon and Kayin States, 550 people from Tamway Township in Yangon Region, 19,731 people from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region, 9050 people from nine townships in Rakhine State, 6220 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region and 1,080 people from three townships in Bago

Region respectively.

Similarly, healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 56 people from Lashio Township in Shan State (North) and 119 Students from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region on 16 March yesterday.

It is reported that officials from the respective Regional Military Headquarters visited the site and coordinated the necessary work. — MNA



Locals in Mon State get vaccinated against COVID-19.

CRIME NEWS

Forest Dept seizes illegal timbers in Nay Pyi Taw, regions/states

THE Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation adopts the Community Monitoring and Reporting System (CMRS) to curb the illegal timber and forest products.

According to the data collected between 7 and 13 March, the department seized a total of 287.5538 tonnes of illegal timbers — 38.5142 tonnes of teak, 51.0308 tonnes of hardwood and 198.0088 tonnes of others in regions/states and Nay Pyi Taw and arrested 31 suspects with 24 vehicles, the department stated. — MNA



Confiscated teak and hardwood logs.

Court sentences 3 human traffickers to 10-year imprisonment

MONYWA District Court sentenced three people to 10-year imprisonment with labour each for their involvement in trafficking a girl to a Chinese man, on 15 March.

The three suspects Khin San Wai (aka) Khin Than Wai, Poe Poe (aka) Poe Ei Win and Hla Shwe (aka) Chit Swe Oo

from Kyauktaga Township of Bago Region promised Ma..., aged 20, from Monywa Township of Sagaing Region a well-paid job and sold her to a Chinese man.

The case was opened against the three suspects at Monywa Myoma Police Station under Section 24/32 of the

Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. Then, the court handed down the sentence after Khin San Wai (aka) Khin Than Wai, Poe Poe (aka) Poe Ei Win and Hla Shwe (aka) Chit Swe Oo were found guilty under Section 24/32 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law on 15 March. — MNA

Illegal teak, unregistered vehicle seized

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

On 13 March, a combined inspection team conducted inspections at the Mayanchaung Checkpoint and seized an unregistered Toyota Wish vehicle (approximately worth K5,000,000), driven out from the detour road at milestone 96 miles and five furlongs according to a report, and action is taken under the Export/Import Law.

On 17 March, combined inspection teams led by the Bago Region Department of Forest under the management of the Bago Region Anti-Illegal Trade Special Task Force carried out inspections according to a report and confiscated 6.0414 tonnes of illegal teak (approximately worth K1,812,420) from a forest reserve in Bago District.

Therefore, two arrests (estimated value of K6,812,420) were made on 13 March and 17 March, according to Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA



Officials seized illegal timbers.

Awareness campaign for GI designation of Shwebo Pawsan rice

AN awareness campaign for Shwebo Pawsan (high-grade rice variety) to get a Geographical Indication (GI) designation was held on 15 March in Leikchin village in Shwebo district.

The Shwebo Pawsan Farming, Milling and Trading Association (Central) has been raising awareness of GI.

Working agendas and cooperation, the interest of the farmers, traders and millers if GI is earned, the business operating system for quality management drawn up by the SPFMTA were highlighted at the event.

Under the support of GRET Myanmar, the SPFMTA is exert-



An awareness campaign for Shwebo Pawsan (high-grade rice variety) to get a Geographical Indication (GI) designation was held on 15 March in Leikchin village in Shwebo district.

ing efforts for Shwebo Pawsan (high-grade rice variety) to get a Geographical Indication (GI) designation. "Pedigree seed access plays a pivotal role in seeking GI. The

SPFMTA is also running Seed Centre developed under JICA's project to produce pedigree and quality Pawsan variety in the Shwebo district. It is providing drying and treatment services and costs K70,000 per 100 baskets of paddy seeds. Drying service costs K40,000 per 100 baskets", a member of SPFMTA elaborated.

The SPFMTA encourages the growers for seed drying and treatment. Those enthusiastic farmers can contact them via 09453873280, 09969220298, 09766414909 and 09787951522.

In order to acquire copyright for Shwebo Pawsan, the related

organizations and the farmers are working together to meet quality and GI criteria.

Pawsan rice crop was previously grown in the Ayeyawady delta regions. Now, it is cultivated across the country. There are about 1.3 million acres of Pawsan rice crop every year.

Pawsan varieties vary in different regions and harvest seasons.

A GI is a specific intellectual property right that designates a product from a specific region and whose characteristics result in both the natural conditions of its origin and the expertise of local producers. — Lu Lay/GNLM

Salt prices hike to over K200 per viss

THE price of salt in Mon state has hiked to over K200 per viss, according to the Mawlamyine Commodity depot.

In the second week of March, the price of salt has risen above K200 per viss. On 17 March, the raw salt price (normal) ranges from K214-K220 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) while the raw salt (pure) is K250 per viss.

Last January, the raw salt price (normal) hit around K80 per viss while the raw salt (pure) fetched around K100 per viss.

Nevertheless, this year's

salt season is better than last year. Last year, the raw salt price (normal) was around K60 per viss while the raw salt (pure) was around K85 per viss. At the last 2021 opening season of the salt, the salt prices were not good, and the yield loss of the salt was due to the early rain.

Although the price of salt is mounting in the late season, there is less salt stockpile in the hand of local farmers and traders. On the other hand, rising fuel oil prices have also pushed up transport costs.

Therefore, the last 2021

salt season can be said to be a year of low yields and losses for Salt farmers. Yearly, Mon State produces nearly 40,000 tonnes of sun-dried salt beyond magnesium chloride (MgCl₂), iodized salt (I₂) and table salt (NaCl).

The 2019-2020 statistics showed 14 iodine salt processing plants and one factory each for magnesium chloride (MgCl₂) and table salt (NaCl) production, with the production capacity of 60 tonnes of magnesium chloride, 204 tonnes of table salt and 12,132 tonnes of iodized salt. — NN/GNLM



On 17 March, the raw salt price (normal) ranges from K214-K220 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) while the raw salt (pure) is K250 per viss.

Tomato growers suffering losses from drastic drop in prices



The growers in NyaungU Township uses underground water. The villages in the township supply tomatoes to markets of NyaungU and Pakokku.

