

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMMAR

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Tuesday, 22 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 Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives ASEAN Special Envoy to Myanmar, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia Mr Prak Sokhonn, ASEAN Secretary-General Dato Lim Jock Hoi

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received ASEAN Special Envoy to Myanmar, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia Mr Prak Sokhonn and ASEAN Secretary-General Dato Lim Jock Hoi at the Credentials Hall of the Office of the State Administration Council Chairman, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they openly exchanged views on the pathways of Myanmar entering the multiparty democratic system in 2010, serving the State responsibilities by the SAC under the 2008 Constitution, which was enacted by a referendum, due to the voting fraud in the 2020 multiparty general election, protests evolved into violence sparked by political dissents, murder cases without any reasons, mine attacks on government buildings and schools, security measures of the SAC to ensure the lives and prosperity of the people, implementations on the Five-Point Consensus of ASEAN, distribu-



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives ASEAN Special Envoy to Myanmar Mr Prak Sokhonn and ASEAN Secretary-General Dato Lim Jock Hoi at the Credentials Hall of the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

tion of humanitarian assistance for Myanmar people, ways to promote ASEAN cooperation and further outcomes to be received through the meeting of the first

official mission.

Present on the occasion were SAC Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Ko Ko

Hlaing, and the deputy ministers, Cambodian Minister of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation Mr Kitti Setta Pandita Cham Prasidh, ASEAN Secretary-Gen-

eral Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Cambodian deputy ministers, Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chhouk Bunna and relevant officials. — MNA

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin receives the special envoy of the ASEAN Chair

PAGE-4

NATIONAL

Union Government Office Union Minister meets Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister

PAGE-5

NATIONAL

MNREC Union Minister attends Int'l Day of Forests event

PAGE-6

NATIONAL

CBM launches course to issue remittance licence, combat unofficial hundi business

PAGE-7

LOCAL BUSINESS

Myeik tourism businesses near extinct on hike fuel prices

PAGE-10

Objectives of 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

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

Judgements passed on 2 special criminal appeal cases; 5 special civil appeal cases heard

A special appeal tribunal consisting of Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo and Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union U Myo Tint, U Khin Maung Gyi, U Tin Hun and Daw Khin May Yi that convened yesterday morning at the room No 1 of the Supreme Court of the Union passed the judgements on a total of two special criminal appeal cases, special criminal appeal

case No 8/2021 (Bago) and 9/2021 (Mandalay). In addition, a total of five special civil appeal cases, special appeal case No 17/2020 (Yangon), 18/2020 (Yangon), 15/2020 (Mandalay), 4/2021 (Ayeyawady) and 5/2021 (Ayeyawady) were heard keeping in line with the COVID-19 prevention and control guidelines. — MNA

298 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 21 March, total figure rises to 609,288

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **609,288** after **298** new cases were reported on 21 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **565,156** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at **19,425** without casualties yesterday. —MNA

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

Special envoy to Myanmar of the ASEAN Chair and Secretary-General of ASEAN arrive in Nay Pyi Taw

U Kyaw Myo Htut, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar welcomed Mr Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia

and special envoy to Myanmar of the ASEAN Chair and Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN who are visiting Myanmar, in the morning of 21 March 2022 at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport.—MNA



Public Notification

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

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

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

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

Public Notification

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

Regarding the "request for money from departmental organizations in conducting trade", the following numbers can be reached to safely report such information.

Auto telephone number - 067 409 881
Mobile phone - 09 699611116
Fax - 067 409 887
Email address - antiillegaltradeoffice@gmail.com

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

Situation on Peacemaking Process

THE National Unity and Peace Restoration Coordination Committee, the Work Committee and the Negotiation Committee were formed to carry out the tasks to ensure national unity and perpetual peace. Our coordination committee has met NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations 16 times, non-NCA signatory EAOs nine times, political parties seven times and the religious leaders and peace negotiators two times, totalling 34.

Tatmadaw issued 20 statements for a ceasefire from 21 December 2018 to 28 February 2022. A joint declaration after the meeting with the Cambodian Prime Minister in early 2022 mentioned that the ceasefire will last for the end of this year.

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

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing pays homage to remains of late State Ovadacariya Chairman of Shwegyin Nikaya Dhipati Presiding Sayadaw Dhamma Senapati 15th Shwegyin Sangharaja Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhaddanta Vijjota of Vijjotayon Monastery

THE State Ovadacariya Chairman of Shwegyin Nikaya Dhipati Presiding Sayadaw Dhamma Senapati 15th Shwegyin Sangharaja Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhaddanta Vijjota of Vijjotayon Monastery in Mayangon Township of Yangon Region passed away on Sunday.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, accompanied by SAC Member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe, Religious Affairs and Culture Union Minister U Ko Ko, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung, senior military officers of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Office and the Yangon Command Commander among others paid homage to the body of late Sayadaw yesterday.

First, the Senior General and party paid homage to Shwegyin Nikaya Upa Chairman Maha Nayaka Joint Shwegyin Sangharaja Chancellor of Sitagu World Buddhist Academies Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Agga Maha Pandita Maha Dhammakathika Bahujana Hitadhara Sitagu Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nyanissara and donated K10 million to organize the final rites of late Sayadaw.



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing pays homage to remains of late State Ovadacariya Chairman of Shwegyin Nikaya Dhipati Presiding Sayadaw in Yangon on 21 March 2022.

The Senior General and members then paid homage to the remains of late Sayadaw and instructed the necessary things regarding the final rites.

They listened to the sermons delivered by the Sitagu Sayadaw, sharing merits gained and signing in the Sanvega record book.

The Shwegyin Nikaya Dhipati Chairman Sayadaw was born to U Nu and Daw Htwa in Sarsin Ward of Mudon Township in Mon State on the 7th Waxing of

Taboung, Wednesday 1291 ME.

The Sayadaw-to-be became novice under the lead of Sayadaw Bhaddanta Zavana of Kyauk Wine Monastery of Mudon Township in 1304 ME. In 1311 ME, the Sayadaw was honoured into monkhood at Thilavisaw Dhani Buddhist Ordination Hall of Kantha Kyaung Thit Monastery of Bahan with the religious efforts of U Pe Thein and Daw Kyin Yan.

The Sayadaw completed the Dip.BD and Sasana Dhaja Siri Pavara Dhammasariya Si-

yawmani and taught the Buddhist literature to the monks and novices at Vijjawtayan Monastery. The Sayadaw renovated the religious buildings and also served as Ovadacariya Sayadaw of the pagoda board of trustees of the Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Pagoda and the Tooth Relic Pagoda, Township Sangha Nayaka (Shwegyin) Chairman, State Sangha Central Working Committee member, State Vinido, 15th Shwegyin Sangharaja and State Ovadacariya Sayadaw.

For such continuous efforts in the religious sector, the government conferred Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru title to Sayadaw in 1379 ME and Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja title in 1382 ME.

The Sayadaw passed away at the age of 93 and 73 Vasa on 20 March 2022, the 4th Waning of Taboung, Sunday at 2:12 am.

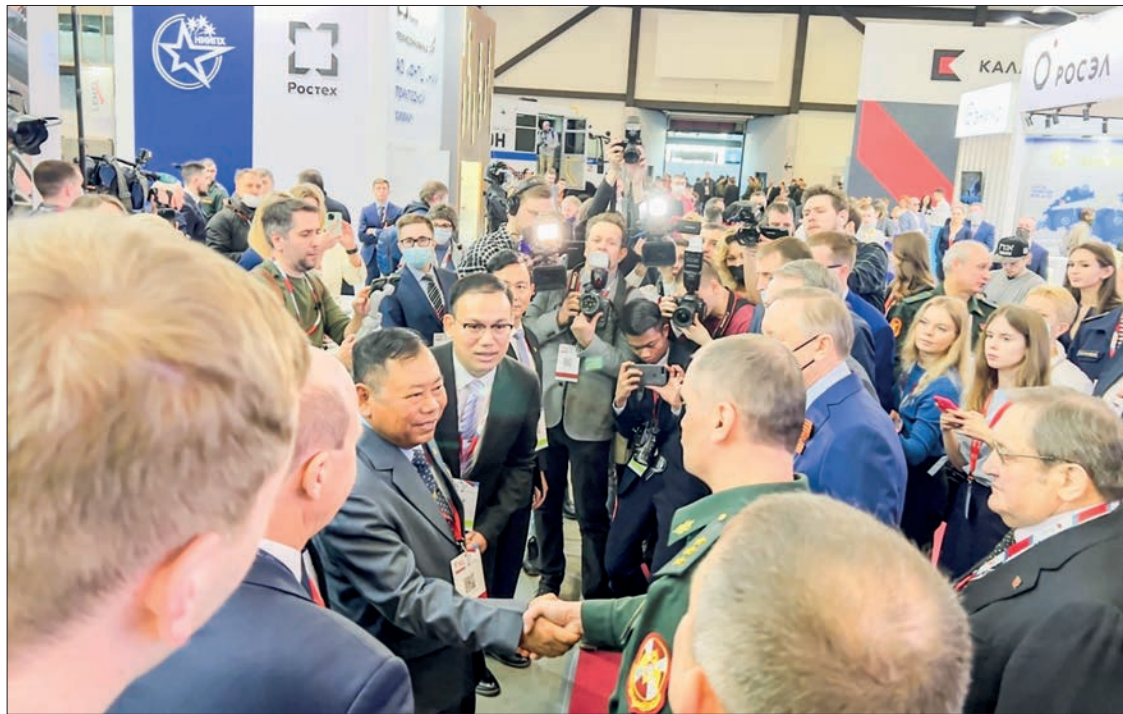
The final rites will be held at 1:00 pm on 22 March following the COVID-19 health rules. — MNA

Home Affairs Minister attends EXPOTECXNOSTRAZH-2022 in Russia

AT the special invitation of the Russian Federation, the Myanmar delegation consisting of Senior Police Officers led by Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut attended the EXPOTECXNOSTRAZH-2022, International Advanced Technology Exhibition on Community and National Security, held from 16 to 18 March in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

The delegation accompanied by the Myanmar Military Attaché to Russia arrived at the Expo-Forum compound on the morning of 16 March and were welcomed by officials from the ROSOBORONEXPORT.

