

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.

SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla visit family water-throwing pavilion in PyinOoLwin Station

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla on the Akyat Day of 1383 ME Maha Thingyan festival yesterday viewed the participation of officers, other ranks and families in the water-throwing festival at the pavilions of training depots, regiments and units in PyinOoLwin Station.

At the pavilion of the families of the Tatmadaw Administration School in the morning, the Senior General, wife and party were welcomed by trainee officers, Tatmadaw members and families. The Senior General and wife viewed the



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla view the choral dance performance at the event.

joyful participation of Tatmadaw members and families with songs and choral dances in the festival and doused them.

At the pavilions of Tatmadaw Communications and Electronic School, PyinOoLwin Military Hospital and Tatmadaw Engineering School, the Senior General and wife

watched the song and dance entertainment of choral dance troupes and enjoyment of Tatmadaw members and families in the water-throwing festival. They then splashed Thingyan water on the Tatmadaw members and families.

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Shwedagon crowded with visitors on Thingyan Akyat Day



On the precinct of the Shwedagon Pagoda.

PILGRIMS peacefully visited the Shwedagon Pagoda on the Akyat day of the 1383 ME Thingyan festival.

Religious buildings, including pagodas, are reopened to the public following COVID-19 health rules.

The Shwedagon Pagoda was packed with members of the Sangha, nuns and pilgrims on the morning of the Akyat day of the Thingyan festival. — Aung Myint (IPRD)/GNLM

Kyaiktiyoe Pagoda packed with pilgrims on Thingyan's third day

KYAIKTIYOE Pagoda in Kyaikto Township of Thaton District in Mon State was crowded with pilgrims on the third day of the Thingyan festival (Akyat Day).

Visitors across the nation can peacefully ride vehicles and cable cars from Kinmunsakhan to Kyaiktiyoe Pagoda. According to the pagoda

board of trustees, the people donate gold foils, alms, water, flowers and oil light, and there are about 5,000 visitors to the pagoda daily.

The pagoda board of trustees also provided awareness activities to follow the health rules of the Ministry of Health. —Than Than Maw (Kyaikto)/GNLM



On the terrace of the Kyaiktiyoe Pagoda.

Domestic visitors flock to Kyaukmyatmaw Pagoda out of seven travel destinations in Bagan Cultural Zone

DOMESTIC visitors thronged Kyaukmyatmaw Pagoda out of seven travel destinations in Bagan Cultural Zone in NyaungU Township of Mandalay Region, said U Myo Min Aung, assistant director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Bagan Branch).

The DHT created appealing holiday destinations to enjoy the beautiful natural landscapes and heritage tourism in Bagan.

Additionally, it developed the new seven destinations as the Community-based Tourism sites to ensure the job creation for the residents and draw the attention of local travellers and tourists.

Out of those destinations, Kyaukmyatmaw Pagoda is



Local travellers are seen visiting one of the Bagan Cultural Zone's sites.

packed with approximately 15,000 visitors per day during the Thing-

yan holidays. The DHT developed those seven sites; Kyauk-

myatmaw Pagoda, Rocky Lake, Zee-O-Hla village, Set-Set-Yo

village, Mount Popa and Gemoe Pond and Thepyintaw village.

According to the department, besides Kyaukmyatmaw Pagoda, domestic visitors observe community-based tourist sites such as Set-Set-Yo village and Zee-O-Hla village these days.

Kyaukmyatmaw Pagoda is situated on the bank of the Ayeyawady River. It is a two-storey temple and architecture of the Pyu Era. Temple's interior design is similar to that of Lawkananda Pagoda.

The sunset view on the bank of the Ayeyawady River and picturesque mountains attract homegrown visitors and tourists between 5 and 6:30 pm. — Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM

47 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 15 April, total figure rises to 612,527

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 612,527 after 47 new cases were reported on 15 April 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 591,264 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at 19,434 without casualties. —MNA

The system that met the requirements of the country will be practised

OUR country has to rigidly stand with a Union based on Democracy and Federal System elected by people. Democracy, herein, is an administrative mechanism chosen by people and the Federal System is a system of dividing up authoritative power and sharing an equal opportunity. Notwithstanding the designation of the Federal System laying hedges, the system that met the requirements of the country will be practised.

(Excerpt from Speech Delivered by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing at the Parade of the 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day on 27th March 2022.)

SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla visit family water-throwing pavilion in PyinOoLwin Station

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The Senior General and wife went to the Khatawmi family Thingyan pavilion in PyinOoLwin Station in the evening. They viewed the entertainment of family choral dance troupes and public participation in the Myanmar traditional Thingyan festival and doused the Tatmadaw members and families.

The Senior General and wife presented cash awards to Tatmadaw members and families who participated in the entertainments at the family pavilions and joyfully enjoyed the water-throwing festival together with Tatmadaw members and families. — MNA



The Senior General and his wife take part in the water-splashing festivities in PyinOoLwin Station yesterday.



SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win visits water-throwing pavilions in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area



The Vice-Senior General and his wife present awards to artistes and choral dancers.



The Vice-Senior General goes around the Thingyan pandals in Nay Pyi Taw.



A choral dance demonstration.

THINGYAN revellers, Tatmadaw members and families joyfully enjoyed the water-throwing festivities at the pavilions in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on the Thingyan Akyat Day of Myanmar's traditional Maha Thingyan Festival 1383 ME.

Renowned artistes, vocalists and choral dance troupes performed singing and dancing entertainment at the pavilion of the families of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army,

Navy and Air) in Zeyathiri Township yesterday. Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win watched the entertainment. He participated in the water-throwing festival together with Tatmadaw members and families.

In the evening, the Vice-Senior General presented gifts and

cash rewards to the artistes and choral dance troupes after watching the singing and dancing entertainment of famous artistes and vocalists together with choral dance troupes at the Nay Pyi Taw Mayor's Maha Thingyan pavilion and the family pavilions of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Seinpan pavilion, Makyiyeik pavilion and Nay Pyi Taw pavilion in the compound of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) were crowded with Thingyan

revellers and those enjoying the water-throwing festival. Artistes and vocalists presented songs

and choral dances while the pavilions served the people with refreshments. — MNA



Nay Pyi Taw Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal.



Ministry of Home Affairs' Maha Thingyan Pandal.

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SAC member Daw Aye Nu Sein launches Sittway Walking Thingyan festival, visits pandals

STATE Administration Council member Daw Aye Nu Sein, accompanied by Rakhine State Chief Minister Dr Aung Kyaw Min, state ministers and departmental officials, launched the Walking Thingyan event along the Shukhintha street in Sittway Township yesterday.

They also looked around the pandals of departments and people playing water at the Viewpoint beach, Sittway Hotel beach and Maha Thingyan Central Pavilion in front of the U Ottama Park.

First, SAC member Daw Aye Nu Sein cut the ribbon to launch the walking Thingyan event at Shukhintha street with Rakhine State Chief Min-



ister Dr Aung Kyaw Min, the Minister, the Social Affairs Minister and the Ethnic Affairs Minister. They visited the wa-

ter-throwing pandals along with the walking Thingyan event and free food donation event.

Afterwards, they went to the Sittway Viewpoint beach, Sittway Hotel and pavilion to inspect the holding of Thingyan celebrations in Sittway.

In the evening, SAC member and the party viewed the performances of Rakhine artistes, choral dance troupes of departments and military at the Maha Thingyan Central Pandals.

The pandals in Sittway township were crowded with revellers on the Akyat day of the Thingyan festival. — Tin Tun (IPRD)/GNLM



MoI holds Maha Thingyan water-splashing event

THE Ministry of Industry held the Maha Thingyan Water-Splashing Ceremony to welcome the 1384 Myanmar New Year yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw. The ceremony was attended by the Union minister and his wife, the directors-general, directors, staff and their families.

At the ceremony, the Union minister wished all the staff and families of his ministry good health, peace of mind and happiness on the occasion of the Myanmar New Year, and the participants performed the people with dances and songs and enjoyed the ceremony happily.

Those present at the ceremony were also offered with traditional snacks and ice-cream, it is reported. — MNA



MoEA family Thingyan festival continues on Akyat Day



THE Ministry of Ethnic Affairs Family Thingyan Festival (Akyat Day) continued yesterday morning at the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw, and Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs U Saw Tun Aung Myint and his wife, Deputy Minister U Zaw Aye Maung, Deputy Minister for Education U Zaw

Win and his wife, the MoEA permanent secretary, the directors-general, the deputy directors-general, officials, staffers and families happily participated in the event.

The Thingyan choral dances were performed, and the Union minister and his wife and the deputy minister

awarded cash awards to the choral dance troupes.

