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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

Music concert hails 77th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and dignitaries watch the music concert in honouring the 77th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day in Nay Pyi Taw on 24 March 2022.

AS a gesture of hailing the 77th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day which falls on 27 March 2022, a music concert participated by famous artistes took place at the Thabin Hall of Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi

Taw yesterday evening. Those famous artistes performed Myanmar classic and modern songs and one-act plays to the accompaniment of the Myawady Band. Chairman of the State

Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, SAC members and their wives, the secretary of the council and wife, the joint

secretary of the council and wife, Union ministers and their wives, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and their wives, officers, other ranks and families enjoyed performances

at the concert. After the entertainment, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla cordially greeted the artistes.—MNA

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Objectives of 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

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

State Administration Council Press Release

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

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

*Information Team
State Administration Council*

THE State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.

77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade event to be broadcast live

THE celebration of the 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade which will be held on 27 March at the Nay Pyi Taw Parade Ground will be broadcast live on MWD Channel, MWD Variety Channel and MRTV Channel starting from 4:45 am on 27 March. — MNA

Announcement

AS the Yangon Region is peaceful and stable with the prevalence of law and order and the decline of COVID-19 infection, the curfew order which restricted the period from 10 pm to 4 am was amended from 12 pm to 4 am with effect from 22-3-2022. — MNA

People invited to celebrate 77th Anniversary 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*

261 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 24 March, total figure rises to 610,176

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **610,176** after **261** new cases were reported on 24 March 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **566,838** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at **19,428** without casualties. —MNA

What Federalism is

FEDERALISM is a concept to share the authority with regions, states, ethnics and national races in unison, and it is integration as well as sharing of rights. Political parties, including ethnic parties, are representing the people.

(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)

Bawdikan Bridge on Taninthayi-Mawtaung Road opened

THE opening ceremony of the Bawdikan Bridge, constructed in commemoration of the 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day in Taninthayi Township was held yesterday under the COVID-19 rules and regulations.

The 787 feet long bridge was built across Ngawun Creek and is located on the Taninthayi-Mawtaung Road in Taninthayi Township. It is a reinforced concrete bridge with a load capacity of 60 tonnes.

The opening ceremony was attended by Member of the State Administration Council Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Union Minister for Construction U Shwe Lay, Taninthayi Region Chief Minister U Myat Ko, Commander of the Coastal Region Command Maj-Gen Saw Than Hlaing, Deputy Minister for Construction U Win Pe, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi, officials, local people and invitees.

At the ceremony, SAC member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun said the Phayagyi-Mawlamyine-My-



SAC Member Lt-General Moe Myint Tun speaks on the occasion to inaugurate the Bawdikan Bridge in honouring the 77th Armed Forces Day.

eik-Bokpyin-Kawthoung Road (ASEAN Highway No 112) which is connecting the Yangon Region, Bago Region and Mon State was built in meeting road standards of the ASEAN Highway with the aim of facilitating smooth flow of goods, developing socio-economic development and enhancing tourism. In such doing, it will be connected with the Greater

Mekong Sub-region Economic Corridor, and this will bring many benefits to regional development, creating job opportunities and facilitating the flow of goods in the ASEAN region, he elaborated.

He also underlined the importance of the Dawei Special Economic Zone, which will be implemented as one of the

biggest economic zones of the country in the Taninthayi Region to connect with Thailand, Cambodia, Viet Nam via sea route, railways and roads, adding the government is working hard to bring peace to the future of the country and to make the lives of its citizens happy.

Afterwards, the Union minister explained the construction

of the bridge and together with the Taninthayi region chief minister and officials cut the ribbon to open the bridge.

In the afternoon, the SAC member and party went to the Taungdagon Crude Palm Oil Mill in Bokpyin and inspected the production of crude palm oil and the plantation of palm plants, it is reported. — MNA

Myanmar, EAEU discuss bilateral economic relations



THE Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and Eurasian Economic Commission organized a dialogue on promoting bilateral trade and investment between Myanmar

and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U

Aung Naing Oo said the discussions are being made to sign the Memorandum of Cooperation to promote bilateral investment and trade between the country and EAEU. The win-win situa-

tion for the economic sector will be added to the MoU.

Among the EAEU member countries, the government makes efforts to sign agreements for bilateral trade promotion and defence services with Russian Federation and Belarus.

Moreover, the Union Minister discussed the reforms for investment policies and investment sector of the country to revive the economy in the post COVID-19 period and he called for more cooperation in the agriculture and livestock sector; fertilizer production sector; cooking oil sector; electric power and energy, basic infrastructure, in increasing export volumes to the EUEA member countries and importing fertilizers, oil and gas and farming machines to the country.

Then, Mr Andrey Diansky of the Eurasian Economic Commission-EEC and Chairman of

Myanmar-Russia Association for Friendship and Cooperation Commodore Aung Thaw (Retired) discussed the potential on the promotion of trade and investment. Then, the Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and Senior Officer of Eurasian Economic Commission-EEC also discussed the main sectors to cooperate such as trade and investment, electric power and energy, agriculture and livestock breeding, mining, infrastructure, information and transportation, industrial and financial sectors. They also explained the law, rules and regulations and opportunities.

After the meeting, Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Than Aung Kyaw hosted a dinner to the representatives of EAEU and Myanmar. — MNA

MIFER Union Minister meets EEC, economic delegation

UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo received the economic delegation led by the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) on promoting bilateral trade between Myanmar and EUEA, Head of the Secretariat of Heavy Enterprise Cooperation Mr Andrey Diansky in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union minister discussed the ongoing dialogue on promoting bilateral trade and investments between Myanmar and Eurasian Economic Commission, the signing of MoUs, government-private discussions to cooperate in win-win economic ties.



The meeting takes place between the MIFER Union Minister and the Eurasian Economic Commission EEC and economic delegation.

He also highlighted the State Administration Council to recover the businesses of prioritized sectors of the following economic objectives of the country, economic poten-

tial and continuous support to make investments in Myanmar for Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member countries, including the Russian Federation.

Then, the officials of EEC and economic representatives discussed the prioritized economic sector, project and cooperation work between Myanmar and EEC.

The EEC is a leading organization of EAEU and is organized with five countries — the Russian Federation, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and also serving economic cooperation in a form of Customs Union. The EAEU has also economic relations with ASEAN. — MNA

Union Minister for Electricity and Energy receives Eurasian Economic Commission

UNION Minister for Electricity and Energy U Aung Than Oo, the deputy minister and officials received the Eurasian Economic Commission at the Minister's Office yesterday morning.

During the meeting, both sides cordially and frankly discussed matters on oil and

gas cooperation in exploration, drilling and production between Myanmar and the Eurasian Economic Commission member states, and electricity generating and distributing, and development of solar power projects to cooperate in partnership. — MNA



MoEE holds talks with the Eurasian Economic Commission.

Commanding Officer-level flag meeting held between Myanmar, Bangladesh



Myanmar and Bangladesh hold the Commanding Officer-level flag meeting in Maung-taw on 23 March 2022.

A Commanding Officer-Level Flag Meeting between the border guard forces of Myanmar and Bangladesh was held in Maung-taw, Rakhine State, on 23 March.

The meeting was attended by 10 Myanmar representatives led by Commanding Officer Officiating Police Lt-Col Kyaw Nang Soe of Border Guard Police Force No 1, and 12 representatives from Bangladesh led by Lt-Col Sheikh Khalid Mohammad Iftikhar, Commanding Officer of Bangladesh Border Guard Force No. 2 (Teknaf).

The meeting discussed matters related to the prevention of cross-border crimes in the border areas between the two countries,

illegal border crossings, drug risk prevention, border security and the rule of law, real-time exchange of information between the two border guards.

The two parties also discussed educating the people in the border area and the terrorist attacks committed by ARSA and RSO terrorist groups in Myanmar by illegally entering Myanmar.

After the meeting, Myanmar representatives handed over 41 Bangladeshi citizens who had already been prosecuted in line with Myanmar's domestic law to the Bangladesh Border Guard Force No 2 as per the procedures. — MNA

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

MoHT Union Minister attends 11th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung attended the 11th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism organized by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) virtually at Nilar Hall of his Ministry yesterday.