At the meeting with Mr Yalubov Evgenig, Director for Special Commissions of ROSOBORONEXPORT, Myanmar officials discussed forms of technology and products that can systematically implement security at the individual, community and national levels in line with international standards, the use of advanced information technology in combatting violence, drug and gang crimes. They also cordially discussed matters related to



MoHA Union Minister Lt-Gen Soe Htut joins the EXPOTECXNOSTRAZH-2022 event in Russia.

enhancing cooperation with the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In the afternoon, the delegation studied the use of technology and products displayed at the international advanced technology exhibition and the demonstration of advanced counter-terrorism and security capabilities and security and forensic investigations

with trained dogs.

The delegation led by the Union minister also attended the opening ceremony of the EXPOTECXNOSTRAZH-2022 at the building on the morning of 17 March. After the ceremony, Officials led by Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard Troops of the Russian Federation Col-Gen

Aleksey Stepanovich Bezzubikov came to greet the Union minister and talked cordially about the exhibition.

Afterwards, the Union minister and party observed the technical inspections of export/import containers of various countries at the International Port in St. Petersburg and the

Deputy Director-General of the port explained the inspection process. In the afternoon, the delegation was received by the officials led by the managing director of the LLC Special Technological Centre. The meeting discussed cooperation on security, inspections and cyber technology. Afterwards, engineers and experts explained in detail the inventions for cybersecurity and rapid investigation in PowerPoint.

On 18 March, the Union minister and party visited the JSC Center-Infom in St. Petersburg and observed the explanations by centre officials on the use of technology in the fight against various crimes.

The EXPOTECXNOSTRAZH-2022 is a programme that explains modern technology to resolve conflicts in the community including terrorism, drugs and crimes, cross-border crimes, matters related to national security and the rule of law under International Law and UN Conventions.

The Union minister and party arrived back in Yangon on 20 March. — MNA

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin receives the special envoy of the ASEAN Chair



The MoFA Union Minister receives the Special Envoy to Myanmar.



The MoFA Union Minister hosts dinner for the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair.

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received Mr Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia and special envoy to Myanmar of the ASEAN Chair and Mr Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of

ASEAN at 2:00 pm on 21 March 2022 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, Union Minister explained that the implementation of the five-point consensus must be a Myanmar-owned and Myanmar-led process. He also highlighted that the special envoy's first visit to Myanmar would pave the way

for confidence-building and understanding to promote cooperation in ASEAN. On the implementation of the five-point consensus, Union Minister reiterated that Myanmar is committed to continuing its cooperation with the ASEAN and that Myanmar's commitment was shown in deeds since the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting

in Jakarta.

Senior Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also attended the meeting.

Later in the evening, Union Minister hosted dinner for the special envoy of the ASEAN Chair and Secretary-General of ASEAN at the M Gallery Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA

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Union Government Office Union Minister meets Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister

MEMBER of the State Administration Council Union Minister for Office of the Union Government Ministry (1) Chairman of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiating Committee Lt-Gen Yar Pyae received a delegation led by Special Envoy to Myanmar of ASEAN Chair, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia Mr Prak Sokhonn at the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Centre in Nay Pyi Taw at 4 pm yesterday.

During the meeting, Member of the State Administration

Council Union Minister for Office of the Union Government Ministry (1) Chairman of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiating Committee Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and Special Envoy to Myanmar of ASEAN Chair, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia Mr Prak Sokhonn first exchanged introductory talks one another.

Afterwards, the two sides exchanged views on the implementation of the peace process in Myanmar and discussed the situation of national unity and peace in Myanmar. —MNA



Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing receives special envoy of the ASEAN Chair



U Ko Ko Hlaing, Union Minister for International Cooperation and Chairman of the Task Force to facilitate the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar received Mr Prak Sokhonn, Special envoy to Myanmar of ASEAN Chair, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia and Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN at 3:00 pm on 21 March 2022 at the Ministry of International Cooperation in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the Meeting, Union Minister and special envoy exchanged views on the implementation of the provision of human-

itarian assistance to Myanmar for Phase-1 and preparations for Phase-2, as well as other issues of mutual interest.

The Meeting was attended by Dr Thet Khaing Win, Union Minister for Health and the Vice-Chairman of the Task Force, Dr Daw Thet Thet Khine, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Vice-Chairperson of the Task Force, U Kyaw Myo Htut, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and senior officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.—MNA

Union Health Minister meets delegation led by ASEAN Secretary-General

UNION Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win received a delegation led by ASEAN Secretary-General Dato Lim Jock Hoi at the Union Minister's guest hall of the Ministry of Health in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed the supply of COVID-19 vaccines to Myanmar by the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund.

From November 2021, more than 50 types of medicines and medical supplies worth USD1,188,748 have been distributed to 58 hospitals and 17 regional and state public health departments through

the ASEAN AHA Centre and the Myanmar Red Cross Society to provide humanitarian assistance to COVID-19 preventive measures in Myanmar as the first and second grants, the Union Minister underlined.

Conditions for collaborating for the third grant and medical treatment and vaccination supervised by the Ministry of Health for the COVID-19 disease prevention, control and treatment activities were also discussed.

The Ministry and the ASEAN Secretariat held a cordial exchange of views on further cooperation in the provision of



the COVID-19 vaccines and took a group photo.

The deputy minister, the directors-general and responsible persons, the

ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General, senior officials from the ASEAN Secretariat and officials from the ASEAN AHA Centre attended the ceremony. — MNA

MNREC Union Minister attends Int'l Day of Forests event



The International Day of Forests event in progress in Nay Pyi Taw.

THE Department of Forest Research in Nay Pyi Taw held a ceremony to celebrate International Day of Forests yesterday morning, and Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi attended and addressed the ceremony.

While addressing the ceremony, the Union Minister highlighted the sustainability of forests and environmental services which play an important role in tackling environmental issues, adding the formation of the International Day of Forests. He stressed the need to emphasize the sustainable conservation and systematic exploitation of forest resources in line with this year's theme "Forests and Sustainable Production and Consumption".

He said plans are underway to expand nature reserves to 10 per cent of the country's area and permanent forest areas to 30 per cent of the country's area in order to reduce deforestation and make forest sustainable. The government has also stopped logging and reduced produc-

tion, as well as log exports, and is working to increase the production of value-added sawmills for the full and efficient use of the products and to develop wood-based industries.

He also called on relevant departments, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, and the people to work together for long-term sustainability and systematic logging.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister attended the coordination meeting on the review of the implementation completed by the State/Region Department of Forest in the 2021-2022 financial year and for the successful implementation of the activities to be carried out in the 2022-2023 financial year. — MNA

MoC Union Minister inspects roads, bridges construction, maintenance works

UNION Minister for Construction U Shwe Lay inspected roads and bridges construction and maintenance work under the road network development project in Delta areas of Ayeyawady Region on 19 and 20 March.

Firstly, the Union minister and party inspected the upgrading of Yangon-Pathein Road and the concrete upgrading works of the mile Kyonkanaung-Pantanaw-Shwelaung-Wakema Road. He instructed officials to meet set standards in the concrete-paving works and build box culverts, small bridges in necessary places according to the road design and the road shoulder after concrete-paving works. The Union minister also inspected the concrete-paving works by machine between Milepost 13/0 and 13/1.

Afterwards, the Union minister and party arrived at the construction site of the old cable-stayed bridge Panmawady



The Union Construction Minister inspects the renovation works at the Maha Pasana Cave in Yangon.

Bridge (Myinkaseik) on the Pathein-Kankon-Myinkaseik-Myaungmya Road, which is to be upgraded to a 1,260-foot-long concrete bridge and officials briefed the construction work at the briefing hall.

The Union minister said that the roads are at present being upgraded and at the same time weak cable-stayed bridges are needed to be upgraded

as concrete bridges using the technical designs of skilled engineers. He called on officials to emphasize meeting set standards.

After that, the Union minister and party inspected the strength of the cable tower, the suspensions and the main section of the old cable-stayed bridge in Pathein and coordinated the necessary things.



Next, he looked around the new Pathein Bridge and the Strand Road.