Afterwards, the Union minister and party enjoyed the water-splashing festivities together with staff and families and were treated to Myanmar traditional food and snacks by the ministry's staff. — MNA

Foreign embassy families participate in Thingyan festival at Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal

THE family members of foreign embassies in Yangon, led by Democratic People's Republic of Korea Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Jong Ho Bom, participated in Myanmar's traditional water festival at Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal with the relevant departmental officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

First, ambassadors, embassy staff and family members were welcomed by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay, and the Thingyan choral dancers

sprinkled water on them with Eugenia sprigs.

The ethnic traditional culture groups, Mother's Group, artistes, members of the Myanmar Music Association and Myanmar Thabin Artistes Association performed the Bagan era dance and Zaw Gyi puppet dance.

After the entertainment, the Yangon Region chief minister, the mayor and the DPRK ambassador gave cash awards to performers and splashed water on them.

Officials sang Myanmar classic songs, played water and participated in the Walk-



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein cordially greets Mr Jong Ho Bom, DPRK Ambassador to Myanmar. **PHOTOS : KO KO ZAW, KO YE**

ing Thingyan event along the Maha Bandoola Park Street. The

Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal hosted many revellers on

the Akyat day of the Thingyan festival. — Ko Thike/GNLM



Families of foreign missions and embassies in Yangon.



The water-splashing with Eugenia sprigs in progress.



Families of embassies join the Thingyan singing.

Mandalay bustled with revellers on Thingyan Akyat Day



Revellers enjoy throwing water on another (top photos). Artists are entertaining the public at the event (above).

REVELLERS played water at the pandals along the southern parts of the moat. Several others went to the resorts to relax on yesterday's Myanmar traditional Thingyan Akyat day.

Thingyan lovers came to the ministries' pandals in the southern part of the moat and participated happily in water-splashing festivities. All pandals donated refreshments. Famous artistes and choral dance troupes entertained the public.

Ko Kyi Soe, a reveller at one Thingyan pandal, said, "As a Thingyan lover, I am happy to be able to celebrate the Thingyan Festival again this year, which

was suspended for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I had refreshed when I played with water and sang Thingyan songs."

People thronged the resort sites like Taungthaman, U Pein Bridge in Amarapura Township, the City Park downtown and the 3rd-mile, 5th-mile and 7th-mile resorts on Dokhtawady riverbanks in Patheingyi Township yesterday afternoon and evening.

Moreover, Mandalay residents visited pagodas and religious places during the Thingyan period and donated traditional Myanmar refreshments. — Maung Aye Chan/GNLM

Nay Pyi Taw residents enjoy Maha Thingyan's third day

ON the third day of the Maha Thingyan water festival, the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area was busy with people enjoying splashing water on each other, donating food and snacks, and doing good deeds yesterday.

Famous pagodas and monasteries in Nay Pyi Taw were also alive, with pilgrims fasting, meditating, and paying homage in the morning. At the Nay Pyi Taw mayor's water-splashing

pandal and the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Army) Thingyan pandal, famous national artistes and the choral dance troupes from the townships in Nay Pyi Taw entertained with their performances. The pandals also offered refreshments to participants of the festival.

In addition, the Walking Thingyan was held in the Nay Pyi Taw Water Fountain Park, and prominent places, including



beach resorts in Zeyathiri Township, were also bustling with holidaymakers from across the country. People also built makeshift tents in villages, wards and townships in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and enjoyed the festival happily and safely.

Ensuring people celebrate the festival in peace, relevant authorities provided security and facilitated the traffic. The Myanmar traditional Maha Thingyan is held to welcome a new year by pouring water to remove the dirt from the old year and prevent it from entering the new year. It is a traditional festival that people celebrate with love in the country. — Ko Gyi Htein/GNLM



Thingyan's choral dance (top), merrymakers enjoy the Thingyan water festival (above and right photos).



Sagaing Region Chief Minister visits water-throwing pandals of departments, North-West Command

SAGAING Region Chief Minister U Myat Kyaw and his wife visited the water-throwing pandals of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Security and Border Affairs in Monywa Township of Sagaing Region on the evening of the

Thingyan Akyat Day together with relevant officials.

They enjoyed the performances of Thingyan choral dance troupes and artistes and presented cash awards to them.