The two-day event will be held from 23 to 24 March to discuss issues of sustainability and digital transformation, rules and regulations to be followed by tourists in resuming tourism activities at the congress, conservation of tourism resources, and health tips and tourism innovation.

General Secretary of the World Tourism Federation Mr Zurab Pololikashvili, Andorra's Minister of Tourism and Communications, Minister of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan, Heads of Ministries of Tourism, Economy and Technology from Spain, Greece, Slovenia, France, Norway, and Italy, officials and responsible persons from private tourism and technology organizations attended the virtual congress.

At the conference, the Mayor of Canilla from Andorra, the Secretary-General of the World



Tourism Organization and Andorra's Minister of Tourism and Communications gave opening remarks.

According to the agenda of the first day of the congress, Andorra's Minister of Tourism and Communications, Minister of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan, State Secretary of the Department of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia, State Secretary of the Spanish Ministry of Tourism, and Greek Deputy Tourism Minister discussed mountainous tourism restoration and prospects.

Post-COVID-19 tourism strategies for the long-term development of mountainous

destinations, challenges of each country in terms of prospects for tourism in the future including tourist destination, issues of The International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022, requirements for sustainable development of mountain tourism attractions and activities, implementing the training programmes to provide quality services, equipment needed for snow and mountain trekking, infrastructure and investment issues, and issues related to the adaptation of snow and mountain tourism to natural resources, ways to Build a Ski Resort, requirements to work with relevant tour management agencies

to improve service quality issues at ski resorts, climate change and its impact on the environment and benefits of tourism to local communities were discussed during the congress.

Next, Andorra Telecom's Statistics and Technology Manager discussed data obtained from mobile data and studies and provided information on the use of Big Data in tourism sustainability activities in mountainous areas.

Officials from Australian, Spanish, Andorra and Norway Technology companies also discussed the transformation of digital technology and the widespread use of technology

in the tourism sector.

Head of Tourism Marketing and Competition Department of World Tourism Organization, and the Project Coordinator of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) discussed the review of the World Tourism Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Sustainable Mountain Tourism Report.

Food and tourism officials from Italy, Andorra, Greece and France discussed food tourism and food security issues on the second day of the conference.

In turn, French and Andorra officials shared innovative experiences in tourism and topics such as job creation and capacity building activities and Britain's Management and development of responsible tourism destinations in Andorra and France were also discussed.

After that, the Mayor of Canilla, the Mayor of Ankang, the European Union (EU) Regional Director for Europe and the Andorra Tourism and Communications Minister made concluding remarks at the closing ceremony of the conference. — MNA

MNHRC attends 1st technical working group meeting of SEANF

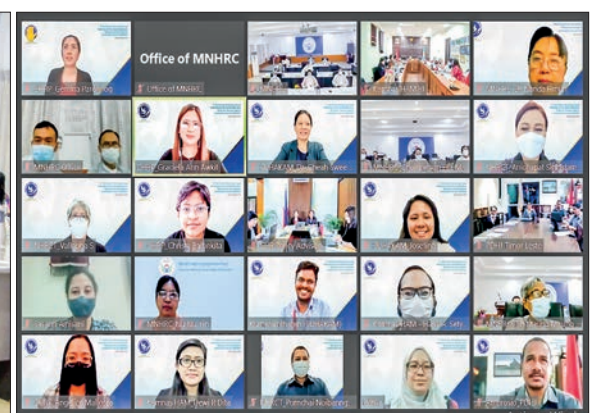
OFFICIALS from the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission attended the first Technical Working Group Meeting of the Southeast Asian National Human Rights Institutions Forum-SEANF hosted by the Philippines Human Rights Commission, Current Chair of the forum, on 23 and 24 March via a virtual online platform.

The meeting was also joined by Chairmen and officials of the human rights commissions from other members of the forum, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Timor-Leste and the Philippines.

The meeting discussed the activities and progress of the forum member National Human Rights Commissions fol-

lowing the 18th Annual Meeting of the Forum held in December 2021; implementation of an MoU on status of stateless persons signed among Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines Human Rights Commissions; implementation of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and the 2022 Action Plan; sharing activities related to the global movement for the rights of the elderly.

The meeting also discussed matters related to the promotion and protection of human rights such as the lack of information during the COVID-19 pandemic and the occurrence of misinformation, the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat of the Forum, liaison between the Forum



and ASEAN Intergovernmental Commissions on Human Rights and plans to hold the second working group meeting and the 19th annual meeting of the Forum.

At the meeting, Myanmar presented the activities and developments of human rights education and protection ac-

tivities after the 18th Annual Meeting of the Myanmar Human Rights Commission, disinformation and insufficient information during the COVID-19 period.

Chairman of the Commission U Hla Myint also participated in the discussion on the Strategic Plan and the 2022

Action Plan.

On the afternoon of 3 March, Myanmar officials attended the "SEANF Leadership in Mitigating Disinformation to Promote Human Rights Online Discussion Series on Influence Operations, a related virtual meeting of the Forum. — MNA

Daily newspapers available online

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SAC Information Team holds 12th Press Conference

THE Ministry of Information hosted the 12th press conference of the Information Team of the State Administration Council yesterday afternoon. Team Leader of the SAC Information Team Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, Member of the Union Election Commission U Khin Maung Oo, spokespersons from relevant departments and representatives of the Information Team answered the questions raised by the media.

At the conference, the Team Leader extensively explained the implementations of the State Administration Council during the year, meetings with both the ethnic armed groups which have signed the NCA and those which haven't signed yet, political parties, religious leaders, and peace mediators for the national unity and a lasting peace; the attendance of the ethnic armed groups at the Diamond Jubilee Union Day celebrations, informal talks with the Coordinating Committee and the status to successfully implement the peace process; the efforts made to implement proportional representation (PR) to ensure greater representation of parties and ethnic group with regard to federalism; the government's serious pursu-



The twelfth Press Conference of the SAC Information Team in progress.

ance of Myanmar's independent proactive and neutral foreign policy, a policy of world peace and friendly relations, and policies that uphold the principle of peaceful coexistence among the nations of the world; the situation to develop the domestic economy and the situation for domestic political strength and the defence capability of all ethnic people; the status of the upgrade works on the Myanmar Railways which plays a vital role in the economy and public transport.

He also explained the action

plans to promote education, for the socio-economic development of the people and the security and stability of the state; status of the collaboration with government organizations and local/foreign organizations to effectively implement the educational development works; the work done in line with the rules and regulations between the Committee for the Prevention of Child Soldiers and the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) and further processes to be carried out in the future; the recent spate of

counterfeit money is baseless rumours that have led to arrests and detentions for online fraud, and the government is making great efforts to ensure that the next election is held nationwide.

The conference also showed the PowerPoint presentation and video files of the terrorist attacks, robberies, killings of innocent people, arson attacks to villages committed by NUG and PDF terrorist groups, and the processes implemented by the Union Election Commission and the situation to practise a PR system in the coming elections.

Afterwards, the officials answered the questions raised by the media outlets. It is reported that journalists from local/foreign media outlets attended the press conference and observed the documentary photos of the violence perpetrated by PDF and NUG terrorist groups, the activities of the State Administration Council and the Committee for the Prevention of Child Soldiers.

The full interview and the holding of the press conference will further be published, it is reported.—MNA

CRIME NEWS

Stimulant tablets seized in some townships

A combined team of anti-drug police force conducted inspections on Yarpayae 7th Road, Myeik (South) Ward, Yarpayae Quarter in Myeik Township at 7:30 pm on 22 March.

Officials stopped and searched a motorcycle driven by Myo Min Oo on the Yarpayae 7th Road and seized 20,000 tablets of ecstasy.

At 5:30 pm the same day, a combined team consisting of the Shan State police force conducted inspections in Tachilek. A search of a man named Arlaung near the bus stop in Ponetun Ward turned up 4,000 tablets of ecstasy. Similarly, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force made a search in MyoU Ward, Maungtaw Township and 39,390 tablets of ecstasy were seized during a raid on the house of Noor Islam at noon on 23 March.

