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The Message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark the 48th Anniversary Mon State Day which falls on 19 March 2022

Esteemed ethnic national people in Mon State,

On the auspicious occasion of the 48th Anniversary Mon State Day which falls on 19 March, today, I'd like to heartily extend greetings with a wish for all ethnic national people residing in Mon State and born across the Union to be healthy and pleasant with good auspiciousness.

Mon State, located in the south of Myanmar, is a focal point of waterways and motor roads.

According to the 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Myanmar, No 1 Taninthayi Division was designated as Mon State on 19 March. From then onward, the celebration of Mon State Day has been organized 48 times on a grand scale, based on ceremonies marking the Mon State Day depending on traditions and cultures of national ethnics, and today's celebration turns 48.

Mon State is fine in climatic conditions, and the state is decorated with national resources such as Zingyaik Hill, Nwalaboh Hill, Mottama Hill and Taungnyo mountain ranges in addition to rivers and creeks, green forests and plenty of land and water sources which are pride to be taken by the people in beautiful scenes.

Mon State is home to eminent pagodas including the wonderful Kyaikhtiyoe Pagoda. As the missionary persons and Shin Araham strived for the propagation of genuine Buddhism, the histories and firm evidence proved that the Suvannabhimi region was an origin for the propagation of Buddhism.

The culture of Mon ethnics are invaluable with abundant cultural heritages, and at present, Mon, Bamar, Kachin, Kayin, Chin, Rakhine, Shan and Pa-O ethnic national people are peacefully and amicably residing in Mon State.

Mon ethnics have been living with own literature, own culture and own language for many years. The great heroes namely Thamein Bayan, Lagun Ein and Elmondayar emerged in Mon State.

Although various ethnic people have been residing in all parts of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for hundreds of years in sharing their same future, they fell under the colonial rule of the colonialists for more than 100 years. The colonialists exploited Myanmar people by extracting teak, oil, gems, minerals and others from the country.

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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.

The government has overcome various dangers through the participation of the entire ethnic people who desire peace and stability: Vice-Senior General

ALTHOUGH terrorists commit instigations, the Tatmadaw is standing with strong unity of military units, said Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win at the meeting with officers, other ranks and families from Kalaw Station at the Station Hall of Kalaw, Shan State (South), yesterday afternoon.



State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets the officers, other ranks and family members of the Kalaw Station yesterday.

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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

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment for COVID-19 Public Notice

2nd Waning of Taboung 1383 ME
18 March 2022

1. The Ministry of Health issued Order No 19/2020 under the authority of Article 21 (b) of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law categorizing the COVID-19 disease as a disease of swift spread or the case to be reported on 28 February 2020.
2. According to this order, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Transport and Communications released the information regarding the Temporary Measures to Prevent Importation of COVID-19 to Myanmar through Air Travel starting 29 March 2020 and extended the period up to 31 March 2022.
3. At present, as the COVID-19 diagnosis confirmed rate, infection rate and mortality rate have dropped significantly, the temporary suspensions on international flights are set until 23:59 hours on 16-4-2022 to develop the international tourism industry of Myanmar and facilitate the arrivals of tourists and Myanmar citizens, and the international flight schedules will be resumed as normal starting 00:00 hour on 17-4-2022 (Myanmar New Year) in accord with the COVID-19 health rules.

People invited to celebrate 77th anniversary of Armed Forces Day

PEOPLE wishing to honour the Tatmadaw parades which will march on the 77th Anniversary 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 Subcommittee
Nay Pyi Taw Command
Nay Pyi Taw
Phone- 032-30009*

Dredging works completed 97% in Bhamo to improve port waterway



The 97-per-cent completion of the dredging works is seen in Bhamo Township.

THE Bhamo District Construction Quality Control Committee inspected the 97-per-cent completion of the dredging work to improve the port waterway in Bhamo Township, Kachin State, on 10 March.

The Dredging Division of the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of

River Systems under the Ministry of Transport and Communications started the Bhamo port dredging work on 27 November 2021 with Union Fund K490 million of 2021-2022 (October- March) mini-budget period for proper flow of water at the port in Bhamo and reduce landslides in Papaung, Yayle, Man-

malin and Kaungsint villages, which are located on the bank of the Ayeyawady River on the other side of Bhamo.

The dredging work was 4,300 metres long, 35 metres wide, 3 metres deep below the datum of water level and it is completed 97 per cent of work on 10 March 2022, according to

Deputy Director U Kyaw Naing Oo of the Dredging Division with the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems.

On behalf of the Chairman of the Bhamo District Construction Quality Control Committee, Deputy District Administrator U Aung Swe and members of

the committee inspected the site to ensure completion of work in time.

Deputy Director U Kyaw Naing Oo, the Dredging Division with the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems explained the completion of work. — Kein Phyu (IPRD)/GNLM

540 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 18 March, total figure rises to 608,384

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **608,384** after **540** new cases were reported on 18 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **562,905** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **19,420** after **2** died. —MNA

Most of the factories resume operation

PRIORITIZING agriculture and livestock much supports the State economy. Except for some factories, most of the factories resume operation. The declining disease infection rate helps the tourism sector to resume.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 4/2021 of Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 30-12-2021)

The Message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark the 48th Anniversary Mon State Day which falls on 19 March 2022

FROM PAGE-1

The ethnic national brethren born in the Union sacrificed a large number of their lives, blood and sweat in the independence struggle to be escaped from the life of colonial slaves who were oppressed by political, economic and social sectors. By fighting against the colonialists, they strived for regaining their Independence.

In driving out the colonialists through the united strength of all ethnic people, it is honourable that the independence struggling histories mentioned the wonderful efforts of Mon national leaders who participated in the independence struggles with the Union spirit.

Regrettably, the ethnic national brethren solved the issues by holding arms under the political diversities and doubts among the national brethren due to the devil legacy of the colonization process after the State had regained the Independence. They did not hold the meetings among them, and consequently, internal armed conflicts have been keeping the country away from peace. However, the New Mon State Party signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA on 13 February 2018 through the unity of Mon ethnics from Mon State so that the new mile stone of peace was erected in Mon State.

From now onward, I'd like to urge all Mon ethnic brethren on their parts to enhance the construction of mutual understanding, patience and trust with all ethnic nationals born in the Union.

Esteemed ethnic national people in Mon State,

I firmly believe that the commemorative ceremonies emphasizing the valuably traditional cultural practices of the Union built by all ethnic nationals help enhance the Union spirit and further strengthen the united strengths of the State.

All ethnic national people from Mon State need to unitedly participate in the development of the State through the Union spirit, adorable for improvement of the already achieved sound foundation.

As Mon State bears sound foundations such as natural resources and underground and above ground natural resources, flourishing Buddhism, the long history of Mon ethnics, plentiful of advanced cultural heritages, and the sea and long beach

All ethnic national people from Mon State need to unitedly participate in the development of the State through the Union spirit, adorable for improvement of the already achieved sound foundation. As Mon State bears sound foundations such as natural resources and underground and above ground natural resources, flourishing Buddhism, the long history of Mon ethnics, plentiful of advanced cultural heritages, and the sea and long beach...

areas, good potential to develop the state within a decade through the restoration of perpetual peace can be seen.

Likewise, as plans are implemented to construct the international airport and international seaports in Mon State under the arrangement of the government, all

The Union spirit was a foundation in the independence struggles in history as well as the foundation for building the future Union based on democracy and federalism. All ethnic national brethren need to firmly forge the genuine Union spirit with a firm vow to the Union in unison through national spirit and mutual trust and through thick and thin in sharing the same future.

local residents of Mon State will have the chance to enjoy the fruits of development in Mon State through their harmonious participation.

As such, I deeply urge all ethnic national people residing in Mon State on this auspicious occasion to actively participate in their respective sectors through the Union spirit in order to possess the sound foundations and improve the socio-economy of the regions and local people and the interests of the State and the citizens.

Actually, our all entire ethnic national people need a physically and mentally peaceful life under the law and development of their lives. The government is striving for ensuring national unity and the peace of the Union with a firm vow in order to implement the sustainable and harmonious development that all the national brethren enjoy in equal terms and to fulfil the actual needs of the people.