On 20 March, the Union minister and party inspected the maintenance and concrete-paving of Road No. 10 Bogale-Mawlamyinegyun-Kyonemange-Wakema-Myaungmya Road under the road network development project in Delta areas of the Ayeyawady

Region.

Union Minister U Shwe Lay arrived at the major renovation site of the Maha Pasana Cave at Kaba Aye Hill, Mayangon Township in Yangon and officials explained the renovation works at the construction project hall.

The Union minister inspected the renovation works at the Maha Pasana Cave and gave necessary instructions. — MNA

MoC Deputy Minister inspects construction of roads, bridges, urban housings

DEPUTY Minister for Construction U Min Htein inspected the Phayagyi-Kyaikto-Thaton-Mawlamyine Road section carried out by Shwe Than Lwin Highway Co Ltd by the (BOT) system on the morning of 19 March.

He pointed out installing safety signs for travellers for ensuring safety, maintaining roads and bridges to be strong by regu-

larly inspecting, extending roads and bridges, upgrading roads and building mile-stones. Then he instructed officials to follow the work process in line with the B.O.T rules and regulations.

Next, the deputy minister and party arrived at the Mon State High Court Project Hall and instructed officials to pay special attention as per

set standards in line with the Court's features and to install energy-saving technologies in the electrical sector. Then, he viewed around the construction site.

The Mon State High Court is the 240x240 feet, RCC 3-storey annexe building and the project is undertaken by the special construction task force 13 of the

Ministry of Construction.

Afterwards, the deputy minister and party inspected the completion of the four-storey quadruplex civil service housing in Mawlamyine, Mon State. He also met departmental personnel at the Mon State Highways Department on 20 March and gave necessary instructions.

Next, the deputy minister

inspected the Eindu-Kawkareik Road. At the construction site of the Gyine-Kawkareik Bridge, the deputy minister stressed that the bridge is located on the East-West Economic Corridor and is very important for border trade. He urged officials to maintain ongoing construction works with momentum and ensure the safety of the workplace. — MNA

CBM launches course to issue remittance licence, combat unofficial hundi business

A launching ceremony of the regulatory compliance training course (Third Batch) for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) was convened at the Central Bank of Myanmar (Yangon Branch) on 21 March 2022.

Present at the opening ceremony were CBM Governor U Than Nyein, Deputy Governor U Win Thaw, the directors-general and officials concerned, officials from the Bureau of Special Investigation, Financial Intelligence Unit and Myanmar Banks Association, directors of the authorized companies holding remittance licences and trainees.

CBM governor delivered



The Central Bank of Myanmar opens the regulatory compliance training course (Third Batch) for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) in Yangon yesterday.

that the CBM has been continuously conducting regulatory compliance training courses regarding AML/CFT. This effort is to control the hundi business, an informal money transfer system, promote a formal channel for remittance service and increase the country's revenue, following

the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and combat an informal money transfer business and develop official channels. The CBM has released the rules and regulations to issue the licence for formal remittance services. This course aims for the professionals

and financing operators to earn a certificate in regulatory compliance for AML/CFT and raise awareness of risk management practices to detect and prevent activities in remittance services. The course will focus on requirements and compliance matters. Those authorized companies are

also to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations in running the remittance transaction business.

Next, the deputy governor also elaborated matters on completion of the first and second batch the objectives of the course and the course curriculum. He also motivated the trainees to effectively participate in the course as it will bring many benefits to the trainees whether they apply for a remittance licence or not. He encouraged them to accomplish the course and produce fruitful results.

That course is opened from 21 March to 1 April 2022 at the CBM's Yangon Branch and the number of trainees totalled 70 in the third batch. — MNA

Deep Depression Warning No 12, 2022

Issued at 11 pm on 21-3-2022

ACCORDING to the observations at 9:30 pm yesterday, the deep depression over North Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal has moved North wards and now lies over North Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal and East central Bay of Bengal. It is centred at about (35) Nautical miles East of Coco Island, about (120) Nautical miles South of Hainggyikyun, about (170) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Pathein, about (270) Nautical miles South of Thandwe, about (245) Nautical miles West of Dawei, about (260) Nautical miles Southwest of Mawlamyine, about (215) Nautical miles Southwest of Yangon (Myanmar), about (155) Nautical miles Northeast of Port Blair and about (90) Nautical miles Northeast of Mayabundar (India).

It will move towards from near Coco Island to Deltaic Ayeyawady, Myanmar the present stage of the depression is coded orange stage.

Position of deep depression, centre pressure and wind

Deep depression is located at Latitude (14.0) degree North and Longitude (94.0) degree East, centre pressure of depression is (1000) hPa and maximum wind speed near the centre is (45) miles

per hour at 9:30 pm on 21 March 2022.

During next (48) hrs forecast

The deep depression is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm during next (12) hrs. It is likely continuous to move Northwards and may lead near Hainggyikyun, Ayeyawady Region in the Morning of (22.3.2022) and cross near Thandwe, Rakhine coast, Myanmar in the morning of (23.3.2022).

General caution

Due to the deep depression, rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread to widespread in Naypyitaw, Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin, Mon States with regionally and isolated heavy falls in some Regions and States during 21.3.2022 to (23.3.2022).

Frequently squalls with rough to very rough seas will be off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (45) m.p.h. Wave height will be about (11-16) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

While the deep depression moving North Wards near Coco Island, maximum wind speed may reach (35) mph.

The deep depression may lead near

Hainggyikyun, Ayeyawady Region in the Morning of (22.3.2022) and maximum wind speed may reach (50-55) mph and in Ayeyawady and Yangon Regions.

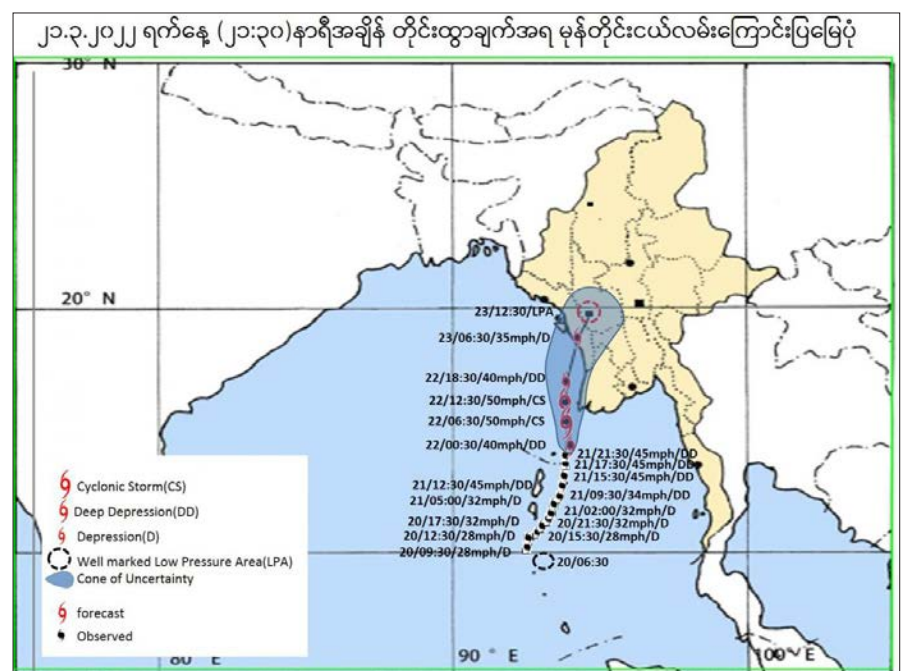
The deep depression may lead near Rakhine coast in the morning of (23.3.2022) and maximum wind speed may reach (40-45) mph.

When crossing the cyclonic storm, storm surge height will be (10)ft to (14) ft in Estuary and Tributaries at Pathein District, Labutta District, Myaungmya

District, Maubin District, Phyapon District, Ayeyawady Region.

Advisory

Due to the deep depression, people should be aware rain or thundershowers with strong wind, lightning, flash floods in small streams and mountain streams and landslides in the mountainous areas and domestic flight, trawlers, vessels and ships in off and along Myanmar Coasts. — Department of Meteorology and Hydrology



Daily newspapers available online

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Cultivate hybrid sunflower, consume sunflower oil

NOWADAYS, prices of cooking oil are on the rise in the domestic market day by day. But cooking oil is essential in the cooking process of Myanmar meals. Despite practising the thrift of using cooking oil, Myanmar people consume small and large volumes of cooking oil on a daily basis.

Currently, Myanmar cultivates more than eight million acres of edible oil crops per year; oil mills produce just 300,000 tonnes of edible oil per year. In fact, the country requires some 1.2 million tonnes of edible oil on a yearly basis. Hence, both the government and businesspersons import edible oil crops such as sunflower oil, vegetable oil, palm oil and others yearly.

In order to cut the import of edible oil, the government makes arrangements for local farmers to grow sunflowers for the production of sunflower oil. In so doing, Magway Region decided

to grow more than 100,000 acres of monsoon sunflower and 300,000 acres of cold season sunflower at the special zone and mixed and double cropping areas, totalling more than 400,000 acres. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation arranges cultivation of 1.5 million acres of monsoon, cold season and hybrid sunflower plantations to enable the people to consume healthy oil at fair prices.