On the morning of the

Thingyan Akyat Day, the chief minister and his wife and officials went to the pandals of the North-West Command in Monywa Township. They also watched dance performances and threw water at them. — MNA

Thingyan's song performance in Sagaing Region.

People celebrate Thingyan's third day

IN Bago, people were celebrating the third day of the Thingyan water festival at the Central Pandal of the Bago region government and Lakepya Pandal yesterday.

In addition to the Walking Thingyan Festival held along the old hospital road on 16 water-throwing pandals, the region government offer re-

freshments daily at the food pandals.

The region government ministers and directors also awarded the dance groups who performed at the pandals with cash prizes, and famous artists/singers, including Moe Aung Yin, Pu Su, Assini, Pwint Nadi Maung and others, are performing at respective pan-

dals till the fourth day of the festival tomorrow, it is reported. — Ko Tut (IPRD)/GNLM

Myanmar traditional Thingyan festival goes into the third day in Bago Region.



Practically implement projects beneficial for the State, growers

As most of the service personnel are in the stereotypical mindset whenever they do development tasks, can they serve their assignments only when the superior level gives orders. They are still hugging the mindset of doing their assignments to just finish.

That is why all the people should strive for the development of the agricultural sector without just a show but efficiently utilize the vacant and virgin lands to be reclaimed as cultivable lands on which various kinds of crops cover.

Their efforts do not reach the implementation of accomplishment for the missions not only in the agricultural tasks but in others, although these are good for the State and the people. Hence, their efforts suspend on the stage of just showing without practical work.

Research is of great importance in the agriculture sector. But it is not enough for just research. It needs to lead the ways to implement it. Will the State implement it? If so, how does the State manage it? Now, demonstration covers the display of research, but it does not comprise a broader scale of works.

All the people need to reform necessary measures for the sake of the State and the people. They all should change mindsets from just finishing to the doing accomplishment from now onward. In fact, the latter's spirit is sure to benefit not only the State and the people but themselves.

If Myanmar citizens efficiently utilize the adequate area of land for operating agricultural works and other livelihoods, it is a must to improve the State economy. If both departmental officials and local farmers join hands to supply agricultural water with high techniques to farmlands in the summer for arranging in the double-cropping pattern on all sown acreage, a per-acre yield of all crops will increase with a great benefit for all.

In order to enjoy a higher rate of per-acre yield for all crops, researchers and farmers need to conduct systematic research for organizing the farmers to grow quality strains of crops. Such a long term plan must be implemented to achieve the accomplishment.

If the agricultural products from double cropping and mixed cropping patterns are exported in systematic production, the State can enjoy the fruits of good results. The larger volume of agricultural export products and import goods under the proper management will contribute a great deal to surging the State economy.

That is why all the people should strive for the development of the agricultural sector without just a show but efficiently utilize the vacant and virgin lands to be reclaimed as cultivable lands on which various kinds of crops cover.

COVID-19: Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 variants, not more severe or transmissible, so far

As the coronavirus which causes COVID-19 continues to evolve, we cannot afford to 'lose sight' of the changes, the UN health agency said on Wednesday, warning that lower case numbers and deaths do not necessarily mean 'lower risk'.

LAST week saw the lowest number of COVID-19 deaths since the early days of the pandemic, but some countries are still witnessing 'serious spikes' which are putting pressure on hospitals.

"Our ability to monitor trends is compromised as testing has significantly reduced," the UN World Health Organization's (WHO) director told journalists in Geneva.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus reiterated that higher testing and sequencing rates are vital for scientists to track existing variants and to identify new ones as they emerge.

"At present there are a number of Omicron sub-lineages we're following closely, including BA.2, BA.4 and BA.5 and another recombinant detected, made up of BA.1 and BA.2," he said.

The latest sub-lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported in a number of countries, including South Africa and some European nations, WHO lead epidemiologist Dr Maria Van Kerkhove informed.

"There are less than 200 sequences available so far and we expect this to change... We are



The latest sub-lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported in a number of countries, including South Africa and some European nations. People queue for rapid coronavirus tests at a center set up at a church in Aalborg, Denmark, where a second omicron variant has fuelled a surge. PHOTO: HENNING BAGGER/RITZAU SCANPIX/AFP

tracking (the virus) very closely to see if there is any uptick in case detection, but (so far) we haven't seen any change in epidemiology or severity," she highlighted.