TOMATO growers from NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region are battered by the lowest price this year, said U Aye Ko, a grower from Thithtaukkyun village.

The tomatoes are flooding the market, bringing down the prices, said a trader.

The growers in NyaungU Township uses underground water. The villages in the township supply tomatoes to markets of NyaungU and Pakokku. During the abundant harvest

time, the tomato is priced at only K100 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes). Therefore, the growers cannot even cover the cost of agricultural input cost, U Aye Ko elaborated.

There is a large price gap between the wholesale and retail prices, when the transport charge is added amid the hike price of fuel oil, said a market observer. A big slump in wholesale prices causes a huge loss to the growers in early 2022. — KPD, KK/GNLM

Follow the ways to ensure the fire safety of society

AS NOW is the time entering the hot and dry season, some events on outbreaks of fire, leaving losses and damage. So, fire safety is of great importance day by day. The work procedures minimizing the loss and waste in the outbreak of fire can be dubbed the preventive measures of fire.

The governments in successive eras assist in functions of the firefighter brigade as well as the Fire Services Department. Fire stations are facilitated with modern fire extinguishers and fire trucks in addition to the recruitment of new firefighters. Also, those firefighters sacrifice their life and limb in putting out the fire whenever the people face the danger of fire.

Moreover, the government has already set up the command and control centre at the Myanmar Fire Brigade Headquarters to rapidly respond to the outbreak of fire, the danger of flooding and storms as well as earthquakes. The centre monitors Yangon City with the use of 16 cameras through an e-watching tower system.

The policies on fire prevention are still effective from the time of constructing a building to the period of using that building. Relevant authorities strict the rules and regulations for the buildings facilitated with emergency exits, warning marks, gathering points for the danger of fire, doors, windows and walls which must be granted for the resilience of fire.

Relevant authorities strict the rules and regulations for the buildings facilitated with emergency exits, warning marks, gathering points for the danger of fire, doors, windows and walls which must be granted for the resilience of fire.

Applying the electronic rules and regulations for the prevention of overheating at machinery and electronic errors can be dubbed as the fire preventive policies. So, people need to comply with the rules and regulations in firefighting in order to enable the people from the specific areas to be free from the danger of fire and give a helping hand to the victims of the fire at any place.



Fourth Covid shot provides little benefit against Omicron infection: study

A FOURTH dose of existing mRNA Covid-19 vaccines may have only “marginal benefits” for younger, healthy adults, according to a new Israeli study published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The research assessed 270 healthcare workers at the Sheba Medical Centre in Tel Aviv who received a second booster shot of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, four months after initially getting three Pfizer shots.

Each was age-matched against two participants in a control group that had received only three doses of Pfizer, with the median ages in the groups ranging from mid-fifties to early sixties.

Recipients’ neutralizing antibodies

Overall, the fourth shot was found to be safe, and topped up recipients’ neutralizing antibodies — which block the coronavirus from infecting cells — to levels



Several hundred people vaccinated against Covid-19 attend a ‘green pass concert’ at Bloomfield Stadium in Tel Aviv on 5 March 2021. PHOTO: JACK GUEZ/AFP

comparable to just after the third dose, prior to when antibody levels started waning with time.

The study took place when the spread of the Omicron variant was rife in Israel, and it found

that the fourth dose didn’t confer much added protection against infection, despite the reduction

over time of antibodies among people who’d received just three shots.

Those who got a fourth shot of Pfizer were 30 per cent less likely to acquire infection than those who got three doses, while those who got Moderna were 18 per cent less likely to get infected.

The study included only a small number of participants and was not a randomized trial — meaning its conclusions should be interpreted with caution — but the results point towards only minor benefits from the extra dose.

Protection against symptomatic infection was slightly better in under-40 adult recipients of a fourth jab — 43 per cent for Pfizer and 31 per cent for Moderna — compared to people who received three shots.

The study authors, led by Gili Regev-Yochay, wrote that their research seems to indicate the advantages of three doses of vaccine designed against the original strain of coronavirus had hit a ceiling in terms of immune re-

sponse, with additional boosters only restoring waned immunity, rather than taking it to new heights.

Relatively high viral loads

“Furthermore, we observed low vaccine efficacy against infections in healthcare workers, as well as relatively high viral loads suggesting that those who were infected were infectious. Thus, a fourth vaccination of healthy young healthcare workers may have only marginal benefits,” they said.

Outside experts said the findings showed the need to develop new vaccines.

“If Omicron continues circulating and we are still using the current first-generation Covid-19 vaccines against it, then I agree with the authors that the benefits to otherwise healthy, younger people will be marginal,” said Julian Tang, a clinical virologist at the University of Leicester.

SOURCE: AFP

Experts warn rising Omicron BA.2 variant threatens Australian winter

AS AUSTRALIA adapts to living with the COVID-19 pandemic and opens its borders, the Omicron sub-variant BA.2 has begun to trouble authorities as the most transmissible variant of the pandemic.

Professor Robert Booy, infectious diseases paediatrician from the University of Sydney told Xinhua on Wednesday that early studies show the new sub-variant is “at least 30 to 40 per cent more transmissible” than the original Omicron strain.

“It’s proving to be the case because it’s supplanting in many countries BA.1, the original Omicron variant, which itself was highly transmissible,” said Booy.

Flagged the variant as “very concerning”

In recent weeks health authorities in New South Wales (NSW), Australia’s most populous state, have flagged the variant as “very concerning” and have ex-

pected it to overtake the original Omicron strain as the dominant strain and for daily cases to more than double in the next six weeks.

Since the beginning of March, daily cases in NSW have climbed from under 10,000 to more than 15,000, representing a slow but steady increase.

On Thursday, NSW recorded 20,087 new positive cases.

Health authorities in the state of Victoria have also seen an upward trend in daily infections, with 9,752 new cases recorded on Thursday. They said the new sub-variant BA.2 had been found in half of all wastewater tests in the state, suggesting it’s quickly becoming the dominant COVID-19 strain in the state.

While there is now strong evidence that the BA.2 sub-variant is the most transmissible strain yet, the scientific jury remains out on whether it may be more severe.

Among the experts whom Xinhua spoke to, some said there

are early reports that BA.2 could be more severe while others said it could be less, but they all agreed that more data collection and research would be needed to find a conclusive answer.