At 1:20 pm the same day, a combined team of anti-drug police made inspections in Meinpang "Wa" ward, Hopang Township. A search of the house of Nyi Htan turned up 2,400 ecstasy tablets.

They are prosecuted under the Law Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA



Illegal timbers, consumer goods, vehicles seized

MANAGED by the Anti-illegal Trade Steering Committee, efforts are being made to take action against illegal trades under the law.

On 21 March, an inspection team led by the Rakhine State Department of Forest conducted inspections Taungup Township and seized 3.5544 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated value of K355,440) under the Forest Law.

In addition, a customs team on duty conducted inspections at the Myanmar International Port (Thilawa) Container Checkpoint and confiscated construction materials (estimated value of K6,000,000) which were different from the products declared in the Import Declaration (ID).

Similarly, consumer goods (estimated value of K12,600,000) that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) were seized under the Customs Law at the Myanmar Port Container Inspection station.

On 23 March, detergent pow-



Officials seize illegal timbers.

der packages (estimated value of K2,000,000) mixed with the products declared in the Import Declaration (ID) were seized from a vehicle driven from Myawady to Yangon at the Mayanchaung Permanent Checkpoint.

In Magway Region, combined inspection teams seized 2.9262 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated value of K292,620) in Sedoktara Township, Minbu District, 7,000 gallons of refined diesel oil on the Pakkoku-Yesagyo Road in Yesagyo Township, (totally estimated value of K35,292,620) under the law.

On 24 March, 1.1260 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated value of K39,410) were seized under the Forest Law in Thonze Forest Reserve in Thayawady District, Bago Region. Similarly, 3.0737 tonnes of illegal timbers (estimated value of K4,840,000) were also seized along with the three vehicles in Kanbalu Township in Sagaing Region.

Therefore, a total of 14 arrests (estimated value of K61,127,470) was made on 21, 23 and 24 March, the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee stated. — MNA

Pawsan paddy prices jump to K1 mln per 100 baskets on low demand

THE price of high-grade paddy (Pawsan variety) significantly soared to over K1 million per 100 baskets, according to the Aya Trade Convention Centre of Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

The prices of Pawsan paddy move in the range of K1,061,000 and K1,016,000 per 100 baskets (46 pounds) in Pathein, Kangyidaunt, Ngaputaw, Myaungmya, Einme, Wakema, Labutta, Mawgyun, Maubin, Pyapon, Bogale, Kyaiklat and Dedaye townships in Ayeyawady Region at present.

Last 1 March 2021, the paddy produced in Pathein, Kangyidaunt, Ngaputaw, Myaungmya, Einme, Wakema, Maubin, Pyapon and Bogale townships fetched only K902,000-946,000 per 100 baskets, whereas the prices stood at only K869,000-885,000 per 100-basket in Labutta, Mawgyun, Kyaiklat and Dedaye townships.

Meanwhile, low-grade paddy (Emahta variety) was worth only K650,000-690,000 per 100-basket on 1 March. It rose to K708,000-



The mechanized harvesting in action on one plot of farmlands.

800,000 on 24 March.

The prices of rice are relatively higher these days, following the increase in paddy prices.

The monsoon rice inventory is down at present. However, the

newly harvested summer paddy is going to flood the market.

The price of paddy is likely to fall if the market sees a high inflow of summer paddy, rice traders shared their opinions.

The government's leading committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Interests of Farmers set the floor price for paddy at K540,000 per 100 baskets for 2021 monsoon

paddy and 2022 summer paddy.

The committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Interests of Farmers under the provisions of Law of Protection of the Farmer Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits, set the floor price of the paddy which meets the prescribed criteria: 14-per-cent moisture content and a fixed percentage of impurities such as sand, weed, and small stones is set at K540,000 per 100 baskets (one basket is equivalent to 46 pounds).

The traders are notified of purchasing the paddy at K540,000 if the market price falls below the floor price. Those who face difficulties in selling them at the floor price in minimum can contact the Myanmar Rice Federation through 01-2301128, 01-2301129 and 01-218266). There are nearly 18 million acres of monsoon and summer paddy in Myanmar every year; according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. — NN/GNLM

Exports of cattle, animal products down by \$11 mln as of 11 March

MYANMAR'S exports of animal products including live cattle between 1 October 2021 and 11 March 2022 in the current mini-budget period plummeted to US\$4.6 million, a sharp drop of \$11.33 million compared with the corresponding period of the 2020-2021 FY as livestock trading was suspended in Myanmar-China cross-border trade.

In the previous FY, animal products exports were registered at \$15.9 million.

Animal products exports are solely driven by the private sector. Myanmar exports live goat, live sheep, live pigs, live cattle, leather and other products.

Myanmar's live cattle trade is mainly relying on China. The legitimate market has halted since late 2020. Nevertheless, Chinese traders are constantly purchasing cattle on the black market across the border between Myanmar and China, despite the suspension of cross-border trade. At present, the black market has been stronger, with 1,000 head of cattle daily sent to China, the association stated.

Live cattle export was al-

lowed in late 2017 to eradicate illegal exports, creating more opportunities for breeders and promoting their interests.

The Ministry of Commerce grants a permit to each company for 100 cattle export and the permit is valid for three months. The companies can be taken legal action if they do not sell the cattle during the three months.

The country exports cattle that are above five years old, along with vaccination certificates, health certificates, and farming registration certificates. According to the 2018 cattle census, there are 11.5 million heads of cattle in the country, with 1.8 million buffalo and 9.7 million cows and bulls.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will also strive for investments in dairy farming and value-added production businesses.

Of them, 1.1 million cattle are old enough to be placed on the market every year. Myanmar can yearly export over 600,000 heads of cattle beyond domestic consumption of 400,000 head, according to the ministry. — GNLM

Pure gold price up by K50,000 per tical within one week

THE price of pure gold rose to K2,048,00 million per tical (0.578 ounce, or 0.016 kilogramme) in the afternoon on 24 March, indicating a significant increase of over K50,000 per tical within one week, according to Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

Last 16 March 2022, the price of gold was estimated at K1,995,000 per tical.

The domestic market saw gold bounce again to over K2 million on 8 March.

The rise in domestic gold price is tracking the global price, which stands at US\$1,940 per ounce. Additionally, the US dollar exchange rate is worth over K2,000 in the local forex market at present.

The domestic gold price is highly correlated with the global gold price so it remains an upward trend, YGEA stated.

The price of a safe-haven asset is unlikely to fall in the coming months. Only when Kyat strengthens against the US dollar in the local forex market and the global gold price slides can the domestic gold price fall, a trader share his opinion.

Last 28 September 2021,

a dollar value hit an all-time high of over K3,000 in the black market and consequently, the pure gold reached a record high of K2.22 million per tical in history.

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 gold and currency market stability play a crucial role in trade facilitation.

The objectives of the committee are inspecting and prosecuting market manipulation,

checking if there is compliance to payment rules or not, proceeding against those unscrupulous traders who intend to interfere with the free and fair operation of the market under the existing laws, by-laws and regulations in line with the official directives, illegal procurement of foreign currency, illegal trade and taking legal actions against price manipulators.

Furthermore, the officials concerned will crack down on those people involved in charging a percentage for money withdrawals at the banks as shadow money. — GNLM



Gold jewellery is seen at one of the gold outlets in Yangon.

Learn a lesson from natural disasters for a better future

NATURAL disasters are a kind of test for human beings whether they are qualified for lasting in society or not. Some of them fall in the test and some achieve wins. Those who secure wins can survive in natural disasters but those who fall in the test lose their lives and property.

Myanmar people have an unforgettable and regrettable event of natural disaster in their lives. It is called the Nargis cyclonic storm which started on 27 April 2008 in the sea. The cyclonic storm unexpectedly changed its route and hit Ayeayawady and Yangon regions on 2 May. Hence, all need to take an invaluable lesson from the bitter experience.

In fact, any process which needs to overcome the challenges must have unity among the people. The united strength will be the best to safeguard the nation against any disasters and dangers.

The summer storm is beneficial to Myanmar. It is because the storm will bring coldness and rainwater to the country when the summer is hot. It will lessen the heat for the people along its route. It will fill farmlands to grow more crops and rainwater lakes for public consumption. Importantly, the storm will give good lessons to the people on how to manage more natural disasters in the coming monsoon. Hence, all the people need to pass the coming examination with good results.