Although Myanmar produces millions of baskets of edible crops on a yearly basis, it still imports 768,000 tonnes of palm oil in the 2017-2018 financial year, 370,000 tonnes of palm oil in the mini-budget of 2018, 855,000 tonnes in 2018-2019 FY, 888,000 tonnes in 2019-2020 FY and more than 800,000 tonnes in 2020-21 FY.

The Myanmar Seed Committee approved Yezin hybrid-1, foreign hybrid species and Hsin Shwekyar-2 for hybrid sunflower strains for farmer's choice cultivation in the country. Sunflower comprises vitamin E, folic acid, magnesium and other elements contributing to the health of consumers.

More than 2.8 million acres of croplands are placed under groundnut plants, 3.8 million acres of lands under sesame and some 600,000 acres under sunflower, totalling over 7.6 million acres. At this juncture, an acre of groundnut can yield 186 kilos of oil, sesame 91 kilos of sesame and 288 kilos of sunflowers.

That is why all the people need to change consumption of cooking oil from hybrid sunflower while farmers should choose hybrid sunflower strains for cultivation so as to cut import volume of cooking oil as well as foreign exchange.

No scientific reason to predict COVID 4th wave in India: Virologist Dr Jacob John

Amid talks of a possible fourth COVID wave in June, virologist Dr T Jacob John said that there is no "scientific, epidemiological, or virological reason to predict the wave." John, a former professor of CMC Vellore, added, "Nobody can predict that it will not happen, but we can say the probability is extremely low but we've to be vigilant."



As India's COVID-19 caseload continues to fall, many remain braced for a fourth wave of infections. Eminent virologist Dr T Jacob John however opined on Saturday that the chances of a fresh spike in cases was low. He however stressed the need to remain vigilant, noting that the possibility could not be ruled out completely. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ANI

EMINENT virologist and Former Professor, Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore Dr T Jacob John on Saturday said that the chances of the fourth COVID-19 wave are low, however, he stressed the need to remain vigilant.

Talking to ANI in an exclusive interview, Dr John said, "the chances of the fourth COVID-19 wave is low but nobody can predict it will not happen."

He added, "there is no scientific, epidemiological reason to predict a fourth COVID-19 wave but nobody can predict that it will not happen. I can say the probability is extremely low."

He further stressed that it is important to be vigilant and cautious. There is a need to keep looking at the viruses and their genetic sequences and see if there are any new variants appearing and if any variants are overtaking Omicron locally in more places, he added.

Dr John also said that he doesn't believe in predicting waves based on mathematical modelling.

"I do not understand how fear needs to be inculcated in human beings and for what purposes. So I don't believe in predicting a wave based on mathematical modelling. I told you about the problems of mathematical modelling that computers had with type two polio vaccines. Mathematical modelling is good if all the elements that go into the mathematical modelling are good. So, there is no need to be fearful of the wave."

He said that had he been asked the question in 2020 on whether the virus behaves differently, then he would have replied in the negative. However, he said that now in the year 2022, there is a lot of information about this virus, on how it behaves and how variants are created, and so on. "There is enough information to be confident about predicting the future, he stated.

"People don't understand one thing Omicron was totally unpredictable. It is not from Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Kappa, Omicron has an unknown pathway of location. I'm saying this because if a similar unknown pathway or mutation resulted in a variant will that be more transmissible? I doubt. So, I am not at all agreeing with the prediction of the fourth wave, but I will not be categorically saying that there cannot be a fourth that is for us to wait and see," he added. As China reported a spike in COVID-19 cases he said, "we need not worry about what's happening there because the contexts are extremely different. China had a zero COVID policy. They aggressively tested, quarantined and kept the curve suppressed for a long time and so now Omicron is unstoppable, catches in Hong Kong, New Zealand, China, wherever the previous in Taiwan everywhere."

SOURCE: ANI

'Iron army' of grocery runners feeds Shanghai as Covid hits

As many Shanghai residents shelter from Covid at home, a common sight on the megacity's suddenly subdued streets is the racing, swerving scooters of food-delivery riders.

FIRMS including Meituan, Alibaba-owned Ele.me, Pinduoduo and Dingdong Maicai are struggling to keep up with a rush of orders from sequestered citizens in need of groceries and disinfectants.

At a sorting centre in central Shanghai run by Dingdong Maicai, staff are working overtime to handle double the demand of a week ago, when the metropolis of 25 million people began battening down the hatches.

Shanghai has so far avoided a citywide lockdown but authorities have closed school campuses, sealed off some residential compounds and launched a rigorous round of mass testing.

Dingdong Maicai has hired 300 additional staff across the city in recent days, some of them restaurant workers left idle by closures.

China's hordes of scooter delivery drivers were hailed as

national heroes two years ago when they kept untold millions fed during huge lockdowns when the virus first emerged.

The lessons learned from 2020 — and no small amount of bravado — have helped companies stay on top of the crush this time around.

"We are an iron army. Whatever artillery fire we face, we react quickly," said Zhang Yangyang, manager of the bustling yet tidy Dingdong sorting depot.

Since its initial outbreak faded two years ago, China has largely kept the virus under control through a tough zero-Covid strategy.

Although its national daily case number — 4,365 reported Friday — is unremarkable globally, it represents the country's worst uptick in infections since the start of the pandemic.

With the highly transmissible Omicron variant spreading, authorities have imposed stay-at-



Food runners report they are currently making up to 100 deliveries a day, which are often left outside housing complexes to avoid human contact. PHOTO: HECTOR RETAMAL/ AFP

home orders or other restrictions in several cities.

But unclear messaging about their plans has sowed public confu-

sion, helping to fuel binge-buying and the resulting burden on business managers like Zhang.

"I don't have a weekend,"

Zhang said.

China has one of the world's biggest and most developed ready-meal and grocery delivery

sectors.

Slick smartphone apps enable users to place one-click orders from virtually any restaurant or food store within a several-kilometre radius, with the apps even displaying the delivery rider's body temperature.

Food runners report they are currently making up to 100 deliveries a day, which are often left outside housing complexes to avoid human contact.

Dingdong Maicai staffer Li Yawu has found himself suddenly working up to 15 hours a day, after which he goes home to "soak my feet".

"It would be untrue to say I wasn't scared in the beginning," he said of delivering to neighbourhoods where Covid has taken hold.

"But when you deliver food into a user's hands and there is that much gratitude in their eyes... I don't feel scared anymore."

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 21 March, 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the deep depression over north Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal has moved northwards. It is centered at about (35) Nautical miles southeast of Coco Island, about (135) Nautical miles South of Hainggyikyun, about (180) Nautical miles south-southwest of Pathein, about (275) Nautical miles south of Thandwe, about (250) Nautical miles west of Dawei, about (265) nautical miles southwest of Mawlamyine, about (220) Nautical miles southwest of Yangon (Myanmar), about (150) Nautical miles northeast of Port Blair (India) and about (80) Nautical miles northeast of Mayabundar. Weather is cloudy over the Andaman Sea, southeast Bay and eastcentral Bay of Bengal and a few cloud to partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 22 March 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and (southern and eastern) Shan, Kayin, Mon states, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Rakhine, Kayah states, scattered in Magway region and northern Shan state and isolated in the remaining regions and states with regionally heavyfalls in Ayeyawady region and isolated heavyfalls in Bago, Yangon, Taninthayi regions and Kayin, Mon states. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Frequently squalls with rough to very rough seas will be off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (45) m.p.h. Wave height will be about (11-16) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

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

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 March 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

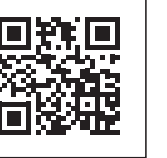
FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 March 2022: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 March 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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Myeik tourism businesses near extinct on hike fuel prices



One of the tourist destinations in Myeik Archipelago.

ONCE-POPULAR Myeik Archipelago destination in Taninthayi Region crowded with the visitors attract only the small number of visitors and tourism businesses have nearly come to a halt, said a tourism entrepreneur.

“Soaring fuel oil prices hinder the business as it added extra charges on motorboat ride to tour around the islands. The transport charges increase from K100,000 to 150,000 per person,” he continued.

The tourism business which seemed to revive one month ago turned out sluggish again due to the COVID situation and security concerns.

“Myeik Archipelago tourism

business has nearly stopped since 2020. Omicron variant and the political instability are contributing factors to the suspension of the business”, a tour operator quoted in his sayings.

There are 800 islands in Myeik Archipelago and the famous spots are Smart Island, Bailey Island, Kyalleik Island, Padan Island, Lay Island, Doneyaung-hmine Island and Don waterfall.

The enchanting coastline, picturesque views, natural pebble beach, sandy beach, observing the culture, tradition, customs and living styles of Salon people and Kayin ethnic people are the tourist attractions in the Myeik Archipelago. Addi-

tionally, the visitors can enjoy fun sporting activities such as cycling, swimming, diving and snorkelling, fishing, studying natural rainforest and fishing businesses.

Visitors rarely use road transport amid security concerns and the pandemic. Additionally, only those individuals who have an urgent case fly with flights to the Myeik Archipelago. The Islands tour does not have any customers, for now, said a tour operator.