The Union spirit was a foundation in the independence struggles in history as well as the foundation for building the future Union based on democracy and federalism.

All ethnic national brethren need to firmly forge the genuine Union spirit with a firm vow to the Union in unison through national spirit and mutual trust and through thick and thin in sharing the same future.

In conclusion, at the ceremony to mark the 48th Anniversary of Mon State Day, I send a message of honour with a wish for all ethnic national people-

- to follow the honourable heritages and customs and continuously preserve the national characters
- all citizens including ethnic people from Mon State to serve the interests of the Union through the Union spirit
- make utmost efforts for further establishment of the Union based on democracy and federalism similar to the active participation of Mon ethnics in the independence struggles
- to be those who are capable of further serving the interests of the state, people from the state and the country and citizens.

*Senior General Min Aung Hlaing
Prime Minister*

Chairman, State Administration Council

The government has overcome various dangers through the participation of the entire ethnic people who desire peace and stability: Vice-Senior General

FROM PAGE-1

In his address, the Vice-Senior General said some big countries together with local terrorist groups attempted to cause utter devastation through armed insurrection including instigations to spark the riots and terror acts with posing political and economic sanctions against Myanmar to oust the existing government in a short time, persuasion of servants into CDM activities for stopping the running of government machinery, the collapse of banking services for the disarray of monetary circulation, and interruption of travelling and commodity flows. The government has overcome various dangers through the participation of the entire ethnic people who desire peace and stability. In international relations, the government firmly upholds the Our Three Main National Causes and practises independent,

active and non-aligned foreign policy aimed at world peace and friendly relations with nations and upholds the principles of peaceful coexistence among nations without harming the sovereignty of the nation.

On the other hand, various ways and means are being applied for disintegrating the Tatmadaw by spreading the propaganda through media. Although terrorists commit instigations, the Tatmadaw is standing with strong unity of military units. Officials at different levels need to fulfil the requirements of Tatmadaw members and families for their basic needs, transport, health and education sectors. As such, the Tatmadaw members will serve their duties conveniently.

Only when the Tatmadaw members are healthy and fit will they serve the State defence duty with might and main. Mem-

bers of the medical corps raise health awareness of Tatmadaw members and families in their respective stations.

Then, the Vice-Senior General fulfilled the needs of Tatmadaw members and families and presented foodstuffs and cash assistance for officers, other ranks and families of Kalaw Station.

Lt-Gen Aung Zaw Aye of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) gave sports gear to officials.

The Vice-Senior General and party cordially greeted Tatmadaw members and families. —MNA

The Vice-Senior General presents foodstuffs and cash assistance for the Kalaw Station.



Opening ceremony of staff housing for Mon State Director Office of MoEA

THE opening ceremony of staff housing for Mon State Director Office of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs was organized in Mawlamyine Township yesterday.

The event was attended by State Administration Council members Dr Banyar Aung Moe and Mahn Nyein Maung, the Union ministers, the state chief minister and guests.

During the ceremony, SAC member Dr Banyar Aung Moe highlighted the emergence of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs under the law, protection of ethnic literacy and culture including the rights of ethnic people.

Then, Union Minister U



Saw Tun Aung Myint talked about the activities of ministry to develop the socio-economic status of ethnic people,

the opening of new staff housing marking 48th Anniversary

Mon State Day and another important role of literature and cultural associations in

conserving the language, literature, arts, culture, tradition, national characteristic and historic heritages and cooperation works to ensure unity and peace processes.

SAC member Dr Banyar Aung Moe and party cut the ribbon to launch the new staff housing. Then, the Mon, Pa-O and Kayin cultural dance troupes performed and the officials gave cash awards.

Afterwards, the officials provided cash assistance to the literature and cultural associations for the conservation of intangible cultural heritage and inspected the staff housing. — MNA

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Committee on Prevention of Recruitment of Child Soldiers holds 1/2022 meeting

UNION Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo, Chairman of Committee on the Prevention of Recruitment of Child Soldiers, presided over the (1/2022) committee meeting yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union Minister said the government and the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) signed the prevention of child soldier recruitment project on 27 June 2012 and the term of the project was 18 months. Although the Plan of Action period was over on 27 December 2013, it was extended further six months two times due to the uncompleted procedures.

After the end of the second six-month term on 27 December 2014, the Plan of Action was not extended but carried out with Indicator 21 and then it was reduced to Indicator 11 according to the meeting of CTFMR and the government conducted on 26 July 2018. According to the Plan of Action, the Tatmadaw



The meeting 1/2022 of the Committee on the Prevention of Recruitment of Child Soldiers in progress.

discharged 1,029 child soldiers, who were wrongly recruited, cooperating with CTFMR from June 2012 until today.

He also added that the arrangements are being made to release wrongly recruited 28 child soldiers to reunite with their parents and the senior

officers and military members were taking action for wrongly selecting the underage children.

For such cooperation between Tatmadaw and CTFMR, Tatmadaw was removed from the lists of the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the annu-

al lists of UN Secretary-General for 2019 on 15 June 2020 and reached under the monitor for one year.

During that period, the Tatmadaw strictly followed the law, rules and regulations in recruiting the new members.

Despite such doings, Tat-

madaw was put back on the list again one-sidedly before the issuance of the annual report of the UN Secretary-General on 21 June 2021. But, Tatmadaw organized the committee meeting as usual and reported the outcomes of the meeting to CTFMR via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services also gave instructions to conduct the measures systematically and report to CTFMR.

Moreover, the government also informed the CTFMR to cooperate using various ways and the activities of Tatmadaw were also presented to Ms Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tatmadaw will carry out the procedures according to its commitments.

Then, the attendees coordinated the discussion and the Committee Chairman concluded the meeting. — MNA

Announcement on findings of more SARS-CoV-2 Omicron Variant cases

18 March 2022

1. The Ministry of Health is continuously conducting the "COVID-19 Variant Surveillance Activities". Laboratory samples are being taken from the returnees who are repatriated by relief flights from foreign countries, from mass infections and local infections, and up-to-date information on the discovery of COVID-19 variants, including the Omicron variant, is being provided.
2. In doing so, the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron (BA.2) was detected on 31 suspicious laboratory samples of the COVID-19 virus on 15 March 2022 at the Tatmadaw Medical Research Unit.
3. People who have been diagnosed with Omicron BA.2 have been treated separately since COVID-19 was confirmed and are in good health.
4. International studies have shown that the Omicron BA.2 mutation spreads faster than the Omicron variant BA.1, but that those who have received a full dose of COVID-19 vaccine have lower severity and mortality.
5. Therefore, it is announced that the Ministry of Health is stepping up the COVID-19 variant surveillance activities, and COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment works are being intensified.

Ministry of Health

Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation returns from Cambodia

MYANMAR Tatmadaw delegation led by Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye; Lieutenant-General Moe Myint Tun and Lieutenant-General Ye Win Oo who attended the 19th ASEAN Chief of Defence Forces Meeting, the 12th ASEAN Military Operation Meeting and the 19th ASEAN Military Intelligence Meeting in Cambodia left for Nay Pyi Taw from

Phnom Penh Airport yesterday evening.

The Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation was seen off by Deputy Joint Chief of Staff of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces Lt-Gen Meas Vanna and officials, Myanmar Ambassador to Cambodia U Thit Lin Ohn, Military Attaché (Army, Navy and Air) Brigadier-General Thura Hla Min and Cambodian officials at the airport.

The Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation arrived back at Tatmadaw Airport in Nay Pyi Taw at 6 pm yesterday. Lieutenant-General Than Tun Oo from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Adjutant-General Lieutenant-General Myo Zaw Thein, the Commander and officials of Nay Pyi Taw Command welcomed back the delegation at the airport. — MNA



The Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation is welcomed back at Nay Pyi Taw Tatmadaw Airport yesterday.