They also suggested that before a better understanding of the whole picture was made, people should continue to stick to some necessary protective measures, especially given that southern hemisphere countries including Australia are entering colder months.

“Although we don’t have any indication that the BA.2 is more severe than BA.1, the more people that get it, the more chance we’re going to have severe cases,” Nancy Baxter, head of the University of Melbourne’s School of Population and Global Health, told Xinhua.

Mask mandate for most indoor spaces

Late last month the NSW government scrapped its mask



People exercise with the Sydney Opera House in the background, as the city and state of New South Wales report a record number of coronavirus cases. PHOTO: AFP

mandate for most indoor spaces including shops, offices and hospitality venues. The topic of mask mandates has sparked heated debates across the Australian society. “I know that masks are un-

popular amongst our politicians, and I can understand that. It’s kind of a constant reminder of the pandemic,” said Baxter. “But masks are effective against any variant. They’re not variant specific. So in-

doors, encouraging mask wearing is very important, and the highest quality mask that’s available; so N95, P2 masks are definitely what I’d recommend.”

SOURCE: Xinhua

Myanmar Gazette

Head of Service Organization transferred and appointed

THE State Administration Council has transferred and appointed U Wunna Zaw, Director-General of the Department of Rural Road Development of the Ministry of Construction, as Director-General of the Union Minister’s Office of the same ministry from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 17 March 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the low pressure area over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining Equatorial Indian Ocean still persists. It is likely to move east-northeastwards and lies over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining south Andaman Sea and move to the northwards near Andaman Sea, Nicobar Islands and Coco-Island, intensify into a Depression at (20.3.2022) and a Cyclonic Storm at (21.3.2022). It may continue to move north-northeastwards and reach near Bangladesh and Rakhine coast of Myanmar at (22.3.2022). Weather is cloudy over the south Andaman Sea and south Bay and generally fair over the north Bay and West central Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the north Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 18 March 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi region and isolated in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady regions and Kachin, (southern and eastern) Shan, Kayah, Kayin, Mon states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of scattered to fairly wide spread rain or thundershowers in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Shan, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 MARCH 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 MARCH 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 MARCH 2022: Partly cloudy.

LOW PRESSURE AREA CONDITION

Issued at (19:00) hours M.S.T on 17-3-2022

ACCORDING to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the low pressure area over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining Equatorial Indian Ocean still persists. It is likely to move east-northeastwards and lies over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining south Andaman Sea and move to the northwards near Andaman Sea, Nicobar Islands and Coco-Island, intensify into a Depression at (20.3.2022) and a Cyclonic Storm at (21.3.2022). It may continue to move north-northeastwards and reach near Bangladesh and Rakhine coast of Myanmar at (22.3.2022).

GENERAL caution
Due to the low pressure area, rain or thundershowers will be scattered to fairly widespread in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Shan, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin, Mon states during (17.3.2022) to (19.3.2022). Squalls with rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40) m.p.h. Wave height will be about (8-10) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts.

Pilgrims throng Bagan Cultural Zone on Fullmoon of Taboung



BAGAN cultural heritage zone in NyaungU Township, Mandalay was packed with the pilgrims on Fullmoon of Taboung which fell on 16 March, said U Than Myint Oo from the Shwezigon Pagoda Trustees Board.

Bagan cultural heritage zone, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was crowded with the devotees.

According to the list of Shwezigon Pagoda, approximately 3,500 pilgrims paid homage to the pagoda.

The majority of the visitors

were seen in the famous historical temples of Bagan; Shwezigon Pagoda, Lawkananda Pagoda, Tuyintaung Pagoda, Tantkyitaung Pagoda, Htilominlo Temple, Ananda Pagoda, Bu Pagoda, Thatbyinnyu Temple, Dhammayangyi Temple, Sulamani Temple, Mahabodhi Temple, Sulamani Temple, Manuha Temple, Shwesandaw Pagoda, and other famous pagodas. They also like to observe the structure, building and mural paintings of Khayminga Pagoda, Yinmanawin Pagoda, Wuttanahtaw Pagoda, Sulegon

Pagoda, Thagyapon and Thagyahit pagodas precinct, Shweleiktu, Ingyin Cave Pagoda, Kyaukmyatmaw Pagoda, and other pagodas in the cultural zone.

They visited the zone by private cars, by e-bikes and with horse cart riding.

A high number of visitors to the zone on Taboung full moon day allowed the residents to earn well.

The pilgrims must strictly obey the health guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health. —Ko Htein(KPD)/GNLM

Devotees visit the temples in Bagan Cultural Zone.



Historic Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival crowded under Covid pandemic precaution

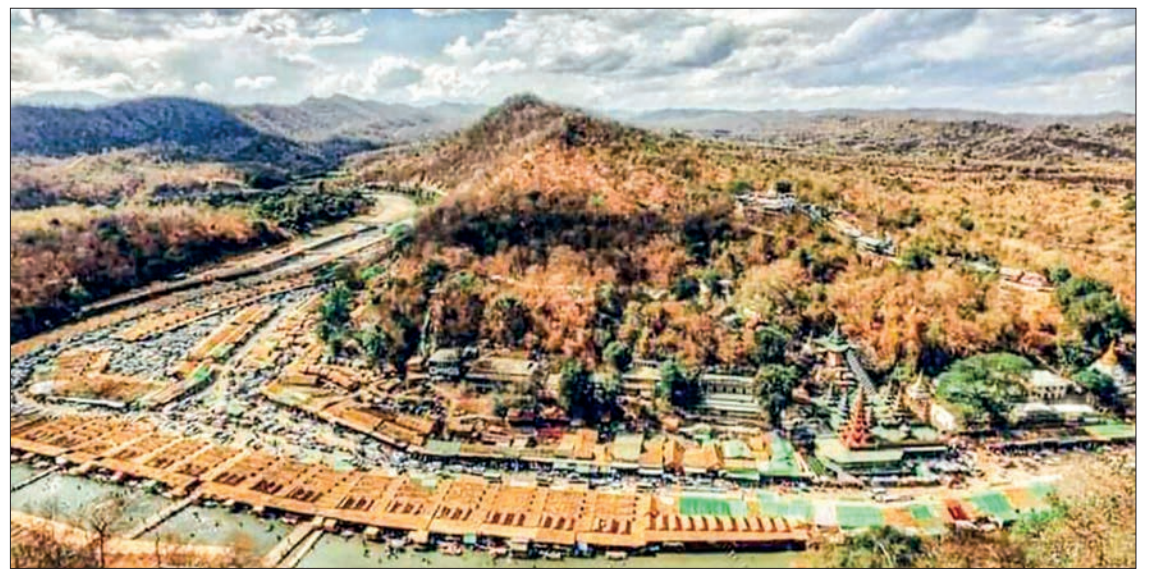
THE historic Shwesettaw Pagoda in Minbu (Sagu) Township, Minbu District, Magway Region, is packed with pilgrims during the pagoda festival, but it is allowed to visit in accordance with the COVID rules and regulations of the Ministry of Health, according to the Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival Committee.