There were approximately 40 tour companies who have been offering service to Myeik Islands. Now, only ten have survived. — Myint Oo (Myeik)/GNLM

Complaints to be filed against actions affecting financial market stability

COMPLAINTS can be filed against actions that can affect the stability of the financial market, according to a statement released by the Monitoring and Steering Committee on the Gold and Currency Market.

The state administration council has formed the Monitoring and Steering Committee on the Gold and Currency Market to control and stabilize domestic gold and currency prices, which are very important to domestic and foreign trades.

The committee has taken measures to form a complaint scrutiny team to assist in modifying the stability of domestic currency prices.

Thus, the financial market harming activities such as the illegal holding of foreign currency, illegal trade, manipulation, selling or transferring of the ownership of basic assets like property or cars, not complying with the payment restrictions of the Central Bank of Myanmar and being involved in changing

the cash with a percentage. If people find such activities, they shall complain to the complaint scrutiny team of the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market through email: gmm.complaint@cbm.gov.mm or phone: 067-3409463 or 09-43006833.

The objectives of the committee are to inspect and prosecute against market manipulation, check if there is compliance with payment rules or not, proceed against those unscrupulous

traders who intend to interfere with the free and fair operation of the market under the existing laws, rules and regulations in line with the official directives, illegal procurement of foreign currency, illegal trade and taking legal actions against price manipulators.

Currently, the pure gold price is around K2 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in the domestic market while the dollar Vs kyat exchange rate is around K 2,000 per dollar.

The pure gold price was up

to K2,220,000 per tical in September last year in the domestic market, while the US dollar exchange rate touched a high of above over K3,000 per dollar.

Under the guidance of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market was formed on 17 December 2021 as the gold and currency market stability play a crucial role in trade facilitation. — NN/GNLM

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, food items, consumer goods, vehicles seized

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

On 18 March, a combined inspection team led by the Secretary of the Yangon Region Anti-Illegal Trade Special Task Force conducted surprise checks at the Minlwin checkpoint in Hlegu Township, Yangon, and seized illegal cooking gas cylinders

(estimated value of K4,800,000) under the Customs Law.

A combined inspection team led by the Yangon Region Department of Forestry also conducted inspections and seized a six-wheel truck carrying 8.742 tonnes of illegal timbers (estimated value of K35,411,940) near Milestone (18/5) on the Yangon-Mandalay expressway in Hlegu Township under the Forest Law.



Confiscated illegal timbers in Bago Region and Yangon Region.



Seized consumer goods in Kayin State.



Similarly, on 20 March, fruits in excess of the import declaration (ID) (estimated value of K2,454,100) from two vehicles driven from Myawady to Mandalay were confiscated at the Mayanchaung Permanent Checkpoint.

Similarly, a 10-wheel truck carrying illegal food items (estimated value of K52,450,000) was seized at the Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) Combined Checkpoint in Kayin State and action is taken

under the Customs Law.

In addition, on 21 March, 34.3706 tonnes of illegal timbers (estimated value of K3,696,874) were seized in the Myautzarmari forest reserve in Thayawady District in Bago Region under the Forest Law.

Therefore, on 18, 20 and 21 March, a total of nine arrests was made (estimated value of K94,012,914), according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA

Hong Kong to lift ban on flights from nine countries

HONG Kong will resume international flights from the United States, Britain and seven other countries, the government said Monday as it announced a loosening of some of the world's toughest Covid-19 restrictions.

The finance hub has struggled to maintain China's zero-tolerance policy during an Omicron-fuelled outbreak that has sparked a huge surge in cases and put the city in the spotlight with one of the highest Covid fatality rates in the developed world.

After the highly transmissible variant fuelled a wave of cases, authorities banned flights from nine countries deemed high-risk — including the United States, Britain, France and India.

But infections climbed rapidly. Hong Kong has recorded more than a million cases and 5,900 deaths this year, with the bulk of the toll among its unvaccinated elderly population.

On Monday, Lam said Hong Kong will lift flight bans for the

nine countries from 1 April.

"The epidemic situations in those countries are not worse than Hong Kong's, and most arrivals did not have serious symptoms," she said during a press conference.

Hong Kong has also reduced the quarantine period for vaccinated arrivals starting 1 April to seven days in a designated hotel, followed by another seven days of at-home monitoring.

Currently, Hong Kong residents trying to return from most destinations face a two-week quarantine stay in expensive hotels.

Suspended mass testing

Lam's administration has been excoriated for its handling of the Covid crisis, with critics calling it unprepared despite two years of breathing room due to its low number of cases before Omicron hit in January.

Once the variant broke through, hospital wards were flooded with patients and morgues overcrowded with



People wait in a queue to check-in for their flight at Hong Kong International Airport in Hong Kong on 21 March 2022. PHOTO: AFP

bodies — leading to a coffin shortage last week.

Unclear public messaging from the government over mass testing and lockdowns has also fuelled bouts of panic-buying — leaving supermarkets shelves stripped bare.

Hong Kong, known as "Asia's World City", has seen a record exodus of foreign and local residents, with a net outflow of more than 134,000 people by mid-March.

On Monday, Lam said that a

previously floated plan to mass test Hong Kong's 7.4 million residents was "not appropriate" at this stage, given the city's limited resources.

"Our current opinion is to suspend it and whether we will do it depends on the development of the epidemic," the leader said.

Lam also announced that kindergartens, primary schools and international schools will resume in-person teaching from 19 April. — AFP ■

Saudi says Yemen rebel attacks 'threat' to oil supplies



This handout image released by the Saudi press Agency (SPA) shows a damaged car parked at an Aramco oil terminal in the southern Saudi border town of Jizan on 20 March 2022, following a "drone assault" the previous day on a petroleum products distribution terminal run by Aramco. PHOTO: AFP PHOTO / HO / SPA

TOP crude exporter Saudi Arabia warned Monday that Yemeni rebel attacks on the kingdom's oil facilities pose a "direct threat" to global supplies.

Saudi Arabia "will not incur any responsibility" for shortages in oil supplies in light of the Iran-backed Huthi attacks, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

These cross-border assaults are a "direct threat to the security of oil supplies in these extremely sensitive circumstances witnessed by the global energy markets", it added.

The statement comes a day after the kingdom acknowledged a temporary drop in production after the Huthis attacked a refinery with an armed drone.

It urged the international community to "stand firm" against the Huthi insurgents.

Oil prices have repeatedly spiked above \$100 per barrel lately, driven by supply concerns centred on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. They rose higher again on Monday. Brent crude was up more than four per cent at more than \$112 per barrel at one stage.

Analysts said the main mover of the market was news of the EU considering a ban on Rus-

sian oil imports, although the Huthi attacks on Aramco were also cited.

The drone assault on the YASREF refinery in Yanbu Industrial City on the Red Sea "led to a temporary reduction in the refinery's production", the Saudi energy ministry said Sunday.

It added that the drop would "be compensated for from the inventory", but did not provide numbers.

The Iran-backed Huthis, against whom Saudi Arabia leads a military coalition in Yemen, have repeatedly targeted the kingdom, including sites belonging to energy giant Aramco.

The Yemeni insurgents said on Sunday that they launched cross-border drone and missile attacks that targeted a number of "vital and important" establishments. — AFP ■

Vaccination status of nearly half of COVID-19 active cases unknown in Samoa: health ministry

ALMOST half of those currently infected with COVID-19 have not had their vaccination status recorded, Samoa's Ministry of Health said on Monday.

Of all the active cases, 47 per cent, or around 90 people, have

an unknown vaccination status, the Samoa Observer reported, while 3 per cent are unvaccinated and the remaining 50 per cent have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccines.

Figures showed that the

majority of those infected are among the 15-29 age group.

The current active cases also include three children under 4 and six people above 60.

So far 181 positive cases have been detected as a result

of the 2,211 Rapid Antigen Tests completed since Friday, with no reported deaths.

Last Friday, Samoa went into the alert level 2 lockdown, and then shifted to the alert level 3 the next day. — Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan issues warning over tight energy supply in Tokyo, other areas

THE Japanese government on Monday issued a warning over tight energy supply, urging people in Tokyo and some other areas to save electricity as a large earthquake last week in the northeastern region caused some power plants to halt.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's warning came after Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc. said earlier in the day a power shortage is possible Tuesday due to cold weather and suspension of some thermal power plants from the quake last Wednesday.

According to the company, supply from its solar plants will likely be limited due to weather, even though demand for heating will likely increase. It expects the power consumption rate to stand at 97 per cent between 6 am and 7 am on Tuesday.

The firm is asking households and companies to turn off unnecessary lights and set their heating at 20 C to save electricity. — Kyodo ■

Two trains collide in Tunisia, 95 people injured

A head-on collision between two passenger trains injured 95 people Monday in the south of the Tunisian capital, emergency services said.

"The injured were taken to hospitals and there were no deaths," civil defence spokesman Moez Triaa told AFP, adding that only one of the trains was carrying passengers.

Most of the injured suffered bruises or fractures, none of them life-threatening, he said.

Many passengers were in shock, he added, saying around 15 ambulances had been dispatched to treat the wounded or take them to hospital.

The collision happened at 9:30 am local time (0830 GMT) in the Jbel Jelloud area, on the approach to a terminus in central Tunis.