In fact, any process which needs to overcome the challenges must have unity among the people. The united strength will be the best to safeguard the nation against any disasters and dangers.

Saliva testing for COVID-19 quicker, safer than nasal swabs: Study

To identify people with COVID-19 the investigators began conducting weekly tests of saliva samples from healthy community volunteers in May 2020 and continued over the next 2 years.

ACCORDING to a study led by the American Society for Microbiology, saliva samples can identify COVID-19 more quickly than testing with nasal swabs.

The study was published in the journal, 'Microbiology Spectrum'.

"That is important because people can spread COVID-19 before they know that they have it," said co-author Donald K. Milton, M.D., DrPH, a professor of occupational and environmental health at the Institute for Applied Environmental Health, University of Maryland School of Public Health, College Park.

"Earlier detection can reduce the disease's spread," he added.

An urgent need to increase testing

The research was motivated by the problem that early in the pandemic, an urgent need to increase testing was accompanied by a shortage of supplies, notably nasal swabs, which were then the standard method for collecting

samples for testing.

To identify people with COVID-19 the investigators began conducting weekly tests of saliva samples from healthy community volunteers in May 2020 and continued over the next 2 years.

Of the asymptomatic volunteers who tested positive, Milton and his colleagues found that those patients would typically show symptoms a day or 2 later.

"That made us wonder whether saliva was better for catching pre-symptomatic patients than the traditional nasal swabs," Milton said. To answer that question, the researchers used data from a companion study of close contacts of people with confirmed cases of COVID-19.

In the study, "We collected saliva and mid-turbinate [nasal] swab samples from contacts every 2 or 3 days during their quarantine period," said Milton.

"All samples were tested using real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction [RT-PCR] to detect SARS-CoV-2 and measure how much viral RNA



Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis has developed a saliva-based test for COVID-19 that is faster and easier than the swab tests currently in use. PHOTO: MATT MILLER/ WUSTL.EDU/ANI/FILE

was in the samples.

We then analyzed how these results changed in the days before and after symptom onset," he added.

Saliva was significantly more sensitive

Early in the course of infection, saliva was significantly more sensitive than mid-turbinate nasal

swabs notably so before the onset of symptoms, according to the study, which noted that previous studies had shown that pre-symptomatic transmission plays a

greater role than the symptomatic transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

The findings have implications for improving public acceptance of COVID-19 testing, reducing the cost of mass COVID-19 screening and improving the safety of healthcare workers who conduct testing. In the latter case, saliva self-testing avoids the close contact between patient and healthcare worker that nasal swabbing entails and avoids causing patients to cough and sneeze, thereby spreading virus particles as a result of swabbing the sensitive nasal passages, as well as discomfort to patients.

"Our research supports the use of saliva in large-scale screening in schools and workplaces, as a means of improving screening rates, as well as early detection," said Milton.

"We expect that if rapid saliva tests become available, they could be a major advance from the current nasal swab-based rapid tests," he concluded. — ANI



UN to debate how science and technology can boost COVID-19 recovery

THE 25th session of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development will focus on the themes of "Industry 4.0 for inclusive development" and "Science, technology and innovation for sustainable urban development in a post-pandemic world".

Ministers, policymakers, heads of international organizations and leading experts will examine how science, technology and innovation can help the world recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic during 25th session of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development from 28 March to 1 April in Geneva and online.

Focus on the themes

The sessions will focus on the themes of "Industry 4.0 for inclusive development" and "Science, technology and innovation for sustainable urban develop-

ment in a post-pandemic world".

UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan will lead a high-level roundtable discussion on science, technology and innovation policies, solutions and research priorities relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals. The discussion will be livestreamed on UN Web TV on 28 March at 2:30 pm CET.

"We need to make changes in international relations in science, technology and innovation so that developing countries can benefit from technology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals," Ms Grynspan said.

She added: "Developing countries need more opportunities to participate in international research networks, increased funding for research and more support for technology upgrading and transfer, particularly in support of post-COVID-19 recovery efforts."

Conversation with great minds

The commission will also feature a conversation with four distinguished academic scholars in science, technology, innovation and socioeconomic development, who will provide thought-provoking insights on these topics.

They are Yoshua Bengio, artificial intelligence scientist and 2018 Turing Prize laureate; Shoshana Zuboff, a renowned scholar of the digital revolution and its economic, social and political impacts; Daron Acemoglu, an influential researcher on political economy issues; and Carlota Perez, a leading specialist in the field of technological change and its economic and social consequences. Their conversation will be livestreamed on UN Web TV on 28 March at 3:30 pm CET.

Other speakers during the commission will include Ambassador Collen Vixen Kelapile

(Botswana), president of the UN Economic and Social Council; Maimunah Mohd Sharif, executive director of the UN Human Settlements Programme; and Hiroshi Kuniyoshi, deputy to the director-general of the UN Industrial Development Organization.

The commission will also review the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels and hear presentations on ongoing science, technology and innovation policy reviews by UNCTAD.

Tapping into the technological revolution

New and emerging technologies represent a \$350 billion market, which by 2025 could grow to over \$3.2 trillion, according to UNCTAD's groundbreaking Technology and Innovation Re-

port 2021, which outlines how developing countries can benefit from the current technological revolution to reduce gaps that hold back inclusive and sustainable development.

"Industry 4.0 makes it crucial

Source: UN



We need to make changes in international relations in science, technology and innovation so that developing countries can benefit from technology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. A vendor at the Guatemalan market. PHOTO: LAMAG.COM/UN NEWS



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 24 March 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the North Bay and West central Bay and partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 25 March, 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Taninthayi Region and Kachin, Shan states, scattered in upper Sagaing regions and Kayin, Mon states and isolated in the remaining regions and states. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of likelihood of isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers in upper Sagaing, Taninthayi regions and Kachin state.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 March 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

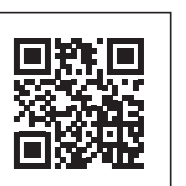
FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 March 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 March 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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NEWS
IN BRIEF

Anti-malaria drugs can fight pulmonary disease, finds study

A team of researchers from Colorado University has found that drugs used to treat malaria are also effective at treating a pulmonary disease similar to tuberculosis.

The research was published in the journal, 'Science of Translational Medicine'.

The study was a significant development in the fight against infections caused by non-tuberculous mycobacteria, or NTM, which are now more common than tuberculosis in the United States and often attack people who have a weakened immune system or pre-existing conditions like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or cystic fibrosis.

"There are currently very few antibiotics available to treat NTM infections, and some patients fail to respond to any treatment," said Professor Mary Jackson of CSU's Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Pathology, one of the lead authors.—ANI ■

Water supply fears as Morocco hit by worst drought since 1980s

AS Morocco withers under its worst drought in 40 years, experts warn that a combination of climate change and bad resource management could trigger severe drinking water shortages. "The country hasn't seen a situation like this since the start of the 1980s," said water policy expert Abderrahim Hendouf. While it was usually farmers who bore the brunt of repeated droughts in the North African kingdom, today water supplies to cities are under threat, water minister Nizar Baraka told parliament in mid-March.

Morocco has had little rain since September, and authorities say its reservoirs have received just 11 per cent of what they would in an average year. "That's a worrying sign," Abdelaziz Zerouali, the water ministry's head of research and planning, told state television station M2, adding that some preemptive measures had been taken to mitigate the risks.—AFP ■

Restoration project breathes life into world's largest natural populus euphratica forest



Aerial photo taken on 21 October 2021 shows the scenery of populus euphratica forest in the lower reaches of the Tarim River, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHAO GE

NORTHWEST China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has managed to save 6.82 million mu (about 454,667 hectares) of populus euphratica forest from degradation, thanks to a three-

year restoration project.

Covering an area of nearly 17 million mu, the populus euphratica forest along the Tarim River, China's longest inland river, is the largest natural forest containing

this plant species.

Though highly tolerant to drought, swathes of populus euphratica trees had died since the 1950s due to overexploitation of water resources along the Tarim

River, causing the river to dry up and decline in water levels.