We can't lose sight of the virus WHO's director of emergencies, Michael Ryan, warned that as the virus continues to evolve, the world "cannot simply afford

to lose sight of it". "It would be very short-sighted at this point to assume that lower numbers of cases mean absolute lower risks. We are pleased to see deaths dropping

but this virus has surprised us before, it has caught us off guard before.

"We need to do our jobs and track this virus the best we can, while people go back to live their lives as normally as possible", Dr Ryan explained.

Meanwhile, WHO's lead scientist Dr Soumya Swaminathan, warned that sub-lineages and recombinants will continue to appear, and the world must continue investing in improved tools such as new vaccines.

"We have to be prepared for the possibility that this virus can change so much that it might be able to evade existing immunity," she said.

Still an emergency

Tedros emphasised that currently, the virus remains deadly, especially for the unprotected and unvaccinated that don't have access to health care and antivirals.

"The best way to protect yourself is to get vaccinated and boosted when recommended. Continue wearing masks - especially in crowded indoor spaces. And for the indoors, keep the air fresh by opening windows and

doors, and invest in good ventilation," he urged.

This week, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee - which evaluates the global state of the situation with COVID-19 - unanimously agreed that the pandemic remains a public health emergency of international concern.

"Far from being the time to drop our guard, this is the moment to work even harder to save lives," Tedros said, citing the Committee's decision.

The WHO chief said that this means making sure that COVID-19 tools are equitably distributed and simultaneously strengthening health systems.

"Bridging the vaccine equity gap is the best way to boost population immunity and insulate against future waves," he highlighted.

He also emphasised the need for a new pandemic treaty.

"A new pandemic accord is our best collective defence against known virus's and of course the next disease X."

SOURCE: UN

COVID-19 still a global health emergency despite drop in cases, deaths: WHO

AS THE number of new COVID-19 cases and deaths continues to decline, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday that the pandemic remains a public health emergency, advising countries to be prepared to scale up COVID-19 response rapidly. "On COVID-19, there's good news. Last week, the lowest number of COVID-19 deaths was recorded since the early days of the pandemic," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press briefing here on Wednesday.

According to the WHO, the global number of new COVID-19 cases and deaths continued to decline during the week of 4-10 April for a third consecutive week, with over 7 million cases and over 22,000

deaths reported, a decrease of 24 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, as compared to the previous week. "However, some countries are still witnessing serious spikes in cases, which is putting pressure on hospitals. And our ability to monitor trends is compromised as testing has significantly reduced," Tedros said.

The WHO's COVID-19 International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee released on Wednesday its recommendations from its latest meeting, which upheld that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). **Public health and social measures (PHSM)**

The committee said that

countries should continue to use evidence-informed and risk-based public health and social measures (PHSM) and be prepared to scale up PHSM rapidly in response to changes in the virus and the population immunity if COVID-19 hospitalizations, intensive care admissions and fatalities increase and compromise the health systems' capacity. As the number of severe cases has dramatically declined in many countries - in Britain, Sweden and the United States, among others - widespread COVID-19 testing and surveillance programmes have been widely scrapped there. This has led the WHO to call on all countries to sequence at least 5 per cent of their COVID-19 samples in order to keep track of the coronavirus

mutations.

According to Tedros, the WHO is currently following closely a number of Omicron sub-lineages, including BA.2, BA.4 and BA.5, and another recombinant detected, made up of BA.1 and BA.2.

In an earlier statement, the WHO said that scientists in Botswana and South Africa had detected new forms of the Omicron variant, labelled as BA.4 and BA.5. But due to the limited number of samples and sequencing, it is still not fully clear whether these might be more transmissible or dangerous.

"The best way to protect yourself is to get vaccinated and boosted when recommended. Continue wearing masks, especially in crowded indoor spaces. And for the



Performers participate in a street parade celebrating the Songkran Festival in Ayutthaya, Thailand, 13 April 2022. The Tourism Authority of Thailand held a street parade in Ayutthaya to celebrate the Songkran Festival. PHOTO: XINHUA

indoors, keep the air fresh by opening windows and doors, and invest

in good ventilation," the WHO chief advised. — Xinhua



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 15 April 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 16 April, 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Kachin State, fairly widespread in upper Sagaing Region, scattered in Shan, Chin, Kayah States and isolated in lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of fairly widespread rain or thundershowers in Kachin, Shan States and scattered in upper Sagaing Region and Kayah State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 April 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 April 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 April 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay Regions.