An AFP reporter at the site saw the front of one of the trains had been caved in. — AFP ■

EU scrambles to shake off dependence on Russian energy amid Ukraine conflict

OIL prices in Europe have been surging since the start of the conflict in Ukraine amid fears that the European Union (EU) may ban the energy imports from Russia, a sign that the proposed embargo will inevitably backfire on its own economy.

This has made the EU more eager to shake off its reliance on Russian energy by proposing new plans to diversify energy supplies and make itself independent from Russian energy.

EU MEMBERS SPLIT

EU member countries are split over the ban on Russian energy as their dependence on energy imports from Russia varies.

On the whole, the EU is heavily reliant on Russian energy, which takes up a significant proportion of the EU's annual imports. According to the Eurostat, the statistical office of the EU, Russia accounted for more than 40 per cent of natural gas and 30 per cent of crude oil imported by the EU in 2019.

At an EU leaders' summit in France earlier, Latvia, Poland and Lithuania called for a ban on Russian energy imports, but were bluntly rejected by Germany and some other countries that simply cannot cut off the energy imports from Russia.

"Europe's supply of energy

for heating, mobility, electricity and industry currently cannot be secured in any other way," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in defending his rejection.

Germany's Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action Robert Habeck warned of the repercussions of a ban on Russian energy, noting it will cause severe damage to the economy and the society.

SHAKING OFF RELIANCE

In response to rising energy prices in Europe and the current uncertainty in supply, the EU unveiled on 8 March a plan called REPowerEU aimed at diversifying gas supplies and

cutting down on energy imports from Russia.

According to the plan, the EU seeks to make itself independent from Russian fossil fuels well before 2030.

By diversifying gas supplies, speeding up the roll-out of renewable gases and replacing gas in heating and power generation, the EU tries to reduce its demand for Russian gas by two-thirds before the end of 2022.

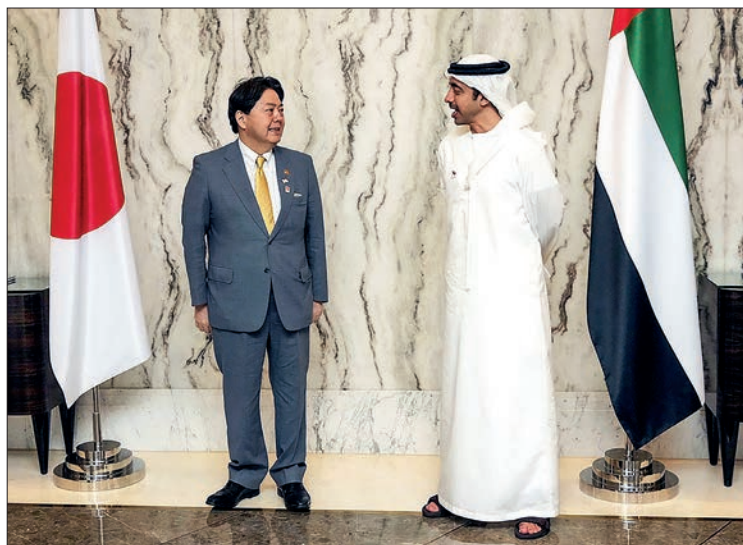
European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen later proposed in a message on social media that the EU should phase out Russian fossil fuels by 2027.

"We need to act now to mitigate the impact of rising energy prices, diversify our gas supply for next winter and accelerate the clean energy transition," she said.

A HIT ON EUROPEAN ECONOMY

The energy tussle has already weighed on the European economy by pushing the inflation higher. The euro area recorded a 5.9-per-cent annual inflation in February, a new all-time high. According to the Eurostat, the main contributor of the surging inflation was energy price, which climbed a staggering 31.7 per cent in February.—Xinhua ■

Japan asks UAE to ramp up oil supplies as Ukraine crisis boosts prices



Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi (L) is pictured with his UAE counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on 20 March 2022. PHOTO: COURTESY OF JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTRY/KYODO

JAPANESE Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi called on the United Arab Emirates on

Monday to ramp up oil supplies to address a surge in oil prices stemming from the Russian in-

vasion of Ukraine in a meeting with his UAE counterpart.

During the talks in Abu Dhabi, Hayashi told Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan that Japan is concerned by a recent spike in the oil market and hopes the UAE will play a role in stabilizing the market, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said. "We are hoping for more crude oil supplies and contribution to market stabilization by ensuring production capacity," Hayashi told the UAE foreign minister, according to the Japanese ministry. As a major oil exporter to Japan, the UAE minister expressed his intention to deepen coordination between the two countries, saying "the relationship with Japan as a strategic partner is unwavering," the ministry said.—Kyodo ■

China property giant Evergrande suspends share trading again

TROUBLED Chinese property developer giant Evergrande and all its units suspended trading in Hong Kong Monday morning, according to a notice to the stock exchange.

China's property firms have struggled in the wake of Beijing's drive to curb excessive debt in the real estate sector, as well as rampant consumer speculation.

Among those embroiled in the crisis is Evergrande, one of the country's largest developers, which has been involved in restructuring negotiations



A man walks past the signage of the China Evergrande Centre in Hong Kong on 21 October 2021. PHOTO: BERTHA WANG / AFP

after racking up \$300 billion in liabilities.

On Monday the company

announced that trading will be "halted" without giving a reason.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hong Kong suspends import of poultry products from US over bird flu

HONG Kong's food safety authority decided on Monday to suspend the import of poultry meat and products from bird flu-affected areas in the United States.

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government's Food and Environmental Hygiene Department said the decision was made in view of a notification from the World Organization for Animal Health about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Queen Anne's County of the State of Maryland, Jefferson County of the State of Wisconsin, Taylor County of the State of Iowa, and Lawrence County and Jasper County of the State of Missouri in the United States.

The CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products, including poultry eggs, from the areas with immediate effect.—Xinhua ■

Aussie state to invest millions for sustainable farms

IN a bid to "future proof" its agricultural sector, the government of the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) has announced an investment of 125 million Australian dollars (about 92 million US dollars) that would incentivize farmers to reduce emissions.

The plan, dubbed "the Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Programme," would fund the monitoring of emissions in the state's farms and open up a "carbon credits" programme—allowing farmers to earn money for reductions in emissions.

"Primary producers and land managers are playing an important role in NSW achieving its goal of reducing emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2050," said NSW Treasurer and Minister for Energy and Environment Matt Kean.

According to government data, in 2019 the state's agricultural industry emitted 16 megatonnes of carbon dioxide, or 12 per cent of its total emissions. As such it has become a major consideration in the state's drive to reach net-zero emissions.

The schemes would increase the viability for farmers in the state to engage in more sustainable farming practices, such as reducing the use of harmful fertilizers, and switching to renewable energy forms such as solar or wind power.

The state's Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW Dugald Saunders said the programme would open to applications for funding in the coming months.—Xinhua ■

Suzuki unveils 150 bil yen investment in India for EV production

SUZUKI Motor Corp said Sunday it will invest a total of about 150 billion yen (\$1.26 billion) in India for local manufacturing of electric vehicles starting in 2025.

The deal is part of Japan's 5 trillion yen, five-year public and private investment plan in India that Japanese Prime

Minister Fumio Kishida unveiled during a meeting with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Saturday.

The Japanese automaker, known for a significant presence in India's car market, signed a memorandum of understanding with the western state of Gujarat on Saturday for lo-

cal manufacturing of EVs and their batteries.

The signing took place at an India-Japan Economic Forum in New Delhi in the presence of the two countries' prime ministers.

"Suzuki's future mission is to achieve carbon neutrality with small cars," Suzuki Motor Presi-

dent Toshihiro Suzuki said at the forum.

The operation of a new plant to be built for battery production is planned to begin in 2026, the carmaker said.

Suzuki is India's biggest carmaker, accounting for around half of the country's new vehicle sales. — Kyodo ■

Asian, European markets mixed as traders track Ukraine crisis

ASIAN and European markets were mixed Monday after last week's rally, while oil prices extended gains, with investors keeping tabs on the war in Ukraine as Turkey said Kyiv and Moscow were edging towards a ceasefire agreement.

Confidence remains at a premium owing to the crisis in eastern Europe — which threatens to deal a hefty blow to the global economy — as well as central bank monetary tightening measures.

Traders struggled to maintain the buying enthusiasm seen last week that was fuelled by bargain-buying and China's pledge to support beaten-down markets and indication that a crackdown on the tech sector was nearing an end.

Hopes for an end to the war were given a boost Sunday when authorities in Turkey, where Russian and Ukrainian representatives

have been negotiating, said the two sides were close to a deal to stop the fighting.

Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said the sides were negotiating six points: Ukraine's neutrality, disarmament and security guarantees, the so-called "de-Nazification", removal of obstacles on the use of the Russian language in Ukraine, the status of the breakaway Donbas region and the status of Crimea annexed by Russia in 2014. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday urged

direct talks with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin as the only way to end the war. "Dialogue is the only way out," he said on CNN. "I think it's just the two of us, me and Putin, who can make an agreement on this." After a healthy performance on Wall Street on Friday, Asia struggled to maintain momentum.