In previous years, Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival was held for three months, from the 5th waxing day of Tabodwe to the 1st day of Myanmar New Year. In addition to the opening and closing ceremonies, locals in Minbu (Sagu) Township set up temporary guesthouses, shops, restaurants,

clothes stalls, traditional pharmacies and local product shops with being crowded with people.

This year, despite a three-month visiting period, there are over 90 guesthouses for the day rest only for pilgrims to relax and bathe in the Mann Creek keeping in line with COVID rules and regulations of the Ministry of Health. It costs K10,000 per guesthouse from 6 am to 6 pm. Overnight stays are not allowed in guesthouses.

The visitors, who come from far, can stay at nearby religious buildings, monasteries and temples in the Shwesettaw Pagoda compound by showing



The historic Shwesettaw Pagoda in Minbu (Sagu) Township, Minbu District, Magway Region, is packed with pilgrims during the pagoda festival, but it is allowed to visit in accordance with the COVID rules and regulations of the Ministry of Health. **PHOTO: U WIN NAING (PHOTO SPECIALIST-2)**

COVID-vaccinated certificates, CSC cards and household lists,

explained U Tun Wai, vice-chairman of the Shwesettaw Pagoda

Festival Committee. — Zeya Htet (Minbu)/GNLM



Vietnam ends Covid quarantine for international travellers

VIETNAM announced an end to quarantine for international travellers on Wednesday, as it seeks to restart its tourism industry after two years of strict Covid-19 restrictions.

The only virus requirement for visitors will be a negative Covid test, the country's ministry of health said in a statement.

The communist state's tourism sector was worth up to \$32 billion a year before the pandemic, but it ground to a standstill during the pandemic as the government restricted travel.

Virus curbs have slowly been eased in recent months, with visitors trickling back in



Passengers outside the arrival hall of Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi, Vietnam, on 15 March 2022. PHOTO: AFP

since November to play golf at resorts, under a bubble arrangement. Vietnam also announced the resumption of 15 days' vi-

sa-free travel for citizens from 13 countries: Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Britain, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Belarus.

The country, which has a population of 97 million, is still reporting nearly 200,000 new Covid cases a day as the Omicron variant sweeps through.

But the health ministry says the situation "remains under control" with hospitalization and death rates staying low.

Officials attribute that to the high vaccination rate, with 98 per cent of adults fully inoculated according to the health ministry.—AFP ■

China's new COVID-19 cases top 5,000, highest in 2 years



On Tuesday, the same measure was imposed in nearby Dongguan, an industrial city of 10 million. Aerial photo taken on 23 June 2020 shows the Sea Battle Museum in Humen Town, Dongguan City, south China's Guangdong Province. PHOTO: XINHUA/LIU DAWEI

NEW COVID-19 cases in China topped 5,000, the highest in two years, as the world's most populous country wrestles with rising infections, especially in its northeast, health authorities said Tuesday.

The caseload for Monday totalled 5,154, more than doubling from the previous day's 2,125, according to the National Health Commission. The daily coronavirus numbers include asymptomatic infections released by the agency, but which China does not classify as confirmed cases. Daily new infections in mainland China, driven by the Omicron variant of the virus, are soaring to reach the highest level since it started releasing the number of asymptomatic cases in late March 2020.

The figures are far smaller

than most countries, but the increase is at the fastest pace since the early days of the pandemic and has led Chinese officials to toughen anti-virus measures and order citywide lockdowns.

The northeastern province of Jilin is the worst hit, with about 4,000 cases confirmed Monday. Changchun, the provincial capital with about 9 million residents, has been locked down since Friday, forcing manufacturers such as Toyota Motor Corp. to suspend factory operations.

The steep rise in infections has fuelled concern about supply chain disruptions and an economic slowdown in China, with the country's southern technology hub of Shenzhen on Monday also coming under a citywide lockdown.—Kyodo ■

Hong Kong to close off beaches after mainland China uproar

HONG Kong will close most of the city's beaches, leader Carrie Lam said Wednesday, after photos of maskless residents enjoying sun and surf sparked outrage in mainland China.

The rules add to Hong Kong's already strict distancing measures, including wearing masks while hiking and a ban on gatherings of more than two.

"As we see a surge of people going to beaches, we have to take appropriate measures in order to protect our system, to reduce the public's movements to ensure safety," Lam told reporters.

Authorities said they will begin taping off the beaches Thursday.

Lam's announcement comes on the heels of anger from Chinese social media users, who have blamed the

spread of Covid in the mainland on Hong Kong's sluggish epidemic response.

The city — which recorded nearly 750,000 cases in less than three months — has not gone into a full lockdown.

But tens of millions in mainland China were abruptly placed under stay at home orders this week, after the emergence of more than 3,000 daily new cases as Beijing battles to maintain its "dynamic zero" Covid strategy.

Nearby Shenzhen, with a population of 17 million, was locked down Monday after an Omicron flare-up in factories and neighbourhoods linked to Hong Kong.

"How can they be so care-free and go to the beach while Shenzhen is under lockdown? So selfish," one user wrote on Weibo.—AFP ■



People visit a promenade next to Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong on 15 March 2022. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

India's COVID-19 tally surpasses 43 million

INDIA'S COVID-19 tally surpassed the 43 million mark on Thursday, rising to 43,001,477, as 2,539 new cases were registered during the past 24 hours across the country, showed the federal health ministry's latest data.

Besides, as many as 60 deaths due to the pandemic were reported since Wednesday morning, taking the total death toll to 516,132.