U Wunna Maung Lwin receives Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr Saud bin Abdullah Al Subaie, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at 9:30 am on 18 March 2022 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the call, the Union Minister congratulated the Ambassador for having been ap-

pointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. They cordially exchanged views on matters pertaining to the strengthening of existing bilateral relations between Myanmar and Saudi Arabia, expanding mutually beneficial cooperation including energy and trade sectors, and cooperation in the international arena.—MNA

The Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Myanmar calls on the MoFA Union Minister yesterday.

Working Committee to Address the Impact of COVID-19 on the National Economy meets

THE meeting of Working Committee to Address the Impact of COVID-19 on the National Economy (2/2022) was virtually held yesterday morning at Office No. (1), Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

The meeting was chaired by U Aung Naing Oo, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. Members of the Working Committee, the deputy ministers for Planning and Finance, and Commerce, Permanent Secretaries and representatives

from the ministries concerned attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the discussion was held on the provision and repayment of loans under COVID-19 Fund, collection condition of loan interest, ongoing process for provision of loans for the Film, Music, Theatrical, Press and Media and the works done by the working committee. The meeting also discussed relief measures carried out by concerned ministries, upcoming plan of actions, and issues presented to the committee. —MNA



The meeting 2/2022 of the Working Committee to Address the Impact of COVID-19 on the National Economy in progress.

CBM hosts virtual meeting for Baht-Kyat direct trade on 18 March

CENTRAL Bank of Myanmar held a virtual zoom meeting regarding currency swap in the bilateral cross-border transaction between Myanmar and Thailand at 2 p.m. on 18 March.

Present at the meeting were secretary and joint-secretary of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, deputy governor of the CBM, Kayin State Minister for Economics, Shan State Minister for Economics, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, director-general of Myanmar Customs Department, director-general of the Internal Revenue Department, managing directors of Myanma Economic Bank, director-general of the Trade Department, president and officials of Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, chair of Myawady



Border Chamber of Commerce, chair of Kengtung-Tachilek Chamber of Commerce, working committee members of the CBM, officials of Ayeyawady Farmers Development Bank and Kasikorn Bank Public Company, exporters, importers and related organizations.

Deputy Governor Daw Than Than Swe of the CBM discussed matters regarding

the aims, policy, procedures and benefits of the direct Baht-Kyat settlement in cross-border trade between Myanmar and Thailand.

Deputy Minister U Nyunt Aung for the Commerce, in his capacity as the secretary of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, made a remark. Next, Kayin State Minister for Eco-

nomics talked about the accuracy of trade data and market exchange rate. Then, Shan State Minister for Economics explicated matters raised by Tachilek traders.

After that, the joint-secretary of the central committee explained the Kyat-renminbi process, the response to overcome the barriers and ways to figure out possible problems in

direct Baht-Kyat trade.

Officials concerned from the MoC, MEB, A Bank and Kasikorn Bank discussed the banking services.

The director-general of the Myanmar Customs Department also revealed the situations of circulating currencies with the Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) and the department's future plans on that.

Additionally, the traders also asked questions about banking procedures, payment methods, proposed exchange rates, documents for cross-border trade, banking rates and financial support plans and the officials concerned of the CBM responded to them in detail.

Finally, Deputy Governor Daw Than Than Swe also coordinated the points of discussion and delivered the closing remark. —MNA

U Ko Ko Hlaing receives Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

U Ko Ko Hlaing, Union Minister for International Cooperation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr Saud bin Abdullah Al Subaie, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at 1:30 pm on 18 March 2022 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, the Union minister congratulated the ambassador for having been

appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and briefed on the discussions between Myanmar and Bangladesh regarding the repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State.

They cordially exchanged views on the importance of religious harmony, expanding bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade, investment and energy sectors.—MNA



The Union Minister for International Cooperation receives the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Myanmar.

Community Centre (Natmawk) opened marking 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn attended the opening ceremony of newly built Community Centre of IPRD in Natmawk Township marking the 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day yesterday.

First, the Union minister pressed the button to inaugurate the Community Centre signboard together with Magway Region Social Affairs Minister U Soe Paing Myint, town elders U Nyan Shein and Daw Kyi Myint.

During the event, the Union minister said it is such a proud for launching such the very first Community Centre in Magway Region to mark the 77th Armed Forces Day. The libraries are also established to bring knowledge to the elderly, young people and students of any religions and efforts are being made to conduct educating programmes.

The libraries are upgraded into the community centre as they are the places where the people can explore their knowledge, information, and also a forum and recreational area.

The current community



The MoI Union Minister comforts the children at the Natmawk Community Centre.

centre was constructed using more than K414 million of State budget and the Magway Region government donated materials worth K50 million.

He also talked about the crucial role of centres for the development in future through the unity and collective strength,

and to produce reliable young leaders as long as the youths' network becomes wider and to become a bridge to link government and its people.

Then, the region social affairs minister made a remark and town elder expressed words of thanks.

The Union minister handed over 1,000 units of MRTV DVB-T2 Set Top Box to the region social affairs minister.

He then inspected the multisectoral hall, art room, museum, public library, kid reading room, stadium, computer room and meeting hall of community

centre and gave the presents to the children who were reading in the reading rooms.

The community centre is constructed using the State budget and is the very first centre in Natmawk Township of Magway Region. The people can seek knowledge, collect information, discuss for the interests of country and regions and read the journals for free at the library.

The Union minister and party visited Bogyoke Aung San Museum in Natmawk Township and provided food and cash assistance to the patients at the township hospital.

They then visited Mann Shwesettaw pagoda in Mibu Township and made cash contribution.

The Union minister also met the staff of IPRD office and MRTV retransmission station of Minbu District and instructed the necessary things. The Union Minister and the Region Chief Minister discussed help of information tasks over regional development tasks.—MNA

Announcement on 2022 admission for Technological universities for those who will pass the matriculation exam

THE Department of Advanced Science and Technology of the Ministry of Science and Technology is developing scientific and technological human resources by setting policies for nation-building and socio-economic development of the people.

In addition, with the aim to train qualified engineers for the benefit of the people in order to improve the career opportunities of young people, it is announced that students who will pass the 2022 matriculation exam will be able to allow to attend technological universities based on the total score of the English, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry subjects.

Ministry of Science and Technology

Public Notification

SINCE the stability of the gold and financial markets is very important in the domestic and foreign trade, the State Administration Council has formed the "Gold and Financial Markets Overseeing Working Committee" to ensure the stability of the markets. The working committee is setting up a Grievance Redressal Committee to assist in monitoring the stability of local currency exchanges.

Therefore, if you know those who involve in committing acts that could undermine financial market stability, such as illegal handling and trade of foreign currency, those who do not comply with the payment restrictions of the Central Bank of Myanmar in trading and transferring property such as real estate and motor vehicles, those who issue cash deposited in banks at a percentage, and those who hold cash exchange the kyats deposited in the bank account by taking a percentage, please feel free to contact the Grievance Redressal Committee at 067-3409463 and 09-43006833, email address: gmm.complaint@cbm.gov.mm.

Gold and Financial Markets Overseeing Working Committee

Maintain traditions of running monastic education

CITIZENS of Myanmar started their learning at monastic education under the management of Buddhist monks. Parents and guardians sent their offspring to monastic schools for learning literature and Buddhism as well as public ethics lectured by members of the Sangha.

During the period from 1962 to 1988, monastic education schools and private schools were closed for various reasons. But monastic education schools were allowed to reopen in 1992 to run them under the curriculum adopted by the Ministry of Education.

Those monastic education schools approved by the 2014 national education law are under the joint management of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and the Ministry of Education.

In the 2020-21 academic year, 1,489 monastic education schools including 797 primary schools, 589 post-primary schools, 101 middle schools and 26 high schools were allowed to be opened in regions and states including those from the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area under the supervision of the monastic education supervisory central committee.

The number of students at the monastic education schools in the Mandalay Region was top on the chart, followed by those from Yangon and Sagaing regions. These schools restrict the disciplines and morals of the students but face weakness as a lesser contribution to the academic measures depending on the donated cash. Moreover, teachers from monastic education schools did not have recognition for their qualifications and capacity. However, monastic education schools have been contributing much to Myanmar's education system in successive eras. Hence, it is necessary to assist these schools.