Hong Kong fell for a second day following the massive gains enjoyed on Wednesday and Thursday after Chinese authorities announced they would provide support to markets battered by recent volatility. But the lack of specifics as of Monday weighed on sentiment. There was little major reaction after Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam unveiled plans to ease containment measures and lift a ban on flights from several countries including Britain and the United States.

Sydney, Seoul, Mumbai, Manila, Jakarta and Bangkok also slipped, but Shanghai, Singapore, Taipei and Wellington edged up. Tokyo was closed for a holiday. London opened flat, while Paris and Frankfurt edged down. US futures were lower. "Stabilising stock markets point to less cautious investors," said Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management. "Not because views on geopolitical or policy/rates risk have improved but because price action shows a market more tolerant of those challenges." — AFP ■

Washington and London ready to resume trade talks in Baltimore



Britain's International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan (L) and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai pose for a picture during a G7 trade summit at Mansion House in London on 22 October 2021. PHOTO:HENRY NICHOLLS / POOL / AFP

WASHINGTON and London have chosen the port city of Baltimore — just an hour's drive from the US capital — as the site of Monday's talks on deepening their economic relationship.

The United States is Britain's biggest trade partner, and the two countries are particularly interconnected when it comes

to services trade and direct foreign investment.

In total, the US and the UK do some \$263 billion (200 billion pounds) worth of trade per year.

Following Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, London has been negotiating agreements far and wide in an effort to boost its international trade foot-

print — and has sought in particular to reinforce its relationship with the United States.

But even though the administration of former president Donald Trump seemed ready to make a new bilateral arrangement with London and had even opened negotiation talks, the administration of current President Joe Biden does not seem to be in a hurry to continue them.

"It's important to remember that these (trade) agreements are just one tool at our disposal," said a senior US trade official on the condition of anonymity.

US Trade Representative Katherine Tai, who will lead the American side on Monday's and Tuesday's talks, is expected to talk about "the need to get creative and think outside the box when it comes to our trade dynamic with the

UK," another official said during a telephone conversation with reporters.

"Some of our trade tools were developed decades ago, and don't particularly represent the global challenges that we faced today," the second official said.

'Work together'

Asked whether this week's meeting marked a revival of negotiations that were interrupted last year, the officials insisted these talks are more about "deciding where to go together," and said they are confident the conversations would be productive.

"The purpose of this dialogue is to work together to make our trade smarter, and to help our workers and businesses compete in a really tough global economy," the second official said. — AFP ■

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MYSTRAS

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MYSTRAS VOY.NO. (V35)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-3-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **WILMAR** 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 ES JASMINE V.2203

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ES JASMINE VOY.NO. (2203)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **22-3-2022** 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 WILHELMSSEN SHIPS SERVICE(S) PTE LTD

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Four dead, one missing, as storms batter New Zealand

WILD storms lashed New Zealand's North Island Monday, claiming at least four lives when a fishing vessel sank and causing chaos in the country's biggest city Auckland, officials said.

Four bodies were recovered and another person was missing after a chartered fishing boat went down off the remote Northland coast late Sunday, police said, with five survivors stable after being plucked from the raging seas.

The military sent two air force planes and a naval warship to help the search effort.

The storm front moved south and hit Auckland early Monday, dumping 76.8 mm (3.0 inches) of rain on the city in a single hour, the same amount it usually averages in a month at this time of year, the official MetService weather forecaster said.— AFP ■

Quake-hit bullet train services to fully resume around 20 April

EAST Japan Railway Co said Monday it aims to fully resume around 20 April its high-speed shinkansen train services that were disrupted in the wake of a powerful earthquake that hit northeastern Japan last week and caused one bullet train to derail.

The operator, known as JR East, said it is continuing efforts to resume full operations of the Tohoku Shinkansen bullet trains connecting Tokyo and the northeast region, after halting services between Nasushiobara Station in Tochigi Prefecture and Morioka Station in Iwate Prefecture following the quake late Wednesday. JR East said it has so far confirmed about 1,000 cases of damage to equipment and infrastructure, such as electric poles and bridges.

It said it will resume services between Nasushiobara and Koriyama stations, as well as Ichinoseki and Morioka stations on Tuesday. It will operate between Koriyama and Fukushima around 2 April, before resuming train runs between Sendai and Ichinoseki two days later.— Kyodo ■

India's Modi thanks Australia for returning stolen artefacts

AUSTRALIA has returned 29 religious and cultural artefacts to India, among them several stolen or illegally exported from the country, earning thanks from Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a Monday summit.

New Delhi has pushed Western governments and museums to identify and return objects of India's "stolen heritage", and hundreds of items from overseas collections have already been repatriated.

Thirteen of the works returned by Australia are connected to alleged trafficker Subhash Kapoor, a former Manhattan art dealer who was the subject of a massive US federal investigation known as Operation Hidden Idol.

"I would like to especially



This handout photograph taken on 21 March 2022 and released by the Indian Press Information Bureau (PIB) shows India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspecting the antiquities repatriated from Australia, in New Delhi. PHOTO: PIB / AFP

thank you for the initiative to return ancient Indian artefacts," Modi told his Australian coun-

terpart Scott Morrison during a virtual meeting of the leaders. "These include statues and

paintings that are hundreds of years old and that have been illegally taken out... now we can return them to the places where they belong."

The objects — including sculptures, paintings, photographs and a scroll — date back to the 9th century and were held by the National Gallery of Australia.

The museum first announced the return of works it acquired through Kapoor last July, including a US\$5 million bronze statue of the Hindu god Shiva that had been stolen from a temple in southern India.

Kapoor was arrested in 2011 and is currently in jail awaiting trial. He denies all charges.— AFP ■

Passenger plane carrying 132 crashes in south China

A passenger plane with 132 people aboard crashed in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Monday afternoon, said the regional emergency

management department.

The Boeing 737 aircraft of China Eastern Airlines, which took off from Kunming and was bound for Guangzhou, crashed at

about 2:38 pm into a mountainous area near the Molang village in Tengxian County in the city of Wuzhou, causing a mountain fire, according to the department.

The 132 people onboard flight MU5735 were 123 passengers and nine crew members, said the Civil Aviation Administration of China on its website. The administration said it has initiated the emergency response mechanism and dispatched a working team to the site.

The fire has been put out and the rescue operation is underway, said Chen Jie, an official with the regional emergency management department.

The Wuzhou fire brigade has sent 117 firefighters with 23 fire trucks to the site. Further 538 firefighters from other parts of Guangxi have been dispatched to join in the rescue efforts, the regional fire department said at its Weibo account.

The neighboring Guangdong Province has dispatched 505 firefighters and 97 vehicles to aid the rescue operation, with the first batch having arrived at the scene.

The Guangxi regional health commission has dispatched 12 medical experts to the site while over 80 medical workers and 36 ambulances sent by health authorities in the city of Wuzhou have arrived at the scene.

China Eastern Airlines said on Monday that it has initiated an emergency response mechanism following the crash. It has established nine special working groups for aircraft disposal, accident investigation, family assistance, logistics support, legal support, public relations, security, financial insurance, and cargo disposal. The working groups were en route to the site, and the company said that the cause of the accident would be fully investigated.— Xinhua ■



Photo taken with a mobile phone shows the plane crash site in Tengxian County, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 21 March 2022. A passenger plane with 132 people aboard crashed in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Monday afternoon, said the regional emergency management department. PHOTO: XINHUA

Dozens rescued after Indonesian boat carrying migrants sinks: officials

TWENTY-SIX passengers reported missing when a fishing boat carrying undocumented migrant workers sank off the coast of Indonesia have been found alive, some after drifting for two days, officials said Monday.

Two of the vessel's 86 passengers, who were seeking work in neighbouring Malaysia, were killed when it capsized Saturday, said Rully Ramadhiansyah, spokesman for the Belawan na-

val base on Sumatra island.

The captain and three crew members all survived.

"We found some of the passengers tightly holding to floats, jerry cans and other floating objects to survive in the ocean," Ramadhiansyah told AFP.

"Some others were rescued by a fishing boat".

The wooden vessel sank off North Sumatra province near the coastal area of Tanjung Api as it attempted to sail through

an unguarded route to Malaysia. It sprang a leak soon after departing before then being hit by strong waves and capsizing.

Officials had previously said there were 89 people on board at the time of the sinking but later revised it to 90 following testimony from the boat's captain.

Relatively affluent Malaysia is home to millions of migrants from poorer parts of Asia, many of them undocumented, work-

ing in industries including construction and agriculture. Indonesians illegally seeking work in neighbouring Malaysia often risk dangerous sea crossings, and accidents are common due to bad weather and poor safety measures.

In January, six Indonesian women drowned off the coast of Malaysia when their boat sank during a suspected attempt to enter the country illegally.— AFP ■

Nearly 3.5 million Ukrainians flee the country: UN

NEARLY 3.5 million Ukrainians have now fled the country following Russia's invasion, the United Nations said Monday, praising neighbouring countries for showing overwhelming compassion towards their "extreme plight".

More than 10 million people — over a quarter of the population in regions under government control — are now thought to have fled their homes, including the millions of internally displaced people.

UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, said 3,489,644 Ukrainians had fled the country since Russia invaded on 24 February — a figure up 100,600 on Sunday's update.