There are still 30,799 active COVID-19 cases in the country as there was a fall of 2,012 active cases during the past 24 hours. This was the 52nd consecutive day when the number of active cases declined in the country.

So far 42,454,546 people have been successfully cured and discharged from hospitals, out of which 4,491 were discharged during the past 24 hours.—Xinhua ■

New Zealand to reopen border to Australians in April, others in May

NEW ZEALAND will reopen its border to Australians in April and international travellers who do not require visas in May, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Wednesday, bringing forward the move by several months as the country passes its peak of infections with the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

Vaccinated Australians will be able to enter the country isolation-free from 13 April and fully vaccinated travelers from visa-waiver countries such as Japan, the United States, Britain and South Korea from 2 May.

Ardern had said in February that tourists from Japan, Australia and other visa-free countries would not be allowed in until July.

"Closing our border was one of the first actions we took to stop COVID-19 two years ago," the prime minister said in a statement. "It did the job we needed. But now that we're highly vaccinated and predicted to be off our Omicron peak, it's now safe to open up."—Kyodo ■

NEWS
IN BRIEFWTO chief hails
Covid vaccines IP
compromise

THE World Trade Organization chief on Wednesday hailed a breakthrough between the EU, the United States, India and South Africa on waiving intellectual property rights on Covid-19 vaccines.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the compromise was a big step forward in a bid to end the log-jam at the global trade body.

However, she cautioned that some of the details on waiving WTO rules on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) still needed to be fleshed out – and it would need the backing of all WTO members to come into force.

“This is a major step forward and this compromise is the result of many long and difficult hours of negotiations,” Okonjo-Iweala said. “But we are not there yet. We have more work to do to ensure that we have the support of the entire WTO membership.”

Since October 2020, South Africa and India have called for IP rights to be temporarily lifted for coronavirus vaccines during the pandemic in order to boost production and address the gaping inequality in access between rich and poor nations.—AFP ■

Brazil hikes key
interest rate ninth
straight time

BRAZIL'S central bank raised its key interest rate for the ninth straight time Wednesday, as Latin America's biggest economy continues to reel from surging inflation, now exacerbated by the Ukraine war.

The bank's monetary policy committee raised the benchmark Selic rate by one percentage point, to 11.75 per cent, in line with analysts' forecasts, citing inflation that “continued to negatively surprise” policy makers.

Brazil has waged one of the most aggressive interest-rate tightening cycles in the world as it struggles with spiraling prices driven upward by the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic and now Russia's invasion of Ukraine.—AFP ■

IEA cuts oil demand outlook, fears
Russia supply ‘shock’

THE International Energy Agency cut its world oil demand forecast for 2022 on Wednesday, warning that sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine could spark a global supply “shock”.

“Faced with what could turn into the biggest supply crisis in decades, global energy markets are at a crossroads,” the IEA said in a monthly report.

“While it is still too early to know how events will unfold, the crisis may result in lasting changes to energy markets,” said the Paris-based agency, which advises developed countries.



Workers weld a juncture for a Russian oil pipeline in Siberia in this file photo. PHOTO: AFP

Russia, the world's biggest exporter of oil, has been hit with a slew of international sanctions over the war in Ukraine, which sent oil prices soaring. While the measures exclude the energy market, the IEA said major oil companies, trading

houses, shipping firms and banks have “backed away from doing business with the country”.

The United States and Britain have announced their own bans on Russian oil imports.

“The implications of a potential loss of Russian oil exports to global markets cannot be understated,” the IEA said.

“The prospect of large-scale disruptions in Russian production due to wide-ranging sanctions as well as decisions by companies to shun exports after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine is threatening to create a global oil supply shock,” it said.—AFP ■

Markets rally again as Hong Kong extends surge



Citizens wearing masks walk on a street in Hong Kong, south China, 2 April 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA/LI GANG

ASIAN and European markets rallied further Thursday with another blistering surge in tech firms helping Hong Kong ex-

tend its recovery from the recent rout, while traders also cheered soothing comments on the US economy by the Federal Reserve after it lifted interest rates.

Regional sentiment remains buoyant after China's top economic official vowed measures to support beaten-down markets and indicated that a debilitating crackdown on the technology sector was nearing its end.

The news lit a fire under Asia on Wednesday — sending Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index rocketing more than nine per cent and the city's tech gauge flying by a record 22 per cent.

That provided a platform for

traders in Europe and New York, where an index of US-listed Chinese firms ended up 33 per cent.

And the buying continued in early business on Thursday, with the HSI piling on seven per cent with market heavyweight tech titans including Alibaba, Tencent and JD.com building on their eye-watering rallies.

Companies in other sectors that have been in Beijing's cross hairs over the past year, such as casinos and developers, also extended a rally.

“The statement addressed so many issues on various fronts, which is really rare,” Ding Shuang at Standard Chartered said.—AFP ■

Far from Kyiv, Africa feels economic fallout from
Ukraine crisis

FROM airlines in Nigeria to shoppers in Malawi, Africans are feeling the impact of the Ukraine crisis in wrenching increases in the price of fuel, grain and fertilizer.

Global oil prices scaled decade-long highs of more than \$100 a barrel shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February, inflicting a hefty blow to many businesses south of the Sahara.

Both Ukraine and Russia are also major suppliers of wheat and other cereals to Africa, while Russia is a key producer of fertilizer.

The impact of the war and the West's sanctions against the Kremlin are already starting to



Pain at the pump: Many drivers have been stunned by the leap in fuel prices. PHOTO: AFP

translate into higher prices for farm inputs and imported grain, AFP bureaus in Africa report.

For Lagos baker Julius Adewale, the crisis is a perfect storm. Nigeria's fragile power grid

had recently been supplying just a few hours of electricity per day, forcing Adewale to turn to diesel-fuelled generators for power — the cost of which has now soared.

“There is no light since yesterday and we've been running on gen since yesterday,” Adewale said this week, as workers stacked piles of loaves in his bakery. “(The) cost of production has increased immensely.”

Nigeria is Africa's largest oil producer and biggest economy, but it has little refining capacity.