As of the 2021-22 academic year, monthly cash assistance for primary assistance teachers was extended to K57,000, up from K43,000, for post-primary and junior assistance teacher K64,500, up from K43,000, and senior assistant teacher K70,500, up from K47,000 per month.

The government arranges refresher courses, child-centred teaching and administration for the teachers from the monastic education schools. Monastic education schools create learning opportunities for school-age children from both urban and rural areas to pursue education in accord with the theme: 'to attend schools for every school-age child' while preserving the traditions and customs without opposing the education policy of the Ministry of Education.

Buddhist monks have been playing a key role in the education sector of Myanmar in successive eras. It is because those who learned education in the monastic education led the various sectors of the country including politics, economic, military and social affairs until today.

Global COVID-19 cases on rise again despite reduced testing: WHO

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press briefing that globally increasing cases despite reduced testing "means the cases we are seeing are just the tip of the iceberg."

THE World Health Organization (WHO) sounded the alarm on Wednesday over a global spike in COVID-19 cases, despite reduced testing and several weeks of declining infections.

WHO said cases are especially on the rise in parts of Asia, urging for vaccination coverage to be extended and caution to be exercised in lifting pandemic response measures.

Just the tip of the iceberg

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press briefing that globally increasing cases despite reduced testing "means the cases we are seeing are just the tip of the iceberg."

He added: "Continued local outbreaks and surges are to be expected, particularly in areas where measures to prevent transmission have been lifted."

According to Maria van Kerkhove, WHO's COVID-19 technical lead, more than 11 million cases have been reported to WHO in the last week. This is an eight-percent increase on the previous week.

One factor contributing to rising cases, she said, is the Omicron variant, the most transmissible coronavirus variant so far. Another contributing factor is the lifting of health measures such as masks, physical distancing, and restrictions on movement in certain countries.

Furthermore, Kerkhove said: "We also have incomplete vaccination coverage in many parts of the world and in particular, among people who are at risk of developing severe disease."

The third factor driving up the number of cases has been misinformation, she added, such as that Omicron is mild and the pandemic is over.

"We need a very strong surveillance system around the world for COVID-19. Despite all of the challenges that we are facing, we still need to maintain testing," she emphasized.

Pandemic is not over yet

As each country is facing a different situation, WHO has kept cautioning that the pandemic is not over yet, calling on all countries to remain vigilant.

The virus will "wax and wane," as "it has not settled down into a purely, seasonal or predictable pattern yet," according to Mike Ryan, executive director of the WHO Health Emergencies Program.

"We need to be very cautious. We need to watch this very carefully and we need to focus on getting the most vulnerable appropriately vaccinated. And we need to do that as quickly as possible in every country," he said.

SOURCE: Xinhua



WHO said cases are especially on the rise in parts of Asia. A staff member checks information of a foreigner entering South Korea at Incheon International Airport in Incheon, South Korea, 8 April 2020. PHOTO: NEWSIS/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA/FILE

Licensing deals struck for cheaper Pfizer Covid pill

THIRTY-FIVE generic drug manufacturers will make a more affordable version of Pfizer's anti-Covid pill for the world's poorer nations, in licensing deals announced Thursday by a UN-backed organisation.

The global Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) signed agreements with three dozen manufacturers to produce the oral Covid-19 treatment nirmatrelvir for supply in 95 low- and middle-income countries.

US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer signed a licence agreement with the MPP in November. The MPP, in turn, issued sub-licences to the generic drugs makers.

The deals announced Thursday will "help ensure access to our oral Covid-19 treatment for patients in need around the world", said Pfizer chairman Albert Bourla. "The MPP sub-licensees and the additional capacity for Covid-19 treatment they will supply will play a critical role to help ensure that people everywhere, particularly those living in the poorest parts of the world, have equitable access to an oral treatment option against Covid-19."

The sub-licences allow manufacturers to produce the raw ingredients for nirmatrelvir, and/or the finished drug itself co-packaged with the HIV medicine



Philippines FDA approves world's first generic version of Pfizer's anti-Covid pill. The Manila city government on 10 March 2022 received its order of Bexovid drug for the treatment of mild to moderate coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) for individuals 12 years old and above. PHOTO: ANI

ritonavir.

Protease inhibitor

The 35 companies involved include 19 in India and five in China, the MPP said.

The rest are spread across Bangladesh, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Jordan, Israel, Mexico, Pakistan, Serbia, South Korea and Vietnam.

A licence has also been offered to a

company in Ukraine, which has not yet been able to sign due to Russia's war in the country.

Six companies will produce the drug substance, nine will produce the drug product and the others will do both.

"Nirmatrelvir is a new product and requires substantial manufacturing capabilities to produce," said MPP executive director Charles Gore.

Nirmatrelvir is known as a "protease inhibitor" and works by blocking the action of an enzyme the coronavirus needs to replicate. A low dose of ritonavir is administered to slow down the breakdown of nirmatrelvir inside the body.

Because the combination does not target the fast-mutating spike proteins that stud the surface of the coronavirus, it should be more variant-proof than other treatments, such as synthetic antibody infusions, as well as antibodies evoked by most types of Covid vaccine.

Royalties waived

The 95 countries covered account for around 53 percent of the world's population, including all low- and lower-middle-income nations.

Pfizer will not receive royalties from

the sub-licensees' sales of generic nirmatrelvir while Covid-19 remains classified as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization.

Following the pandemic, sales to low-income countries will remain royalty-free.

Sales to middle-income countries will be subject to royalties of five percent for the public sector and 10 percent for the private sector.

The Geneva-based MPP is a United Nations-backed international organisation that works to facilitate the development of medicines for low- and middle-income nations.

While the search for vaccines has resulted in multiple products being approved for emergency use in the pandemic, the hunt for treatments for those who have already caught the disease has not been as fruitful.

The medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said the sub-licensing was a positive step but was concerned by the deal's limitations, with large countries like Brazil, China, Malaysia and Thailand left out.

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 18 March 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the lowpressure area over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining Equatorial Indian Ocean has moved east-northeastwards and lies over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining south Andaman Sea still persists. It is likely to move east-northeastwards and 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 Andaman Sea and south Bay and generally fair elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 19 March, 2022: Weather will be partly cloudy in Sagaing, Mandalay regions and Kachin, Chin states. Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Taninthayi region, scattered in (southern and eastern) Shan, Kayah, Kayin, Mon states and isolated in the remaining regions and states. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35) m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-9) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (5-7) feet off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of fairly widespread to widespread rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Shan, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 March, 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Low Pressure Area Condition

Issued at (19:00) hours M.S.T on 18-3-2022
According to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the lowpressure area over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining south Andaman Sea still persists. It is likely to move east-northeastwards and 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 lowpressure area, rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread to widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Shan, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin, Mon states with regionally and isolated heavy falls in some Regions and States during commencing today evening at (20.3.2022). 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.

Advisory

Due to the lowpressure area, people should be aware rain or thundershowers with strong wind and domestic flight, trawlers, vessels and ships in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts.

Mang Wein border checkpoint remains closed even after one year

IT has been a year since the closure of the Mang Wein checkpoint in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and it still cannot be reopened, Muse traders stressed.

China has restricted border access through the Muse-Mang Wein trading post, which is a major border crossing between Myanmar and China amid the COVID-19 cases, since 30 March 2021. It is rumoured to be reopened in late March, a rice trader said.

“We heard the news of the reopening of the border post. However, we cannot say for sure. They usually notify us only two days in advance. There is no official letter released yet,” U Min Thein, vice-chair of the Muse Rice Wholesale Centre was quoted as saying.

The officials from both sides have been conducting a series of negotiations to reopen the border post, he added.

Major export items via Mang Wein crossing various beans and pulses, rice and



The Sino-Myanmar border trade zone.

broken rice, fishery products, onion, chilli and fruits have to be exported through Kyinsankyawt post at the moment.

China banned Myanmar trucks and drivers to enter its side because of the COVID-19 protocols and allowed only Chinese short-haul drivers to trans-

port the goods. There causes the problem of delays and bulk supply owing to the lack of Chinese short-haul truckers, promoting the operators to charge the transportation rate to an exorbitant high.