In 2019, Xinjiang launched a three-year project to revive the dying forest. With an investment of 124 million yuan (about 19.5 million US dollars), the project aimed to enhance the forest's self-repair capacity by building flood diversion facilities to irrigate the degrading populus euphratica trees. Ilham Burhan, head of a forest management and protection station located in the lower reaches of the Tarim River in Yuli County, noted that he and his colleagues dug ditches to link the segregated water bodies, thus expanding the volume for the water reservoir and discharging more water into the forest interiors. He added that they had also built a diversion canal stretching over 10 km from the Tarim River to let the water flow into its old course, which was in a dry state for ages.—Xinhua ■

Scientists helping farmers kick chemical habit



This photograph taken on 7 August 2020, shows a general view of "Engrais Sud Vienne," a company where fertilizer and ammonium nitrate are believed to be stored, at Salaise-sur-Sanne, France.

PHOTO: AFP

IN a field in western France, the small purple and white flowers quivering among tender shoots of wheat are a clue that this is

not conventional single-crop farmland.

In fact, this whole area is part of scientific work to help farmers cut down on their use of pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilisers.

"I felt that these products were dangerous," said farmer David Bonneau as he hunched over the little wildflowers — veronica and hickweed. And "the general public is asking for reductions".

One of his experimental plots is treated the standard way, with chemical weedkiller; another he weeds mechanically

with a harrow whose teeth tear up the wild plants; while a third will not be treated at all.

He is part of a project involving 400 farms and around 40 villages in the Deux-Sevres region of western France, where scientists are experimenting with different techniques to cut pollution. Researchers from the French research agency, CNRS, support volunteer farmers to reduce the use of pesticides —probable sources of cancer and fatal to birds — as well as water-polluting chemical fertilisers, the prices of which are exploding.—AFP ■

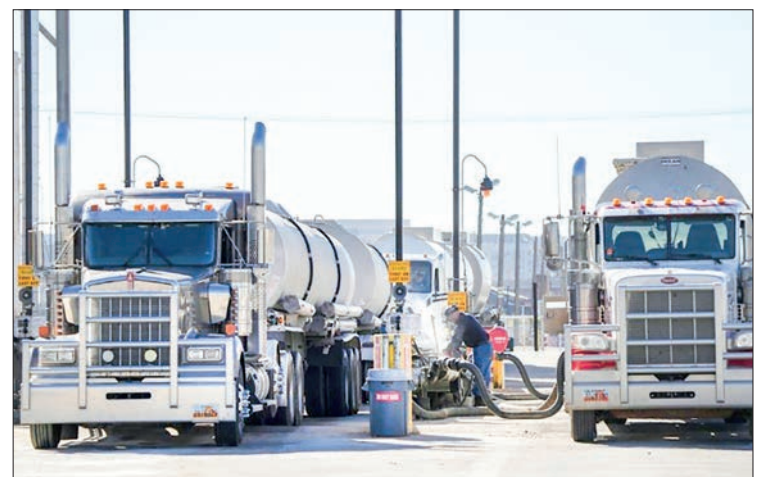
In climate fight, rich nations must give up oil first: report

RICH countries must end their oil and gas production by 2034 to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius and give poorer nations time to replace fossil fuel income, according to a report released Tuesday. The 70-page analysis from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research comes as nearly 200 nations kicks off a two-week negotiation to validate a landmark assessment of options for reducing carbon pollution and extracting CO2 from the air.

The overarching objective, enshrined in the 2015 Par-

is Agreement, is to cap global warming "well below" 2C, and 1.5C if possible.

A torrent of research since 2015, along with a crescendo of deadly extreme weather across the globe, has confirmed that the lower aspirational target is by far a safer threshold. Some poorer nations produce only a tiny percentage of global output but are so reliant on fossil fuel revenues that rapidly removing this income could undercut their economic or political stability, the Tyndall Centre report shows.—AFP ■



Wealthy nations that are major producers would remain rich even if fossil fuel income were removed. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

‘China’s Fauci’ calls for protecting ‘normal life’ in Omicron fight



Staff members disinfect a high-speed train at Shanghai Hongqiao Railway Station in east China’s Shanghai, 21 January 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/CHEN FEI

A top doctor in China’s pandemic fight who came under pressure last year for questioning the country’s zero-Covid policy has called again for balancing anti-virus measures with maintenance of normal life as China struggles with an Omicron surge.

Shanghai infectious disease expert Zhang Wenhong – who has been called “China’s Fauci” after US disease expert Anthony Fauci – also said in a blog post that the

city’s medical resources were becoming “strained” as cases climb, but he expects the metropolis to turn the corner soon.

Zhang’s comments may indicate officials’ growing tolerance for those questioning zero-Covid as patience with draconian lockdowns wears thin.

“In the future pandemic fight, maintaining normal life should be placed in a position of equal importance with (virus

screening),” Zhang posted on China’s Twitter-like Weibo platform Thursday.

“We hope that we can minimise the impact on our lives as much as possible.”

The post was liked, reposted or commented on more than two million times by midday Thursday. China is experiencing its worst Covid-19 outbreak since the start of the pandemic more than two years ago, with Shanghai, the country’s biggest city, an epicentre.

More than 4,800 new cases were reported nationwide Thursday – a figure that while minuscule compared to other countries, has frustrated Beijing’s zero-Covid strategy of keeping cases low through targeted lockdowns, mass testing and travel restrictions. While some northeastern Chinese cities have imposed full lockdowns on millions of people, Shanghai has sought to minimize disruption with targeted neighbourhood quarantines and mass testing of the roughly 25 million people.— AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Singapore to further relax restrictions as COVID-19 situation eases

SINGAPORE will further relax its COVID-19 restrictions as the number of infected cases has declined, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Thursday.

“Our fight against COVID-19 has reached a major turning point and we will be making a decisive move towards living with COVID-19”, Lee said in a live address broadcast both on TV and online.

According to Lee, the new safe management measures, which will take effect from Tuesday, include doubling group size to 10 persons from the current five, and increasing the capacity limit for larger events and settings.

Up to 75 per cent of employees will be allowed to return to workplaces. Wearing masks outdoors will be made optional.—Xinhua ■

BRICS nations launch vaccine R&D center

A launch ceremony for the BRICS Vaccine Research and Development (R&D) Centre was held online on Tuesday.

During the ceremony, Chinese Minister of Science and Technology Wang Zhigang said that China will work with other BRICS countries to use the center’s launch as an opportunity to promote exchanges and cooperation on vaccine R&D and testing.

China will work with these countries to jointly establish plants and the mutual recognition of standards, so as to strengthen the defense against COVID-19 and deliver hope and confidence for global economic recovery, Wang said.

At the ceremony, the five BRICS countries jointly proposed an initiative to strengthen vaccine cooperation to ensure the accessibility and affordability of vaccines in developing countries through their equitable distribution as global public goods.—Xinhua ■

Vulnerable communities in Britain feel threatened by rising COVID cases

AS Britain moved to lift all COVID-19 restrictive measures, vulnerable communities in Britain feel that relaxing restrictions this much will cost even more lives.

Helena Briggs, in her 50s, told Xinhua that she was very concerned.

“It’s so bad that restrictions have been lifted and it makes me so nervous to go out. I have a disability so I can catch the virus quicker than anyone else. I think that people are being selfish so the masks should be kept,” she said.

Last month, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the end of all domestic COVID-19 restrictions in England. British Travel Secretary Grant Shapps recently announced all COVID-19 travel restrictions are to be removed, prompting further concern regarding transmission of the virus from overseas.

More than 91 per cent of people aged 12 and above in Britain have had their first dose of vaccine, more than 85 per cent have received both shots and more



More than 91 per cent of people aged 12 and above in Britain have had their first dose of vaccine, more than 85 per cent have received both shots and more than 67 per cent have received booster jabs. PHOTO: AFP

than 67 per cent have received booster jabs.

But these measures have not been reassuring for people like Briggs. It is estimated there is up to 3.7 million people who are classed as clinically extremely vulnerable in Britain.