The government subsidises the cost of petrol, but diesel and aviation fuel are sold at market price.—AFP ■

Brazilian plane-maker eyes China's booming air-cargo market

BRAZILIAN plane-maker Embraer is optimistic about China's booming air-cargo market and is willing to support the sectors' further progress in cooperation with local partners, said senior executives of the company.

"China has played key roles in sustaining the global supply chain and industrial chain, especially during the global pandemic period, highlighting the value of the air-cargo sector," said Guo Qing, managing director of Embraer China.

The country's high-quality growth will create new market opportunities for global players, Guo added.

China's air-cargo market is a highlight in the global market, according to Guo, and like other markets, it is powered by demands from the e-commerce and logistics sectors. It also shows unique demands and market ecology in line with the country's social-economic conditions and geographical environment, he said.



China's air-cargo market is a highlight in the global market. PHOTO: XINHUA

"An upgraded air-cargo market will be greatly powered by China's dual circulation development paradigm, where domestic and overseas markets reinforce each other," said Guo.— Xinhua ■

Shanghai kick-starts new year with robust foreign trade growth

CHINA'S economic hub Shanghai saw its foreign trade expand 22 per cent to a total of 674.5 billion yuan (about 106.3 billion US dollars) in the first two months of 2022, according to data from customs authorities. During the period, the municipality's exports rose by 24.5 per cent to about 279.5 billion yuan, while imports went up 20.3 per cent to 395 billion yuan.

The European Union, the Association of South-east Asian Nations and the United States were among the largest trading

partners of Shanghai from January to February.

Notably, the city registered surging exports of automobiles and mobile phones in the first two months of this year, increasing by 242 per cent and 289 per cent year on year respectively. High-tech and new-technology products including integrated circuits and automatic data processing equipment and its components accounted for 29.8 per cent of its total import value, according to the local customs.— Xinhua ■

Walmart seeks to hire 50,000 more workers in US

WALMART said Wednesday it plans to hire 50,000 workers in the United States by the end of April as it seeks to expand its retail operations amid a tight labor market.

The world's biggest store chain, which habitually adds thousands of seasonal workers ahead of the holiday season, has

also been beefing up its pharmacy and home-delivery operations.

The current push targets the hiring of thousands of engineers and data scientists, as well as workers in store and supply chain roles.

The company, which has 1.6 million workers in the United States and 2.3

million globally, plans to add technology hubs in Atlanta and Toronto.

The two cities were picked "because of their growing tech presence, connection to Walmart and broad, diverse talent", Walmart Executive Vice-President Suresh Kumar said.

Key areas for recruit-

ment include staff with expertise in cybersecurity, developers, software engineers and product managers, Kumar said.

Walmart has announced a number of pay hikes in recent years as large chains compete for talent, and its average hourly pay is \$16.40.— AFP ■

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

AS the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 27th MARCH 2022 (Armed Force Day), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V RESOLUTION VOY.NO. (2208S/2209N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V RESOLUTION VOY.NO. (2208S/2209N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-3-2022** 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.

Changing Trade Name For Registered Pesticide

Changing trade name process of the following pesticide produced by **GUANGXI BAIKE BIOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGY CO., LTD.** and distributed by **MYANMAR KETE CO.,LTD.** are changing from the previous trade name of Byter Benzo to the new trade name of Byter Dinga.

No	Previous trade name	New trade name	Registration No
1	Byter Benzo (Emamectin Benzoate 5% WDG)	Byter Dinga (Emamectin Benzoate 5% WDG)	P 2019-4606

Any Objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

MYANMAR KETE CO.,LTD.

No.(125-127), Kha/11 street, Myoe Thit (A+B) Quarter, Insein Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

Ads

TradeMark

Call

09251022355

09974424848

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (167N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (167N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-3-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA RAJIN VOY.NO. (KRJNO247W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA RAJIN VOY.NO. (KRJNO247W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-3-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR PENIDA VOY.NO. (109N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR PENIDA VOY.NO. (109N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-3-2022** 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

First cases opened under Russia military information law



Russian President Vladimir Putin is seen during a visit to Aeroflot aviation training centre on 5 March 2022. PHOTO: KREMLIN/XINHUA

RUSSIAN investigators on Wednesday launched the first criminal cases under a new law against spreading “false information” about Russia’s military operation in Ukraine.

Signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin on 4 March, the law introduced jail terms of up to 15 years for people who publish “knowingly false information” about the military.

It has alarmed his political opponents and independent

media who see the law as a bid to further gag reporting on the military operation.

The first investigations target three individuals accused of posting “lies” on online messaging forums or social media, the criminal investigations committee said on its website.

The probes were based on information from the FSB secret service and the suspects’ homes had been searched and restrictions placed on their movements, it added.

It identified one of the suspects as Veronika Belotserkovskaya, accused of sharing false information on Instagram.

“I have been officially declared an honest person,” she said in reaction to Wednesday’s announcement in a post to her 900,000 followers on Instagram.

The investigators said Belotserkovskaya was based overseas and they would be seeking an international warrant for her arrest.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

UN General Assembly designates 15 March as International Day to Combat Islamophobia

THE General Assembly on Tuesday adopted a resolution to designate 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

The resolution calls for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue on the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and for the diversity of religions and beliefs.

It strongly deplores all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief and such acts directed against their places of worship, as well as all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines that are in violation of international law.—Xinhua ■

Somalia delays election process again as deadline lapses

SOMALIA has again pushed back the deadline for completing lower house elections, delaying until 31 March a process that is already more than a year overdue and has resulted in political sanctions. The electoral committee announced the latest postponement on Tuesday evening, further delaying the vote for a new president and prolonging a political crisis in a country also facing drought and an Islamist insurgency.—AFP ■

Thailand faces early election as coalition cracks widen



Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha takes part in a special Cabinet meeting to discuss measures to stop the spread of the COVID-19 at the Government House in Bangkok on 10 April 2020. PHOTO: ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT / AFP / FILE

THAILAND’S embattled prime minister will hold talks with party leaders in his ruling coalition Thursday as he seeks to control growing divisions that could lead to early elections later this year.

Prayut Chan-O-Cha heads a sprawling coalition facing criticism over his mismanagement

of Covid-19, a pandemic economy still in the doldrums and simmering tensions over huge 2021 pro-democracy protests that have dominated the past 12 months. The turbulent political atmosphere in Southeast Asia’s second-largest economy has seen a weakened opposition agitate for

the prime minister to step down, calling for a no-confidence debate when parliament resumes in May.