As a result of this, the cost of Chinese short-haul truck-

ing tremendously rose to K10 million per truck, whereas the trucking was worth only K700,000-800,000 when Myanmar truckers were allowed to enter China, U Min Thein continued.

Following the detection of the COVID-19 cases in recent days, the short-haul drivers were isolated for two days and the disinfecting activities were carried out. The China-Myanmar cross-border Kyinsankyawt post was temporarily shut down between 2 and 12 March 2022.

China shut down all the checkpoints linking to the Muse border amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, including Nantaw, Sinphyu, Mang Wein (Kyalgaung), Kyinsankyawt-Wan Ding and Pangsai-Wan Ding. Of the checkpoints, Kyinsankyawt has resumed trading activity from 26 November on a trial run.

Myanmar exports agricultural products including rice, beans and corns, and fishery products such as crab, prawn,

etc. Furthermore, Myanmar’s natural gas export to China is also conducted through the Muse-Ruili border. The raw CMP materials, electrical appliances and consumer goods are imported into the country.

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

During the first wave of the COVID-19, the driver-substitution system was practised in border areas, which helps lessen the impediments to the trade, yet the current restriction exacerbates the border trade, Muse Rice Wholesale Centre stated.

According to the Ministry of Commerce’s trading statistics, there are five border posts between Myanmar and China; Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kanpiketee and Kengtung. Of them, Muse performed the largest trade. — NN/GNLM

CRIME NEWS

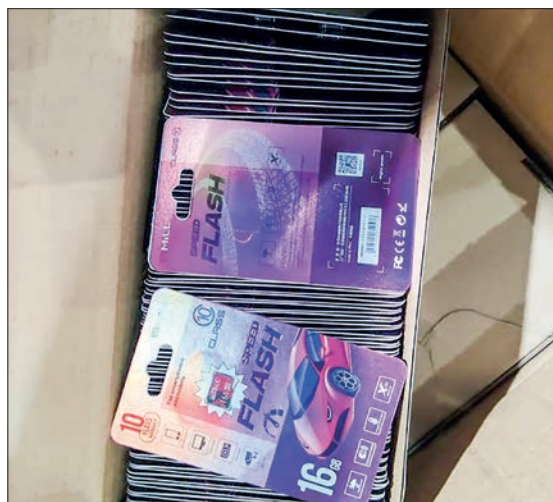
Illegal teak, vehicles, electrical devices seized in Yangon region

ACTION against the illegal trade has been taken in accordance with the law, with the supervision of the Anti-illegal Trade Steering Committee.

On 16 March, combined inspection teams led by the Yangon Region Forest Department conducted inspections and seized a vehicle with 0.7756 tonnes of illegal teak (total estimated value of K15,232,680) between the mile posts (12/6) and (12/7) on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway Hlegu Township, Yangon Region. Action is being taken under the Forest Law.

Similarly, on 17 March, Investigation and Anti-illegal Trade Division conducted inspections at the Yangon Region airport warehouse and revealed illegal electrical devices and memory cards (estimated value of K17,105,000) which were not included in the Import Declaration (ID). Action is being taken under the Custom Law.

Therefore, a total of 5 arrests (estimated value of K32,337,680) were made on 16 and 17 March, the Anti-illegal Trade Steering Committee stated. — MNA



Confiscated illegal goods at the warehouse of Yangon International Airport.

Stimulant tablets seized in Myeik, Yamethin townships



A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force inspected a suspicious man on the Pyithaya road in Myeik (South) ward in Myeik, Taninthayi Region, on 16 March, and seized 10,000 stimulant tablets from him.

On the same day, the combined team also confiscated 2,000 stimulant tablets from the motorbike of a man on Yap-

yae (7) road, Myeik (South) ward in Myeik.

In addition, on 17 March, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force arrested two men with a motorbike along with 1,100 stimulant tablets near Ywatan village in Yamethin Township. According to the investigation, the police searched the motorbike driven

by Ma Mar Mar San near mile post (7/6) of Ywatan-Yamethin road, Ywatan village in the evening, and seized 800 stimulant tablets.

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

Two arrestees are seen along with drugs and motorbike.

Japan may allow 10,000 people per day to enter country from April



An arrival lobby at Narita International Airport has far fewer people than usual on 9 March 2020. PHOTO: KYODO/FILE

JAPAN is considering raising the daily cap on overseas arrivals to 10,000 from the current 7,000 starting in April, further easing its COVID-19 border controls, government sources said

Tuesday.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has said the government will relax the border control measures, criticized as being too strict, in stages, taking into account the infection situation at home and abroad and border control steps implemented by other nations.

The spread of Omicron has been apparently slowing in many parts of the country, and some urban areas such as Tokyo want to have quasi-emergency anti-virus curbs end as scheduled next Monday.

Japan effectively banned the entry of nonresident foreign nationals in late November in response to the emergence of

the highly transmissible variant.

The government has gradually eased the rules since March and the daily cap on people entering Japan, including Japanese nationals returning from overseas, was raised to 7,000 on Monday. Foreign tourists are still not allowed entry.

April marks the start of Japan's business and school year and demand for travel normally increases at this time of year.

As many foreign students are waiting to study in Japan, the government has unveiled a plan to give them entry priority. Most of them are expected to arrive by the end of May, the top government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno has said.—Kyodo ■

Thailand to scrap pre-travel Covid-19 test to boost tourism

TRAVELLERS to Thailand will no longer have to take a Covid-19 test before boarding the plane, under plans announced Friday as part of efforts to reboot the kingdom's pandemic-battered tourism sector. From 1 April, the requirement to take a negative test within 72 hours of travel will be scrapped, and instead visitors will be tested on arrival in Thailand, Taweessin Visanuyothin, spokesman for the country's Covid-19 task force, said.

Draconian travel curbs helped Thailand limit Covid-19 case numbers and deaths in the early stages of the pandemic, but hammered its crucial tourism industry, which accounts for about a fifth of the country's economy.

Thailand is currently recording around 25,000 new cases of Covid a day as the Omicron variant spreads around the country, but officials hope this will tail off in time for them to move to a "post-pandemic" phase from July.



Thailand's tourism industry accounts for about a fifth of the country's economy. PHOTO: AFP

Seeking to bounce back from its worst economic performance since the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Thailand has gradually eased travel restrictions over the past nine months.

But hotels, restaurants and other tourist-dependent businesses have urged the government to go further and faster to entice visitors back to the kingdom's beaches and resorts.—AFP ■

Chinese oral COVID-19 drug safe, well-tolerated in human tests: study

A Chinese oral COVID-19 nucleoside drug, VV116, has commenced global trials in moderate and severe COVID-19 patients after having proven to be safe and well-tolerated in the tests of healthy people.

The drug exhibited "satisfactory safety and tolerability" in three phase-1 trials, which were conducted among 86 healthy participants from November 2021 to January this year in Shanghai, according to a study published this week in the international journal *Acta Pharmaceutica Sinica*.

The early-stage human tri-

als also show that VV116 tablets can be rapidly absorbed after oral administration and taken on an empty stomach or after a regular meal. No deaths or serious adverse events were reported.

The drug developers include several institutes under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai Junshi Biosciences Co., Ltd. and Suzhou-based Vigonvita Life Sciences Co., Ltd.

VV116 was first approved for clinical trials in Uzbekistan and allowed to be used in the treatment of moderate to severe COVID-19 patients in the country in late 2021.—Xinhua ■



A staff member works at the air-inflated testing lab for COVID-19 nucleic acid testing in Beichen District of north China's Tianjin, Jan. 13, 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/SUN FANYUE

NEWS IN BRIEF

Moderna seeks US approval of second Covid booster

MODERNA announced Thursday it had asked the United States drug regulator for emergency authorization for a second booster shot of the company's Covid-19 vaccine for all adults.

The request to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would "allow for a fourth dose of our COVID19 vaccine in adults 18 years of age and older who have received an initial booster" of any approved Covid jab, Moderna said on Twitter. The request comes days after Pfizer-BioNTech, makers of the other Covid mRNA vaccine, also requested emergency approval for a second booster shot, but their request was limited to adults aged 65 and older.—AFP ■

Shenzhen eases lockdown as pandemic gnaws at China economy

CHINA'S southern tech powerhouse Shenzhen has partially eased lockdown measures, after President Xi Jinping stressed the need to "minimise the impact" of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's economy.