“I have always been cautious about leaving my home and have had very little contact with the outside world. My shopping is delivered, and I only leave my

house to take the bin out. Now the government have lifted all restrictions many of us feel helpless,” Briggs told Xinhua.

“Even with the vaccine cases are still going to increase if we continue to allow tourists into the country without passenger locator forms or testing/quarantine requirements. It is a let-down considering the progress this country has made,” she said.— Xinhua ■

Pre-pandemic supply chain won’t come back: expert

SUPPLY chain before the pandemic will not come back and the world needs to accept “this new normal”, an expert said at the 37th annual World Petrochemical Conference (WPC) starting Tuesday in Houston, the largest city in the US state of Texas.

“Whatever you thought about your supply chain pre-pandemic, throw that book out the window,” Lynn Stacy, a speaker with the OEC Group,

said at a WPC panel. “The only way to fix your supply chain is to accept this new normal.”

In his viewpoint, prices will run high, congestion delays will continue, while space and equipment are expected to remain scarce. All are major factors behind the current supply chain bottlenecks. “Plan for the worst, hope for the best,” Stacy said. “Plan for the highest cost, longest transit time, and longest free time.”—Xinhua ■



Supply chain before the pandemic will not come back and the world needs to accept “this new normal”, an expert said at the 37th annual World Petrochemical Conference (WPC) starting Tuesday in Houston, the largest city in the US state of Texas. PHOTO: LOIC VENANCE / AFP

Putin tells Europe to pay for gas in roubles



Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin signs an autograph on a natural gas pipeline Sakhalin-Khabarovsk-Vladivostok in the Russian Far East city of Vladivostok on 8 September 2011, during the pipeline's launch ceremony. **PHOTO: RIA-NOVOSTI POOL/ ALEXEY DRUZHININ /AFP**

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin said Wednesday Russia will only accept payments in roubles for gas deliveries to “unfriendly countries”, which include all EU members, after Moscow was hit by unprecedented sanctions over Ukraine.

Immediately after his announcement, the rouble — which has plummeted since the start of the Ukraine conflict — strengthened against the dollar and euro, while gas prices rose.

“I have decided to implement a set of measures to transfer payment for our gas supplies to unfriendly countries into Russian roubles,” Putin said during a televised government meeting.

He added, however, that Russia will continue supplying the volume of gas outlined in its contracts.

Putin ordered Russia's central bank to implement the new

payment system within a week, saying it must be “transparent” and will involve the purchase of rubles on Russia's domestic market.

Putin also hinted that other Russian exports may be affected.

“It is clear that delivering our goods to the European Union, the United States and receiving dollars, euros, other currencies no longer makes sense to us,” Putin said.

Ukraine was quick to denounce Russia's “economic war” on the EU and its efforts to “strengthen the rouble”.

“But the West could hit Russia with an oil embargo that would cause the Russian economy to plunge,” Ukrainian presidential advisor Andriy Yermak said on Telegram.

“This is now a key economic battle, and the West must collectively win it,” he added.—AFP ■

UK inflation jumps to 6.2%, highest since 1992: data



Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak stops at a sweet shop at the Bury Market in Lancashire. He is due to deliver his budget statement on Wednesday at about 1:45 pm. **PHOTO: LINDSEY PARNABY /AFP**

BRITISH inflation accelerated in February to hold at a near three-decade peak on soaring energy prices, official data showed

Wednesday before a budget update seeking to ease high living costs. The annual rate jumped to 6.2 per cent last month from 5.5

per cent in January, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement ahead of finance minister Rishi Sunak's budget announcement.

The last time the rate was higher was in March 1992 when it had stood at 7.1 per cent.

Spiking domestic electricity and gas costs were a key factor in February's broad-based price gains, according to the ONS.

Sunak faces widespread calls, even from fellow Conservative MPs, to help ease Britain's cost of living crisis.

“Inflation rose steeply in February as prices increased for a wide range of goods and services, for products as diverse as food to toys and games,” said ONS chief economist Grant Fitzner.—AFP ■

Hong Kong's economic growth has positive momentum in the long run

WITH the Chinese mainland's steadily growing economy, Hong Kong will gradually regain its economic growth momentum as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government implements multiple economic relief measures, experts have said.

Hong Kong has recently seen underperformance in export, employment and some other aspects. Observers believe that multiple internal and external factors have led to a slowdown in Hong Kong's momentum of economic recovery.

Data released by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council showed that Hong Kong's export index for the first quarter of 2022 was 24.7, down

12.5 points from the previous quarter, recording a downward trend for the third consecutive quarter. Hong Hao, managing director and chief strategist of the Bank of Communications (International), said the extent of Hong Kong's economic slowdown will depend largely on the development of its epidemic situation. Liang Haiming, a Hong Kong economist and chairman of China Silk Road iValley Research Institute, said the recent economic slowdown is due to volatility in the peripheral markets and mounting geopolitical tensions coupled with the epidemic situation in Hong Kong, which resulted in continued damage to the Hong Kong economy.—AFP ■

Transport strike to end this week: Spanish PM

SPANISH Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Wednesday said he was confident his government would reach an agreement with striking truck drivers to end the ongoing transport strike this week.

Sanchez said his government is working on a package of measures to respond to the economic problems caused by

the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

Speaking at the weekly “control” session in parliament, the prime minister said the aim was for “everyone together to form a great plan to give an answer to the consequences of the conflict in Ukraine and to approve it on 29 March” at the next cabinet meeting.

The government on Monday

agreed on an aid package of 500 million euros (550.70 million US dollars) for the transport sector with the National Committee for Road Transport, which represents around 80 per cent of the companies in the sector.

The two sides are scheduled to meet again on Friday to discuss details on how the financial aid will work.—Xinhua ■



More than 100 fishing boats parade at the Victoria Harbour to celebrate the 23rd anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland in Hong Kong, south China, 1 July 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/LO PING FAI**

US reinstates tariff exemptions on some Chinese products

THE US government announced Wednesday it will reinstate tariff exemptions for 352 Chinese products first hit with punitive duties in 2018, when then-president Donald Trump started a trade war with Beijing.

The exemptions lapsed in late 2020, but President Joe Biden's administration last October began seeking opinions on which of 549 eligible Chinese products should once again be excluded from the tariffs. In a statement, the US Trade Representative (USTR) said, "Today's determination was made after careful consideration

of the public comments, and in consultation with other US agencies." The exclusions are retroactive to 12 October of last year and extend through the end of 2022, USTR said in a statement.

The Biden administration has been under pressure from businesses as well as Democratic and Republican lawmakers to alleviate the tariff burden, which critics say exacerbate supply issues and drive up prices as the United States deals with a record wave of inflation.

The trade conflict between the US and China be-



Undated file photo shows a container ship of Maersk docking in Nansha Port, Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province. PHOTO: XINHUA/GUANGZHOU PORT AUTHORITY

gan when Trump imposed tariffs on \$370 billion worth of Chinese products, citing "unfair" trade practices. However more than 2,200 exclusions were granted and 549 of those were extended, with most of the exclusions expiring at the end of 2020. Washington and Beijing in January 2020 signed a so-called "phase one" trade agreement under which Beijing pledged to increase its purchases of American products and services by at least \$200 billion over 2020 and 2021 — a target China fell short of amid the Covid-19 pandemic.—AFP ■

Renault suspends work at Moscow factory: company

FRENCH car giant Renault announced Wednesday it was immediately suspending operations at its Moscow factory after Kyiv called for a boycott of the company for remaining in Russia.

Renault is also considering "the possible options" for its Russian affil-

ate AvtoVAZ, the company said in a statement, adding that it had downgraded its 2022 financial outlook.

"Renault Group has to revise its 2022 financial outlook with a Group operating margin of around 3 per cent versus at least 4 per cent previously," it said.

Ukraine's foreign minister on Wednesday called for a global boycott of Renault over its earlier refusal to leave the Russian market in the aftermath of the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine.

"Renault refuses to pull out of Russia," Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter ahead of Renault's announcement. "I call on customers and businesses around the globe to boycott Group Renault."