And on Monday, Prayut’s one-time mentor, Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan, said early elections could be held after Thailand hosts the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in November.

While the deputy prime minister has no power over when polls are held, it is the first government indication on the date of national elections — months ahead of Prayut’s term ending in March 2023. Speaking after his deputy’s remarks, Prayut refused to comment on a possible election date. If polls are held after the APEC summit — or sooner — analysts say they could return an unfavourable result for Prayut.

“A lot of Thais want to see General Prayut out of office,” said professor Thitinan Pongsudhirak at Bangkok’s Chulalongkorn University.—AFP ■

Abortion rights added to Chile’s draft constitution

CHILE’S Constitutional Convention, which is drafting a replacement for the nation’s Pinochet-era charter, approved on Tuesday the inclusion of language protecting the right to an abortion.

With 108 votes in favour, 39 against and six abstentions, the Convention approved the second paragraph of the draft’s article on sexual and reproductive rights, which requires the state to provide “the conditions for a pregnancy, a voluntary termi-

nation of pregnancy, childbirth and maternity.”

The text also guarantees that exercise of these rights should be “free of violence and interference by third parties, whether individuals or institutions.”

In Chile, abortion is currently permitted only under three conditions: risk to the life of the mother, fetal non-viability and rape.

Chile’s Congress is debating the possibility of a broader

decriminalization of abortion.

The Constitutional Convention is required to submit its final draft by 4 July, after which Chileans will vote to keep or reject it.

If rejected, the Pinochet Constitution will remain in force.

“I am 52 years old. 47 of which without my mother, who lost her life during a septic abortion,” said Loreto Vidal, a member of the Constitutional Convention, in a heartfelt speech during a debate on the text.—AFP ■



In Chile, abortion is currently permitted only under three conditions: risk to the life of the mother, fetal non-viability and rape. Activists take part in a demo in favour of abortion in Santiago on 21 March 2016. PHOTO: MARTIN BERNETTI/AFP / FILE

Turkey, Poland agree on more diplomatic efforts for Ukrainian crisis

TURKEY and Poland agreed to step up diplomatic efforts to end the Ukrainian crisis, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday.

“We mainly discussed the developments in Ukraine and Russia, as well as our bilateral relations. As two NATO allies, we had a detailed exchange of views. In this process, we will continue our consultation and cooperation with Poland,” Erdogan said at a joint press conference with his Polish counterpart Andrzej Duda in the Turkish capital Ankara.

Duda paid a visit to Turkey on Wednesday to discuss with the Turkish president ways to defuse the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Erdogan welcomed the Polish president in Ankara as part of Turkey’s mediation efforts to secure a ceasefire in Ukraine.

“We continue our attempts to achieve a ceasefire,” Erdogan said, adding that Turkish Foreign



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (R) welcomes Polish President Andrzej Duda in Ankara, Turkey, 16 March 2022. PHOTO: MUSTAFA KAYA/XINHUA

Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu will continue “shuttle diplomacy” visiting Ukraine on Thursday after his talks with his Russian counterpart in Moscow on Wednesday.

Erdogan said he would attend the NATO summit in Brussels on 24 March and hold talks on

the process regarding Russia and Ukraine. The Turkish president also praised Poland for hosting Ukrainian refugees. “Having hosted the largest number of refugees in the world for eight years, Turkey understands Poland best,” he said.—Xinhua ■

Russia ready to continue high-level negotiations with Ukraine as NATO mulling reset of deterrence

FOLLOWING a new round of negotiations between Russian and Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday that Moscow is prepared to continue high-level trilateral negotiations with Ukraine mediated by Turkey. “If such initiatives appear, we would only be happy to continue communicating in this format,” Lavrov said at a press conference following his talks with Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu in Moscow.

He explained that Moscow would only be interested in talks with Ukraine if these would lead to concrete results and solve existing problems.



15 March: A car rides away from a Ukrainian military check point in the centre of Kyiv on the 20th day of the Russian invasion. PHOTO: FADEL SENNA/AFP

According to Cavusoglu, Turkey is ready to host a potential meeting between the presidents of Russia and Ukraine.

Lavrov met with his Ukrain-

ian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba in Turkey’s southern province of Antalya last week on the sidelines of an international forum.—Xinhua ■

Ukraine integrates electricity network into European energy system

UKRAINE has integrated its electricity transmission network into the European energy system, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Wednesday.

“Ukraine has become a member of the European Energy Union. The unification of Ukrainian and European energy

systems has been completed,” Zelensky tweeted. Ukraine, which was importing electricity from Russia and Belarus, last year set a target to integrate its energy system into the European network of electricity transmission system operators by 2023.

According to media reports,

15 nuclear units at four Ukrainian nuclear power plants generate about 55 per cent of Ukraine’s electricity needs. Thermal power plants produce 29 per cent of Ukraine’s electricity, while the rest is powered by other sources or imported from abroad.—Xinhua ■

NEWS DIGEST

Ukrainian, Russian presidents may hold talks in coming days

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelensky may hold talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in the coming days, the Ukrainian government-run Ukrinform news agency reported on Wednesday, citing Ukrainian Presidential Advisor Mykhailo Podolyak.

“Obviously, the only way to end this war is direct talks between the two presidents, and this is what we are working on in the current talks,” Podolyak, also a member of the Ukrainian delegation to the peace talks with Russia, was quoted as saying.

Work is underway to prepare the documents that could be signed during the meeting of the two leaders, the official said.

The Ukrainian side has high hopes that ceasefire will be achieved in the near future, he added.

The fourth round of negotiations between Ukrainian and Russian delegations started on Monday via video link and continued into Wednesday.

US military complex to benefit from Russia-Ukraine conflict

A former Pentagon analyst said the US military complex stands to benefit from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine as it ramps up defence spending for what could be a protracted affair in Europe.

“The American Military-Industrial-Congressional Complex (MICC) will benefit from this war (the Russia-Ukraine conflict) because it is setting the stage for a second Cold War that will increase tensions over the long term,” said Franklin C. Spinney, a former Pentagon analyst. An increase in tensions over the long term “is needed to fund the bow wave of future defence spending that is already programmed in the Pentagon’s computers...” Spinney said in a recent interview with Xinhua, warning that militarization bodes ill for the US economy.