"Over the last four weeks, the world has watched in disbelief. Countless lives have been lost while millions of others have been completely upended," UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi said.

"As if to counter the despair, we have also witnessed overwhelming acts of welcome



Valentina from Kyiv (C) sits in the theatre of the Ukrainian House where a shelter for refugees is installed in Przemysl, southeastern Poland, near the Ukrainian-Polish border, on 18 March 2022. More than 3.25 million refugees have fled Ukraine since the Russian invasion, the United Nations said on 18 March 2022, with more than two million crossing the Polish border. **PHOTO: WOJTEK RADWANSKI / AFP**

and compassion as neighbouring countries, particularly local responders, have opened their hearts and homes to Ukrainians.

"Millions around the world were rightly moved by the extreme plight of the Ukrainian people," he said, citing their "pain and sorrow... loss and

anguish", and "relief at finding safety and trepidation of an uncertain future".

Women and children account some 90 per cent of those who have fled. Ukrainian men aged 18 to 60 are eligible for military call-up and cannot leave. — AFP ■

Zelensky says Jerusalem 'right place for peace' talks with Russia



In this handout picture taken on 20 March 2022 and released by the Ukrainian Presidency Press Office, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky delivers a video address in Kyiv. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SERVICE / AFP**

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelensky suggested Jerusalem could host peace talks between him and Vladimir Putin, his latest attempt to push for a meeting with his Russian counterpart.

Zelensky thanked Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett for efforts to broker talks in a video released on Telegram late Sunday.

"We are grateful... for his every effort. So sooner or later we could start the conversation with Russia. Perhaps in Jerusalem," said Zelensky.

"This is the right place for finding peace. If this is possible."

Bennett has held regular phone calls with Zelensky and Putin, and also had a three-hour meeting with Putin at the Kremlin on 5 March.

He has walked a careful diplomatic line since Russia launched its invasion on 24 February.

Stressing Israel's strong ties to both Moscow and Kyiv, he has sought to preserve delicate security cooperation with Russia, which has troops in Syria, across Israel's northern border.

"Of course, Israel has its own interests and defence strategy for their own citizens. We understand all of this," Zelensky said.

Earlier on Sunday, the Ukrainian president, who is Jewish, had spoken to Israeli lawmakers via videolink, the latest in a virtual international tour of foreign legislatures that has included the United States' Congress, Britain's House of Commons and Germany's Bundestag.

"Russian propagandists have a tough task today," he said in his Telegram video.

"Because for the first time in history, a president of a foreign nation, spoke on video recording in the Knesset and to the whole nation of Israel... the president of Ukraine, who is accused of Nazism in Russia."

Putin has called Ukraine's leaders "neo-Nazis" and said the "denazification" of Ukraine is one of the reasons for launching the invasion.

In his address to the Knesset, Zelensky urged Israel to abandon its effort to maintain neutrality. — AFP ■

NEWS DIGEST

Here are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine.

Kremlin says premature for Putin-Zelensky meeting

KREMLIN spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that it is too early to talk about a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, as there is no breakthrough yet in the peace talks.

"To be able to discuss a possible meeting between the two presidents, you must first do your homework. That is, you need to conduct and agree on the results of the negotiations," Peskov told a daily briefing.

"So far, no significant progress has been made (in the negotiation process) ... The presidents simply have no agreements to approve yet," he said.

Ukrainian and Russian delegations held three rounds of negotiations in person in Belarus starting from 28 February to seek a possible settlement of the current conflict. The two sides started their fourth round of negotiations via video link on 14 March.

China to offer Ukraine more humanitarian aid supplies

CHINA has decided to provide more humanitarian aid supplies to Ukraine worth 10 million yuan (about 1.57 million US dollars), a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Monday.

Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily press briefing that this additional offer was based on the development of the situation and the actual needs of Ukraine. The Red Cross Society of China had earlier provided 5 million yuan worth of humanitarian aid supplies to the Ukrainian side.

"China pays close attention to the civilian casualties in the Russia-Ukraine conflict," Wang said, noting that the top priority for the international community now is to deal with the possible large-scale humanitarian crisis.

Senior Russian navy commander killed in Ukraine: Sevastopol governor

A senior naval commander from Russia's Black Sea Fleet had been killed in Ukraine, said governor of Sevastopol, a port city on the Crimea Peninsula, on Sunday.

Post-Captain Andrei Paliy, the fleet's deputy commander, died during fighting in the eastern Ukrainian port city of Mariupol, Mikhail Razvozhayev said on the messaging app Telegram.

Sevastopol is the base of Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

Ukraine extends martial law

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelensky signed a bill extending martial law in Ukraine, the press service of Ukraine's parliament said Sunday.

The legislation extended the current martial law for 30 days starting 26 March.

Kyiv imposed martial law after Russia launched a special military operation against Ukraine on 24 February.

At least six dead in overnight bombing of Kyiv mall

AT least six people were killed in the overnight bombing of a shopping centre in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, an AFP journalist said Monday, with rescuers combing the wreckage for other victims.

Six bodies were laid out in front of the Retroville shopping mall in the northwest of Kyiv, according to the journalist.

The 10-storey building was hit by a powerful blast that pulverised vehicles in its car park and left a crater several metres (yards) wide.

The burnt-out mall was still smoking on Monday morning. All of its south side had been destroyed, as well as a fitness centre in its car park.

SOURCE: AGENCIES

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

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

3. Social affairs

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

Myanmar Golf Federation introduces World H'Cap System

THE Myanmar Golf Federation held a seminar on the afternoon of 21 March at the Nine Miles' Myanmar Golf Club with the introduction of Computer Software, a system that facilitates the calculation of operational functions related to the World Handicap System (WHS).

Chairman of the Myanmar Golf Club U Thaug Hlaing, gave an opening speech while Joint Secretary U Myo Thiha addressed the gathering.

Next, U Zar Ni Win, Chairman of Myanmar Golf Feder-

ation's World H'Cap System Implementation Committee explained the World H'Cap System and Rule of Handicapping and introduction of the Computer Software to be used.

Then, Secretary of the Myanmar Golf Club U Than Tun discussed the process of implementing the World H'Cap System at the nine-miles club.

After that, the attendees asked questions and the officials explained. The event was attended by 30 enthusiasts from various golf clubs. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM



The Myanmar Golf Federation officials address the World Handicap System Seminar at the nine-miles golf club in Yangon on 21 March 2022. **PHOTO: KO TUN**

Fritz hands Nadal first 2022 defeat to lift Indian Wells trophy

TAYLOR Fritz stunned Rafael Nadal 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) on Sunday to win the ATP Indian Wells Masters and end the 21-time Grand Slam champion's perfect 20-0 run to start 2022.

Fritz, ranked 20th in the world, claimed his second career title and his first at the elite Masters 1000 level while denying Nadal a record-equalling 37th Masters crown.

The 24-year-old American achieved his biggest triumph despite an injured right ankle that was so painful when he tested it Sunday morning he didn't think he'd be able to play.

"This is just one of those childhood dreams, winning this tournament especially, Indian Wells, this is one of those childhood dreams you never even think can come true," the Southern California native said, fighting

back tears.

"It was just an emotional roller coaster all day," said Fritz, who spent hours leading up to the match receiving treatment to numb his ankle after "basically almost crying because I thought I was going to have to pull out.

"It was a game-time decision," Fritz said. "A lot of members of my team wanted me to not play the match. I'm never going to let them forget that because

I went on the court and it was a complete non-issue, didn't feel it at all, didn't hinder me at all."

The 35-year-old Nadal, meanwhile, was pushing himself through pain, twice receiving treatment on his upper body for a yet-to-be diagnosed problem that not only hurt but also affected his breathing. "I don't know if it's something on the rib, I don't know yet," Nadal said. "It's a kind of pain that limit me a lot." — AFP ■

Taylor Fritz of the US hits a return to Rafael Nadal of Spain in their ATP men's final at the Indian Wells tennis tournament in Indian Wells on 20 March 2022.

— **PHOTO: AFP**



Clasico demolition vindicates Barcelona, shifts doubts to Real Madrid

A Clasico that was supposed to mean very little, in the end, meant an awful lot as Barcelona gave a resounding answer to questions about their revival and instead left Real Madrid shrouded in doubt.

Most believed there was no result on Sunday that could derail Madrid's march to the La Liga title but even that feels less certain now. A defeat like this, 4-0 at home, and against Barcelona, was perhaps the only kind that might prompt a collapse.

In that regard, Madrid will be relieved, not only that Barca are still points 12 points adrift, albeit with a game in hand still to play, but that a two-week international break gives them some breathing space, time to stabilize and recover.

It will allow Karim Benzema time to recover too, with the Frenchman's absence undoubtedly a factor in Madrid's spinelessness against Barcelona, who took advantage to devastating effect.

Barca's place in the top four is surely now secure, which will be celebrated by the club's accountants as much as anyone else.

For all the excitement and enthusiasm generated by Xavi's team on the pitch, the harsh reality is the club's financial ills will take longer to cure. Only last week La Liga set Barcelona's spending limit at -144 million euros.

They will certainly believe second place is now a realistic target, particularly given Sevilla's stuttering form. — AFP ■