The city of 17.5 million, under full lockdown since Sunday, resumed work, factory operations and public transport in four districts and a special economic zone, Shenzhen's government said late Thursday. Those areas have "achieved dynamic zero-Covid in the community", it added. China reported 4,365 new infections nationwide Friday, according to National Health Commission data, as the country battles a nationwide Omicron surge, its worst coronavirus outbreak since early 2020.

Millions remain under lockdown across the country, many under hyper-local restrictions aimed at smothering clusters as they emerge without shutting down entire cities. China has firmly stuck to a "dynamic zero-Covid" strategy since the pandemic began, through targeted lockdowns, mass testing and travel restrictions—an approach that has left it increasingly isolated in a world adjusting to the pandemic.—AFP ■

S.Korea's economy faced with uncertainties at home, abroad: gov't report



Busan Harbour, the largest port in South Korea. **PHOTO: KOREA.NET/XINHUA**

SOUTH Korea's economy was faced with uncertainties both at home and abroad amid the spread of the COVID-19 Omicron variant and geopolitical risks in Europe, a government report said Friday.

The Ministry of Economy and Finance said in its monthly economic report, called the Green Book, that worry re-

mained about domestic demand recovery caused by the Omicron variant spread, although the economy saw solid export and continued expansion in employment.

The ministry said uncertainties continued to increase in the global financial and raw materials markets due to higher inflation and the supply chain

disruption, driven by geopolitical risks in Europe, as well as the tightening of monetary policy in major economies.

In the latest tally, the country reported 407,017 new COVID-19 cases for the past 24 hours, raising the total number of infections to 8,657,609. It marked the second-highest daily caseload here.—Xinhua ■

Ukraine war to almost halve Germany's 2022 growth: economic institute



Gorillas, a German on-demand grocery delivery company, delivering groceries within 10 minutes of ordering by using dark stores. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

RUSSIA'S invasion of Ukraine will have a heavy impact on the

German economy, cutting its 2022 growth forecast by almost half to

2.1 per cent, economic institute IfW said Thursday. "Without the strong post-pandemic boost, German economic output would be in recession in the current year," said IfW vice-president Stefan Kooths. The war on the edge of the European Union will cost Germany some 90 billion euros in output for this and next year, said the IfW, the first to issue a forecast since Russia's assault began on 24 February. "The Ukraine shock will delay the return to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels in the second half," it said, adding that production capacities will not be fully utilised up to the end of the year as supply chains are broken and demand disrupted.—AFP ■

EU bans champagne, luxury car, apparel exports to Russia

THE EU on Tuesday banned exports of champagne, high-end cars, fashion apparel, expensive electronics and sports gear to Russia as part of a new round of sanctions on Moscow for its war in Ukraine. The 29-page list of now-prohibited luxury items was published in the European Union's Official

Journal, which announces legal decisions by the 27-nation bloc, giving detail to broad sanctions outlines announced last week by EU leaders. The published EU sanctions package adds 15 individuals - including oligarchs Roman Abramovich and German Khan, as well as people deemed "propagandists" for Russia - and

nine key companies in Russia's aviation, military, shipbuilding and machine-building sectors. Also banned were investments in and assistance to Russia's energy sector and imports from Russia of finished steel. Credit rating agencies were also barred from evaluating Russian institutions and companies.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Risk of imminent Russian debt default appears to diminish

The risk of an imminent Russian debt default appeared to diminish Thursday following statements from Moscow and news of a payment to JPMorgan Chase.

The Russian government faced a 16 March deadline to pay \$117 million in interest on two dollar-denominated bonds, an obligation that looked vulnerable following a wave of Western sanctions imposed following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The finance ministry said in a statement that a payment order worth \$117.2 million "was executed" after it was sent to a bank on Monday.

JPMorgan received a payment from the Central Bank of Russia, which the bank processed after checking with US authorities, a person familiar with the matter told AFP.

JPMorgan, a corresponding or intermediary bank, then sent the funds to Citigroup, the agent in charge of paying bond holders, said the person, who did not specify the amount received.

JPMorgan and Citigroup each declined AFP's requests for comment. — AFP ■

US lawmakers vote to end normal trade ties with Russia

The US House of Representatives voted Thursday to suspend Russia's "most favoured nation" trade status, tightening the Western chokehold on Moscow's economy over its deadly invasion of Ukraine.

The Senate is expected quickly to rubber-stamp the legislation — which also applies to Russian ally Belarus — allowing President Joe Biden to raise tariffs on imports from both nations.

"For weeks members of the Senate, the House and the White House have been working together to draft a strong and effective bill that will increase the pain on Putin's Russia and that our European allies will accept," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said on the floor.

"To date, both parties, Democrat and Republican, remain united in sending Putin a clear message: his inhumane violence against the Ukrainian people will come at a crippling price, and today's step by the House is another way we are making that come true."

The sanction, which had broad cross-party support with only a handful of no votes, follows the announcement of a US ban on Russian energy imports, as well as extensive sanctions on banks, businesses and oligarchs.

The IMF has predicted that the penalties will see Russia fall into a "deep recession" this year.

The House also voted to direct the US trade representative to use Washington's "voice and influence" to push for Russia and Belarus to be suspended from the World Trade Organization.

The bill gives Biden the authority to restore normal trade relations "if these countries have ceased their acts of aggression against Ukraine and other certain conditions are met."

Schumer said he expected the move to have "broad bipartisan support" in the Senate, vowing to push it through quickly.— AFP ■



Total EU luxury sales to Russia were worth €3.5 billion per year. The Mercedes-Benz F 015 Luxury car. **PHOTO: AFP**

Japan aims to speed up start of new offshore wind power plants

JAPAN will aim to speed up the start of operations of some new offshore wind power plants, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine has pushed the resource-poor nation to review its high energy dependence on imports, the government said Friday.

The government's permission criteria for businesses bidding to use marine areas to generate offshore wind power will be reviewed so companies that can start sooner rather than later will be more highly evaluated, according to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

"Following the situation in Ukraine, we are facing an urgent need to accelerate the introduction of renewable energy



In December, a group led by trading house Mitsubishi Corp. won the right to use three marine areas, near Tokyo and in northeastern Japan, with its plan of supplying power at low prices highly rated. The group aims to start business in 2028. **PHOTO: MITSUBISHI/KYODO**

as a home-grown energy source toward decarbonization. This is also vital in terms of ensuring energy security," industry minister Koichi Hagiuda told a press conference.

In December, a group led by trading house Mit-

subishi Corp. won the right to use three marine areas, near Tokyo and in northeastern Japan, with its plan of supplying power at low prices highly rated. The group aims to start business in 2028.

However, some of the

companies that lost out in the bidding process complained that the criteria were too cost-oriented. A ministry council will start specific discussions on how to revise the screening criteria next week, Hagiuda added.—Kyodo ■

German companies report supply chain problems due to Ukraine crisis



Germany's largest port, Hamburg, has warned that global supply chain issues are here to stay. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE majority of German companies have reported disruptions to supply chains and logistics as a

result of the Ukraine crisis, the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) said

on Thursday. Around 60 per cent of companies in Germany have been affected, DIHK said.

Even before the conflict in Ukraine began, 84 per cent of German industrial companies had reported medium to severe supply problems at the beginning of the year, according to DIHK. Reduced earnings and rising costs, as well as longer waiting times were the most common problems associated with price increases and delivery problems. Medium-sized industrial companies in particular were under pressure, said DIHK vice-president Ralf Stofels. The companies were receiving fewer primary products, and only at very high prices. —Xinhua ■

Toyota pauses most Japan production after quake

THE world's top-selling automaker Toyota said Friday it will halt operations on the majority of its Japanese production lines for three days as parts supply is hit by a recent powerful earthquake.

The 7.4-magnitude quake jolted east Japan

on Wednesday night, derailing a bullet train and initially cutting power to over two million homes.