Renault, in its statement issued later Wednesday, said the group's "activities in its manufacturing plant in Moscow are suspended as of today".—AFP ■



An employee works on the assembly line at a plant of French car manufacturer Renault in Moscow. PHOTO: ALEXANDER NEMENOV/AFP

Toshiba shareholders reject two-way split plan

A majority of Toshiba Corp. shareholders on Thursday rejected a management proposal to split the Japanese conglomerate into two listed companies.

Toshiba, a household name in Japan with a nearly 150-year history, had sought support for the new reform plan at an extraordinary shareholders' meeting after its earlier plan to divide into three

was met with opposition from some major shareholders.

The outcome of the vote is not legally binding but indicates likely rejection when the company plans to hold a regular shareholders' meeting in June 2023 for a final decision.

"We will consider a range of options to improve corporate value," Toshiba

President and CEO Taro Shimada said following the results of the vote.

The firm said in November it was planning to split into three listed companies -- two spinoffs that would focus respectively on the infrastructure and device businesses, and a third that would own a stake in flash-memory chip company Kioxia Holdings Corp.—Kyodo ■

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of **ZIBO NAB Agrochemicals Co.,Ltd** have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name "**Agro Power Co.,Ltd**", to new distributor name "**Royal Shin Thant Co.,Ltd**". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days.
Royal Shin THant Co.,Ltd. Ph-09-444461516

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	AP-Zapic	Imazapic 240 g/l SL	P2021-4286
2.	AP Shal 11 EW	Fenoxaprop-P-ethyl 11% EW	F2021-3250

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of **Shandong Topagri Co.,Ltd** have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name "**Agro Power Co.,Ltd**", to new distributor name "**Royal Shin Thant Co.,Ltd**". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days.
Royal Shin THant Co.,Ltd. Ph-09-444461516

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	AP-Penzi	Oxyfluorfen 9% + Pendimethalin 25% EC	P2021-4312

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of **Shanghai Topchems Industry Co.,Ltd** have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name "**Agro Power Co.,Ltd**", to new distributor name "**Royal Shin Thant Co.,Ltd**". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days.
Royal Shin THant Co.,Ltd. Ph-09-444461516

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	Shin Thant Star	Oxadiazon 25% EC	P2017-3408

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of **M/S Krishi Rasayan Exports Pvt.,Ltd** have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name "**Royal Shin Thant Co.,Ltd**", to new distributor name "**Agro Power Co.,Ltd**". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days.
Agro Power Co.,Ltd. Ph-09-5012662,09-73197425

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
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South Korea's disgraced ex-president Park leaves hospital after prison release



South Korea's ex-president Park Geun-hye has left a hospital in Seoul. **PHOTO: AFP**

SOUTH Korea's ex-president Park Geun-hye left hospital on Thursday, three months after she was released from prison following a pardon for her role in one of the country's biggest corruption cases.

Since the December pardon, 70-year-old Park has been an inpatient at the Samsung Medical Centre in Seoul, being treated for shoulder pain and dental problems as well as stress, according to local media. She had been serving a 20-year prison sentence for abuse of power and bribery, and another two years for election

law violations. Her release comes less than two months ahead of the inauguration of the country's new conservative president-elect Yoon Suk-yeol, who as former prosecutor-general played a key role in convicting her.

"I offer my greetings to our people after five years," a smiling Park said as she left the hospital, wearing a dark navy coat and carrying a purse.

"My health has improved a lot thanks to your concerns."

Park is the daughter of late dictator Park Chung-hee, who ruled the country with an iron

fist from 1961 to 1979.

She became South Korea's first woman president in 2013, casting herself in the role of the daughter of the nation, incorruptible and beholden to none.

Less than four years later, she was impeached and ousted.

The corruption scandal exposed shady links between big businesses and politics in South Korea, with Park and her close friend Choi Soon-sil accused of taking bribes from conglomerates, including Samsung Electronics, in exchange for preferential treatment.—AFP ■

Ukraine says 'significant difficulties' in Russia talks

KYIV said Wednesday that talks with Russia to end nearly one month of fighting were encountering "significant difficulties" after Moscow accused the United States of hindering peace efforts.

"The negotiations are continuing online. They are proceeding with significant difficulties because the Ukrainian side has clear and principled posi-

tions," Ukraine's lead negotiator Mykhaylo Podolyak told reporters in written comments.

His comments came after Moscow earlier accused Kyiv of shifting its negotiating position, saying the United States was working to keep Russia and Ukraine "in a state of military action as long as possible".

Ongoing talks between the

two sides have failed to produce any breakthroughs despite earlier hopes that a document might be signed, following announcements from both sides.—AFP ■

People from Ukraine live in a temporary resettlement site in Beregsurany, eastern Hungary, 26 February 2022. **PHOTO: ATTILA VOLGYI/XINHUA**



NEWS IN BRIEF

Trump 'guilty' of felonies, says prosecutor who resigned: US media

DONALD Trump is "guilty of numerous felony violations," said a prosecutor who resigned from a criminal probe into the former US president's business practices, according to his resignation letter published Wednesday by the New York Times.

Mark Pomerantz, who led the New York investigation into Trump's finances, resigned on 23 February along with Carey Dunne, the other lead prosecutor on the case.

Pomerantz's letter said that he had quit over the decision by new Manhattan district attorney Alvin Bragg not to move ahead with prosecution of the Republican billionaire.

That decision, he wrote in the letter which the US daily published in full, was "contrary to the public interest".—AFP ■

Black box of crashed China Eastern jet recovered

A black box from the crashed China Eastern airliner was recovered on Wednesday as investigators try to piece together what made a jet carrying 132 passengers nosedive into a mountainside in southern China.

The cause of the disaster has mystified aviation authorities who have scoured rugged terrain for clues, finding no survivors from what is almost certain to be China's deadliest plane crash in nearly 30 years. A flight recorder "from China Eastern MU5735 was found," on Wednesday Liu Lusong, a spokesman for China's aviation authority, told reporters, although state media later said it was badly damaged.—AFP ■

Another US state passes abortion 'bounty hunter' law



The fight over abortion rights in the United States has never gone away, but as the Supreme Court looks set to revisit *Roe v. Wade*, local initiatives are reshaping access to the procedure. **PHOTO: AFP**

ANOTHER US state passed a law allowing abortion providers to be sued in civil court Wednesday, as conservatives across the country ramp up their effort to overturn long-held reproductive rights.

The bill in Idaho allows families of women who have had abortions -- and the father of the fetus -- to sue providers, taking

enforcement out of the hands of the state, in a move modelled on a controversial Texas law.

Governor Brad Little, who signed the bill Wednesday, said he was an ardent supporter of the rights of "pre-born babies," but feared this approach rendered the law unconstitutional.

"While I support the pro-

life policy in this legislation, I fear the novel civil enforcement mechanism will in short order be proven both unconstitutional and unwise," he wrote in a letter to the state legislature.

"Deputizing private citizens to levy hefty monetary fines on the exercise of a disfavored but judicially recognized constitutional right for the purpose of evading court review undermines our constitutional form of government and weakens our collective liberties." As critics of the Texas law also pointed out, Little said framing legislation in this way rendered vulnerable rights that conservatives hold dear, such as the right to own guns. Civil rights groups and the White House lambasted the Idaho law. "Lawmakers openly touted this bill as a 'clever' way to undermine abortion access by evading judicial review," said Lauren Bramwell of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).—AFP ■

UN to again 'demand' Russia 'immediately' end war in Ukraine

THE UN General Assembly was debating on Wednesday a new non-binding resolution which, if adopted by a majority of member states, will "demand" that Russia stop the war in Ukraine "immediately".

On 2 March, 141 countries approved an earlier resolution that demands that Russia immediately cease the use of force against Ukraine.

Five states, including Russia, voted against and 35 abstained. The resolution was non-binding and, other than demonstrating Russia's isolation on the world stage, did not appear to impact the fighting.

On Wednesday Ukraine put the new resolution forward at another emergency session of the General Assembly in New York.

The text, which is also non-binding, "demands an immediate cessation of the hostilities by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, in particular of



Ukrainian servicemen carry rocket-propelled grenades and sniper rifles as they walk towards the city of Irpin, northwest of Kyiv, on 13 March 2022. PHOTO: AFP/ DIMITAR DILKOFF

any attacks against civilians and civilian objects."