The MICC refers to the network of multisectoral individuals and institutions promoting militarization, arms sales and political power. US President Dwight Eisenhower made its creeping influence public in his 1961 farewell speech.

West should abide by its commitments to solve Ukrainian conflict, says Pakistani expert

THE way to solve the ongoing Ukraine crisis is not by crossing others’ red lines, but to respect and abide by the commitments that have been made, a Pakistani expert told Xinhua in a recent interview.

For Russia, the red line is the eastwards expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), said Najma Minhas, an international affairs expert and editor at Pakistani media outlet Global Village Space. “When you saw increasing movement eastward, the red line started going very, very red.”

Noting that the United States has been pushing NATO members to increase their military spending, Minhas said that some European countries which were previously not spending much on military buildup have now increased their defence budgets.

This is not limited to military buildup, said Minhas, adding that some Western countries are also encouraging their civilians to carry arms and fight in Ukraine.

Regarding the sanctions that the United States has imposed on Russia, she said that it has banned oil, liquefied natural gas, and coal imports from Russia, commodities in which the United States is more or less self-sufficient, but the country has reportedly not banned uranium imports from Russia on which the United States is largely dependent.

Source: Xinhua

Two Myanmar players advance to quarter-finals of 2022 Asian Billiards Championship



Min Si Thu Tun compete in the group match of the 2022 Asian Billiards Championships in Qatar. **PHOTO: ASIAN CONFEDERATION OF BILLIARD SPORTS**

TWO Myanmar billiards players advance to the quarter-finals of the 2022 Asian Billiards Championships on 17 March in Qatar.

Myanmar Billiards players Pauk Sa and Min Si Thu Tun finished second after the group matches.

Min Si Thu Tun is in Group B and defeated Thawat (Thailand) by four matches. He also beat Hang Jae-hoon (South Korea) by 4-0 and lost to Sewala (India) by 4-3.

With one loss, Min Si Thu Tun finished second and already

advanced to the next stage.

Pauk Sa was in Group C, beating Mohammad Thara (Sri Lanka) by 4-0 and Hum Choo-ho (South Korea) by 4-0 and Damani (India) by 4-1 and lost to Prabut (Thailand) 4-3 to finish second in the group.

The tournament is divided into three groups, with the top two finishers from each of the three groups advancing to the semi-finals, with the other three runners-up advancing to the quarter-finals.

According to the match schedule, two Myanmar players, Pauk Sa and Min Si Thu Tun are facing each other in the quarter-finals and will play on 18 March. The winner of this match will be competing against famous Indian billiards player Advani. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Myanmar team reach semi-finals of Thai Invitational Futsal Championship

MYANMAR'S national futsal team has advanced to the semi-final of the Thai Invitational Futsal Championship after the group matches of the tourney which was held on 17 March in Thailand.

In the last match of the group, Iran beat Myanmar 2-0 and the host Thailand and Oman drew 1-1.

Myanmar played a decisive match against Iran for the first

place in the group but lost because Iran is one of the top teams in Asia.

The Myanmar team lost, but goalkeeper Kyaw Htet Aung won the best player award for that match.

At the end of the group matches, Thailand and Oman were tied with 4 points in Group A, but Thailand bagged first place while Oman finished second in the group.

In Group B, Iran finished first with six points while team Myanmar finished second in the group with three points and reached the semi-finals.

The semi-finals will be played on 19 March and Myanmar will face Thailand while Iran will play against Oman.

Mongolia and Maldives, who are bottom of the group, will also play for fifth place. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Troubled Chelsea ease past Lille into Champions League quarter-finals

CHELSEA put their off-field troubles to one side to seal a place in the Champions League quarter-finals on Wednesday (16 March) as a Cesar Azpilicueta goal clinched a 2-1 win at Lille in the second leg of their last-16 tie, and a 4-1 aggregate victory.

Reeling from the impact of UK government sanctions imposed on their Russian billionaire owner Roman Abramovich, the London club appeared rattled as they fell behind in northern France to a first-half Burak Yilmaz penalty. Lille had given

themselves a chance of salvaging the tie following their 2-0 defeat in the first leg at Stamford Bridge last month, but Christian Pulisic equalised on the night in first-half stoppage time and captain Azpilicueta got the winner in the 71st minute.

The reigning Ligue 1 champions go out, and following Paris Saint-Germain's stunning exit last week it means there will be no French club in Friday's draw for the Champions League quarter-finals. In contrast, defending European champions Chelsea

make it three Premier League clubs in the hat as they join Liverpool and Manchester City in the last eight. "It has not been a normal last few weeks but we have to do what is in our hands, which is train the best we can. Tonight it was a difficult game and of course we are happy to go through," Azpilicueta told British broadcaster BT Sport. "This group fights against everything, we know we have to do the best we can on the pitch, we stick together and hopefully end up having a very good season."—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Nadal neutralizes Opelka to extend perfect 2022 start, Alcaraz, Norrie win

RAFAEL Nadal battled past big-hitting American Reilly Opelka 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/5) on Wednesday to push his 2022 record to 18-0 and reach the quarter-finals of the Indian Wells WTA and ATP Masters.

The 35-year-old Spaniard, who won a record-setting 21st Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January and lifted the trophy in Acapulco last month, stayed on track for a fourth title in the California desert. But he had all he could handle from the 2.11m tall American, including a raft of serves that topped the 140 mph mark and had Nadal's back against the wall – literally.

"I manage it so-so," he said of Opelka's serve, which the Spaniard stood as far back in the court as possible to receive. "I don't know if the cameras can follow me like 10 metres behind the baseline."

Opelka saved the only



Spain's Rafael Nadal battles past American Reilly Opelka in the fourth round of the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells. **PHOTO: AFP**

break point of a tense first set. A patient Nadal worked the rallies in the tiebreaker and after he gained a 4-3 lead Opelka produced three straight errors to surrender the set. Impervious on his own serve in the opening set, Nadal gave Opelka a break chance with a double fault in the fifth game of the second and the American pounced on it.

Unable to take advantage of a break point in the next game, Nadal saved three more break points in the seventh game before breaking back to knot it at 4-4.—AFP ■