Three deaths have been linked to the quake off the coast of Fukushima, which was preceded by a 6.1-magnitude shake in the same area.

"Due to the parts shortage resulting from suppliers affected by the earthquakes, additional adjustments will be made to production operations in some plants in Japan," the Japanese automaker said in a statement.

Toyota will suspend

operations on 17 of its 28 domestic production lines from Monday to Wednesday, and one other line just on Monday. The decision will impact 11 factories in total and includes some lines run by Toyota's subsidiaries Hino and Daihatsu.—AFP ■

CHANGING DISTRIBUTOR OF REGISTERED PESTICIDE

This is a notification of the change of distributor of below insecticide, registered by Bayer AG, under the Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, from Marga Min Co., Ltd. to Charoen Pokphand Produce Myanmar Co., Ltd. Any objection to this change can notify to Joint Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein, within 14 days.

Trade Name	A.I	Reg. Type	Reg. No.
Gaucho 600 FS	Imidacloprid 600 g/l FS	Amended	A 2019-125

Bayer Thai Co., Ltd. (Myanmar Branch)- PH : 01-8382710 (Ext. 40600)

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCL 19

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCL 19 VOY. NO. (003/22) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-3-2022 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MKH 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 X-PRESS GODAVARI VOY.NO. (22005N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V X-PRESS GODAVARI VOY.NO. (22005N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-3-2022 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 X-PRESS FEEDERS LINES

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

သတင်းစာ မြန်မာ့စွယ်စုံစာအုပ်အဖွဲ့အစည်း

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Exiled Cambodia opposition leader hit with 10-year jail term

A Cambodian court on Thursday sentenced exiled opposition leader Sam Rainsy to 10 years in prison over an alleged plot to topple strongman ruler Hun Sen.

Rainsy has lived in France since 2015 to avoid jail on a number of convictions he says are politically motivated, including a 25-year sentence passed in March last year.

As well as Rainsy, the court jailed six other senior opposition figures for 10 years, and 13 more activists for five years. One other activist was given a suspended five-year sentence.—AFP ■

Older Australians left behind in tech revolution: survey

A new report from National Seniors Australia has shown how older Australians grapple with rapidly changing technology trends from self-checkouts to smartphones.

The report, published by the peak body representing older Australians on Thursday, compiled results from a survey of 5,430 senior Australians aged over 50 in 2021 and compared them with a previous survey in 2018. “We are being forced into the digital world and I am trying to keep up to date with most of it, but it is moving so fast,” said one of the participants. The survey showed that seniors have ventured into the world of web-surfing, texting, stream television, online banking and video calling since the COVID-19 pandemic began.—Xinhua ■

Black hair, white shoelaces: Japan school rules under fire

EVERY school has its rules, but tough regulations at some Japanese institutions, mandating everything from black hair to white shoelaces, are facing increasing criticism and even legal action.

Toshiyuki Kusumoto, a father of two in western Japan’s Oita, is seeking court intervention to protect his younger son from regulations he calls “unreasonable”.

They include rules on hair length, a ban on styles including ponytails and braids, prohibition of low-cut socks and a stipulation that shoelaces be

white.

“These kinds of school rules go against respect for individual freedom and human rights, which are guaranteed by the constitution,” Kusumoto told AFP.

Later this month, he will enter court-mediated arbitration with the school and city, hoping authorities will revise the rules. Change is already under way in Tokyo, which recently announced that strict rules on issues such as hair colour will be scrapped at public schools in the capital from April.—AFP ■



Japanese schoolgirls walk on a street in Tokyo on 1 September 2019. PHOTO: TORU YAMANAKA /AFP/FILE

Odessa, ‘pearl of Black Sea’, clings to peace, readies for war



Odessa, a key port of about 1 million people, of whom around 100,000 have left since the invasion began, is both a strategic and symbolic target for the Russians. PHOTO: AFP

IN front of a barricade mounted outside Odessa’s magnificent opera house, a soldier shares a long, emotional hug with his wife and daughter.

With the sweet scent of spring in the air and barricades dotting the city, Ukraine’s port of Odessa, known as the pearl of the Black Sea, is clinging to peace, but bracing itself for a Russian attack.

Journalists have to show their credentials in order to access the city’s historic centre, which is now covered in iron

beams welded into crosses, while tanks are deployed at street junctions.

City and defence officials organise press tours for journalists, thanking them for coming to “show the world what is happening here”.

Accompanied by two soldiers, a group of reporters are shown what they can and cannot film, but the atmosphere remains relaxed.

Past a set of barricades, a road is cordoned off with large concrete blocks, with the French

national motto “Liberty, equality, fraternity” written in French in yellow and blue, the colours of Ukraine’s flag.

In peaceful times, the beautiful centre of Odessa, a city founded in the late 18th century by the Russian Empress Catherine the Great and the France’s Duke de Richelieu, is bustling with people and noise. It boasts trendy cafes, the luxurious “Hotel de Paris”, a breathtaking view of the port and of course the 192 steps of the iconic Potemkin Stairs descending toward it.—AFP ■

Peru constitutional court orders release of ex-president Fujimori



Demonstrators hold a march in favour of the pardon of former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori in Lima, on 12 January 2018. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

PERU’S constitutional court on Thursday ordered the release of disgraced former president Alberto Fujimori, who is serving a 25-year sentence for crimes against humanity, a judicial source said. The court reinstated a “humanitarian pardon” given to the 83-year-old in December 2017

that was subsequently revoked in October 2018, the source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

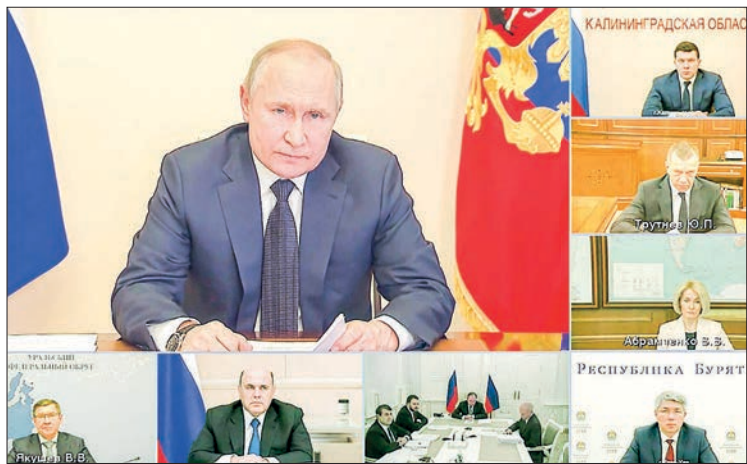
The court’s decisions cannot be appealed and the source said Fujimori should be released within a few days.

Fujimori, who was president from 1990 to 2000, is serving the

25-year sentence for two massacres committed by army death squads in 1991 and 1992, in which 25 people, including a child, were killed in supposed anti-terrorist operations. Upon leaving office he fled into exile in Japan, where his parents were from.

But he was extradited back to Peru from Chile in 2007 and jailed, having been convicted in his absence. The source said the vote on whether to release Fujimori was equally split three for and three against. “The rules say that when it is a draw, the president’s vote counts double,” the source told AFP. “It was a very open, very intense decision with two radically different positions” with regards whether to release Fujimori on health grounds, Eloy Espinosa, one of the six supreme court magistrates, told RPP radio station.—AFP ■

Russian President holds a meeting on socioeconomic support for regions



The policy of containing and weakening Russia, including through economic isolation, or a blockade, is a premeditated long-term strategy, Putin said. **PHOTO: KREMLIN.RU/XINHUA**

THE world is now paying for the West's attempts to maintain its elusive dominance by any means possible, Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

"They are using economic, financial, trade and other sanctions against Russia as weapons, but these sanctions have backfired in Europe and in the United States

where prices of gasoline, energy and food have shot up, and jobs in the industries associated with the Russian market have been cut," Putin said on Wednesday during a meeting on providing socioeconomic support for the country's regions, according to the Kremlin.

The policy of containing and

weakening Russia, including through economic isolation, or a blockade, is a premeditated long-term strategy, he added.