It also reiterates UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' call for Moscow to "stop its military offensive, as well as his call to establish a ceasefire and to return to the path of dialogue and negotiations." The draft resolution, seen by AFP, is supported by

88 countries and had been initially prepared by France and Mexico.

The United States ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, described it as "building" on the 2 March vote.

She said it "makes that appeal to the one person with the ability to stop the violence. And that's Vladimir Putin."—AFP ■

Russia limits access to Google News



Russia's media regulator has restricted access to the Google News service, accusing it of providing access to "false" information about Russia's offensive in Ukraine, Russian news agencies reported Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

RUSSIA'S media regulator has restricted access to the Google News service, accusing it of providing access to "false" information about Russia's offen-

sive in Ukraine, Russian news agencies reported Wednesday.

The decision was taken at the request of the Russian General Prosecutor's Office,

according to a statement by the country's media regulator Roskomnadzor cited by the agencies.

The online news service "provided access to numerous publications and materials that contain false information... about the course of the special military operation on Ukrainian territory," the statement said.

Google "confirmed that some people are having difficulty accessing the Google News app and website in Russia and that this is not due to any technical issues on our end," a company spokesperson said.

"We've worked hard to keep information services like News accessible to people in Russia for as long as possible," the Google spokesperson added.—AFP ■

China going own way on Ukraine issue: scholar

WHILE dealing with the Ukraine crisis, China will neither follow the West nor Russia, said Zheng Yongnian, a scholar with the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen), in a recent interview with German weekly newspaper Die Zeit.

China is going its own way, said Zheng, director of the Advanced Institute of Global and Contemporary China Studies of the university. He noted that the Russia-Ukraine conflict is damaging the entire global economy and thus also China, and China

definitely wants the conflict to end as soon as possible.

China needs a stable world order for its further modernization and is genuinely concerned about the conflict, but understands Russia's security concerns, Zheng said.—Xinhua ■

NEWS DIGEST

Here are the latest developments in Russia's war in Ukraine:

Russia encircling Kyiv

THE capital Kyiv risks being surrounded, with Russian forces moving in on areas north and west of the capital, the Ukrainian military says, with some of its suburbs heavily bombed. Three other major cities are effectively besieged.

Kremlin ok's fighters from Syria

THE Kremlin says Syrians can volunteer to fight for Russia in Ukraine after President Vladimir backed plans to allow volunteer fighters to participate in the war.

His defence minister said some 16,000 volunteers, mostly from the Middle East, were ready to join Moscow's invasion of its neighbour.

Care home, kindergarten hit

A kindergarten and an apartment block are hit in the first air strikes on the central city of Dnipro, with at least one person dead.

A care home for disabled people near Kharkiv in the east is also hit, with 330 people in the building at the time, officials say.

Aid convoy attacked

UKRAINE'S President Volodymyr Zelensky says trucks carrying food and medicine to the besieged port of Mariupol in the south -- without water and power for 11 days -- were attacked by Russia tanks.

The city's mayor says it is being shelled "every 30 minutes", with 1,200 civilians already dead.

100,000 evacuated in two days

ZELENSKY says about 100,000 people have evacuated from areas surrounding Kyiv, Sumy and Izyum in two days.

The Ukrainian military says fighting is raging for control of the northern city of Chernihiv and Kharkiv and Severodonetsk in the east. It says two of its soldiers are killed in strikes on Lutsk military air base in the northwest.

Moscow pledges daily corridors

MOSCOW promises to open humanitarian corridors every day to allow Ukrainians to flee, but Kyiv has rejected routes leading into Russia or its ally Belarus.

UN meets on Russia bio-weapon claim

The UN Security Council will meet Friday after Russia says biological weapons are being developed in Ukraine, claims both Washington and Kyiv deny.

The US says the allegations are a sign Moscow could soon use the weapons itself.

Seizing US assets will backfire: White House

WHITE House press secretary Jen Psaki warns Moscow to seizing assets of US or international companies will "result in more economic pain for Moscow".

Oligarch attacks plan

VLADIMIR Potanin, one of Russia's richest oligarchs and a Kremlin confidant, criticizes plans to confiscate assets of foreign firms exiting the country, likening it to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

EU douses Ukraine's hopes

EUROPEAN Union leaders tell Ukraine there is no fast way to join the bloc, with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte saying membership is "for the long term, if at all".

2.5 million flee

MORE than two and a half million people have fled the "senseless war" in Ukraine, the UN says -- more than half to Poland.

SOURCE: XINHUA/ANI

MFF holds Football & Futsal Referee Training opening ceremony



Trainees (blue shirt) pose for a group photo with Myanmar Football Federation officials, and trainers at the Football & Futsal Referee Training opening ceremony in Yangon on 24 March. **PHOTO: MFF**

AN opening ceremony of MFF Future & Development Group of Referee programme Module -1 (Football / Futsal), jointly organized by the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) and the Referee Committee was held at the press conference hall of Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

Advisor to the President of the Myanmar Football Federation U Bunny Tin Aung, Chairman of the Myanmar Football Federation Refereeing Committee U Tun Hla Aung, CEO

of Myanmar National League U Soe Moe Kyaw, officials from Myanmar Football Federation, trainers and trainees attended the opening ceremony.

U Bunny Tin Aung gave an opening speech during the ceremony.

The training will be conducted from 24 to 28 March. Sixteen trainees and three trainees, including the referee and assistant referee, will join the course.

Two AFC Referee Academy trainees and one trainee will be

among the participants.

Among the AFC Referee Academy participants, Phyto Htet Aung started in 2018 (Batch 2) and is now attending the third-year course.

U Thura Zaw and Daw Khin Nyein Chan will start their first-year course in 2022 (Batch 4).

Module 2 of the MFF Future & Development Group of Referee programme will be launched in May and Module 3 will be continued in August, officials said. —GNLM

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Swiatek poised to be No 1 with Barty coming off ranking list

ASHLEIGH Barty said Thursday that she will remove herself from the WTA rankings after announcing her retirement, opening the door for Poland's Iga Swiatek to become world number one.

The three-time Grand Slam-winning Australian has held top spot for more than two years but stunned the sports world on Wednesday by quitting at just 25.

The 20-year-old Swiatek is

a massive 2,204 ranking points behind Barty, but there will be a new number one on Monday when the new list comes out and the second-placed Pole is in prime position.

Swiatek, who shot to prominence by winning the French Open in 2020 and has shown remarkable consistency since, told reporters at the Miami Open that she is trying not to think about it too much.

—AFP ■



Poland's Iga Swiatek (right) could become the new world number one after Ashleigh Barty (left) retired. **PHOTO: AFP**

Japan beat Australia to reach World Cup, Saudis also qualify



Japan's Kaoru Mitoma celebrates after scoring in Sydney. **PHOTO: AFP**

SUBSTITUTE Kaoru Mitoma scored twice in the dying minutes as Japan beat Australia 2-0 on Thursday to book their place at a seventh straight World Cup and in doing so also helped Saudi Arabia qualify.

It was a crushing blow for an understrength Socceroos who now face a perilous play-off to keep alive their hopes of making

Qatar.

The game in a wet Sydney looked destined for a draw before Mitoma converted from close range on 89 minutes, and then again after a mazy run in injury time to spark joyous celebrations from the visitors.

Victory pushed Japan to the top of Asian Group B qualifying on 21 points, six clear of Australia

with only one more game to play.

The Saudis, on 19 points, face China in Sharjah later Thursday but are assured of their place in Qatar courtesy of Japan's win.

Australia now cannot finish higher than third, forcing a play-off against the third-placed team in Asian Group A. The winner will then meet a team from South America for the right to play in Qatar later this year.

Japan started their qualifying campaign with two losses from their first three games, but have now won six in a row.

They headed into the high-stakes clash in front of nearly 42,000 fans at Stadium Australia with a clear edge. Australia's last win over them was in 2009 and Hajime Moriyasu's men claimed a crucial 2-1 victory when the two teams met in October.

Australia were also missing a string of players due to coronavirus impacts or injury, including influential duo Aaron Mooy and Tom Rogic.—AFP ■