"Imposing sanctions is the logical continuation and the distillation of the irresponsible and short-sighted policy of the US and EU countries' governments and central banks," he said, adding that they have driven up global inflation in recent years and caused rising global poverty and greater inequality across the world. Putin reiterated that the movement of Russian forces against Kyiv and other cities is not aimed at occupying Ukraine.

"We had no alternative for self-defence, for ensuring Russia's security, to this special military operation. We will certainly ensure the security of Russia and our people and will never allow Ukraine to be a bridgehead for aggressive actions against our country," Putin said.—Xinhua ■

Zelensky lists 6 priorities at peace talks with Russia

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelensky has listed six priorities during peace talks with Russia, the presidential press service reported.

"My priorities in the negotiations are absolutely clear: the end of the war; security guarantees, sovereignty, restoration of territorial integrity, real guarantees for our country, real protection for our country," Zelensky said while addressing the nation on Thursday.

The negotiations between Ukraine and Russia are continuing, Zelensky said.

Ukrainian and Russian delegations started their fourth round of negotiations on Monday via video link.

On Wednesday, Ukrainian Presidential Advisor Mykhailo



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky inspects the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine at the frontline of defense in Donbass, eastern Ukraine, 8 April 2021. **PHOTO: UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA/FILE**

Podolyak said that Zelensky might hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the coming days.

On Friday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that a meeting between Putin and Zelensky is possible.—Xinhua ■

EU greenlights Frontex deployment to Moldova

THE European Union and Moldova agreed Thursday to deploy EU border agency Frontex agents to help the impoverished nation handle refugees pouring in from war-torn Ukraine, the EU commission said.

Of the more than three million people who have fled Ukraine since the Russian invasion on 24 February, some 350,000 people have crossed the border into Moldova, the United Nations says.

"Moldovan border guards are facing challenges both in view of the high number of arrivals and sharing a border with an active war zone," the EU commission said in a statement.—AFP ■

NEWS DIGEST

Russian forces strike Lviv airport area in west Ukraine: mayor

Russian forces struck an area around Lviv's airport in western Ukraine, Mayor Andriy Sadovyi said on Friday, with ambulance and police vehicles racing to the scene.

Writing on messaging app Telegram, Sadovyi said he could not give a precise address of the targeted area "but it's definitely not an airport." The work in subgroups will continue during the break, he added.

Japan to slap new sanctions on Russia defence officials over Ukraine

TOKYO - Japan said Friday it will freeze assets of 15 Russian individuals and nine organizations, including the head of the GRU military intelligence service and deputy defense ministers, as it extends its sanctions regime amid Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine. The fresh measure, which targets GRU chief Igor Kostyukov and arms exporter Rosoboronexport among others, brings the number of Russian individuals and groups subject to Japan's sanctions to a total of 95.

Japan begins accepting war-fleeing Ukrainians without guarantor

TOKYO - Japan on Friday started granting entry to Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion even if they do not have a relative or acquaintance in Japan who can act as a guarantor, the government said.

The change to the original policy of requiring displaced persons to have a guarantor was made at a meeting of relevant ministries and agencies given the humanitarian crisis that has led millions of Ukrainians to flee the country due to the ongoing war.

Renowned US economist says sanctions cause damage, unlikely to succeed

Sanctions, which cause considerable damage, are "unlikely" to succeed in achieving political aims, a renowned US economist has said.

"The United States and the EU are very energetic in the imposition of sanctions, trade barriers, technology barriers, and financial barriers towards Russia ... I do not agree with this," Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Centre for Sustainable Development at Columbia University and a senior United Nations advisor, has told Xinhua. Perceiving sanctions as Washington's widely used instrument, Sachs said, "the rampant use of extra-territorial sanctions and secondary sanctions is unlikely to succeed in their political aims (of the US government), but do cause considerable damage."

US strategically provokes Russia, neutralizes Europe to consolidate influence zones: expert

PROVOKING Russia and neutralizing Europe are the "two pillars" of the US strategy in Europe in a bid to consolidate US spheres of influence, which has partly resulted in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, a Portuguese expert has said.

The United States "seeks to consolidate zones of influence at all costs, which guarantees trade facilities for its companies and access to raw materials," sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos said in a recent article in the Portuguese newspaper Publico.

SOURCE: XINHUA/AFP/KYODO

AFF release Futsal Championship fixtures for team Myanmar



The Myanmar Futsal Team players pose for a group photo with team authorities and coaches. **PHOTO: MFF**

THE ASEAN Football Federation has recently announced fixtures for the 2022 ASEAN Futsal Championship to be played by Myanmar Futsal Team.

The tournament will be hosted by Thailand from 2 to 10 April.

Myanmar is falling in the Group B with Viet Nam, Timor Leste and Australia while host Thailand is placed in Group A with Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia and Brunei.

Group matches will be held from 2 to 6 April, with Group B matches including Myanmar will start on 4 April.

According to the match schedule, team Myanmar will play against Viet Nam on 4 April, Australia on 5 April and Timor-Leste on 6 April.

The Myanmar squad is falling in the strong group with Viet Nam and Australia, and thus all the matches are important for team Myanmar to advance to the semi-finals, Myanmar Futsal officials said.

According to the schedule, the semi-final matches will be played on 8 April while the final and third-place matches will be held on 10 April.

The Myanmar team is cur-

rently competing in the Thai Invitational Futsal Championship in Thailand in preparation for the tournament and has reached the semi-finals.

Team Myanmar will continue taking training in Thailand after the Thai Invitational and will compete in the ASEAN Championship.

The winners, first-runners up and second-runners up of this tourney will directly enter the Asian Cup Futsal Championship to be held in September this year, according to the ASEAN Futsal authorities. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

'Living legend' Zlatan Ibrahimovic comes to the silver screen

EVEN though he's still an active player, a new film premiering Friday is attempting to tell the story of Swedish footballer Zlatan Ibrahimovic by focusing on the star's childhood growing up in a poor part of the city of Malmo. Ibrahimovic, Sweden's most successful player, still plays for AC Milan at age 40, and is known for his bravado and swagger, standing in contrast to his typically more humble compatriots.

After starting out with Sweden's Malmo FF in 1999, he has gone on to play for major teams including Ajax, Juventus, Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester United. Pitched as a "true un-

derdog story," the movie "Jag ar Zlatan" (I am Zlatan), which premieres Friday, is based on the autobiographical book of the same name, but director Jens Sjogren told AFP that he wanted to hone in on the player's early years.

"When I read the first chapters of the book I thought of my own childhood," Sjogren said, adding that by focusing on the young Zlatan the movie is likely to appeal to not just those who have followed "Ibra's" football career. "Even though Zlatan had a rough childhood at times we have all been children and struggled with different things," the 45-year-old director said.—AFP ■



Film posters are pictured prior to the gala premiere of the film 'I Am Zlatan'. **PHOTO: JONATHAN NACKSTRAND/AFP**

Australia's World Cup hopes hit as coach tests positive for Covid



Australia coach Graham Arnold has tested positive for Covid-19. **PHOTO: AFP**

AUSTRALIA suffered a major setback Friday ahead of their must-win World Cup qualifier against Japan next week with coach Graham Arnold testing positive for Covid-19.

Australia were already missing star playmaker Aaron

Mooy after he too tested positive and was ruled out of the clash in Sydney on 24 March.

Arnold took a PCR test on Thursday ahead of his arrival in the team camp, with the result meaning he needs to self-isolate for seven days.

As long as he tests negative on the day of the match, the 58-year-old would be out in time to be on the sidelines.

"Until his period of self-isolation concludes, Arnold will remain connected to Australia's squad and staff digitally," Football Australia said.

The Socceroos meet four-time Asian champions Japan ahead of a showdown with Saudi Arabia in Jeddah five days later.

They need to win both matches to ensure automatic qualification for the World Cup in Qatar later this year. Japan will book their spot if they beat the Socceroos.

Australia are three points adrift of Japan, with first-placed Saudi Arabia a further point ahead in Asian Group B.

Regardless of the results, Australia are guaranteed to finish at least third and move to a play-off against the third-placed team in Asian Group A.—AFP ■