Significant Water Level Bulletin (Issued at 13:00 hr M.S.T on 15-4-2022)

According to the (12:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Myitkyina is (592) cm, the water level rose about (10) feet within(1) day.

The water levels, which rose at upper Ayeyawady river, may rise above their present water levels by about (8) feet to (9) feet at Bhamo, Shwegu, Katha and Thabeikkyin during the next (1) to (4) days, about (6) feet to (7) feet at Mandalay, Sagaing, Myinmu, Pakokku and NyaungU during the next (5) to (8) days, about (3) feet to (5) feet at Chauk, Minbu, Magway, Aunglan, Pyay, Seiktha, Hinthada and Zalun during the next (8) to (13) days.

It is advised that the vessels running along the river and those who made plantations on sandbanks during these period should make precaution measures for the rise of water level.

DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY AND HYDROLOGY (MYANMAR)

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Domestic visitors join celebrations in Kawthoung city on Thingyan's third day

BEACHGOERS and merry-makers participated in the celebration in Kawthoung city on the

third day of the Thingyan Festival on 15 April 2022. Kawthoung residents keep

traditional Thingyan and hold the festival every year. As domestic tourism is reviving this year, the visitors thronged the beaches in Kawthoung city, and the jetties are also packed with the visitors for the speed boat ride to the islands.

The visitors also joined the Water Festival in Kawthoung during their trip to the beaches. They visit the NyaungU Phee Island, Saturn Island, Myinkhwa Island, Kyatmauk Island (heart-shaped island), Zardatgyi Island, Fork Island, Paradise Island and other islands. The majority of the domestic visitors enjoy a memorable beach vacation during the Thingyan Festival. — Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)/GNLM



Beachgoers are ready to go to islands in Kawthoung.

Visitors, locals throng Dokhtawady riverbanks in Hsipaw Thingyan

BOTH locals and visitors who come from across Myanmar gathered in the special places of Hsipaw Township, Kyaukme District of Shan State (North), such as the Bawkyo Pagoda, the Namhunwe Waterfall, the Parami Bridge, Chaungson, Sanmalar Park, Hsipaw Chaungtha along the banks of the Dokhtawady River, the fourth-mile beach, Pan Cherry and San Ye Kyi riverside floating restaurants in Swathlan village, Honaung park in Naungkawgyi village on the morning of Thingyan Akyat day. — Khin Lay (Hsipaw IPRD)/GNLM



Hsipaw locals and visitors enjoy Thingyan festival at riverside floating restaurants.

Praykyetto Waterfall in Shan Ywathit crowded with revellers on Thingyan Akyat Day

WATERFALL was more crowded with visitors who came to-

gether with friends and families to play in the water on Thingyan

Akyat Day. People used to visit the Praykyetto Waterfall in Shan Ywathit Town, Hpa-an District of the Kayin State.

Most visitors come from townships in Hpa-an during the Thingyan holidays, and the Praykyetto Waterfall is packed with visitors who swim along the falls, relax and take photos. So, locals earn extra income as they sell seasonal vegetables during the Maha Thingyan holiday.

Officials ensure vendors sell their goods systematically at the designated areas, dispose of waste properly and clean the waterfall for the convenience of visitors. — Zin Lay (IPRD)/GNLM



Thingyan water festival celebrated lively in Bhamo



Bhamo residents revel in Thingyan festival.

THE third day of the Thingyan water festival was celebrated lively with traditional dances at the central pandal in Bhamo yesterday.

Officials from the Bhamo District Administration Body participated in the festival, and the pandal also provided traditional

snacks and water-splashing activities. In addition, the water-splashing pandals in the Bhamo Station and pandals built by families of the Bhamo District Police Force were also alive with people splashing water and enjoying traditional snacks. — Kein Phyu (IPRD)/GNLM

People joyfully play water on Maha Thingyan Akyat Day in Ngapali

THE Maha Thingyan Festival, a traditional festival of Myanmar, being celebrated across the country, people played with water happily at the pandals in Ngapali, Rakhine State, on the Thingyan Akyat Day.

The pavilions have set for people to enjoy water-throwing festivities in Ngapali, and revellers went around the city by car to participate in the Thingyan water festival. — Than Nu (Ngapali IPRD)/GNLM



Water festival celebrated in Wa Self-Administered Division

HOPAN Township in Wa Self-Administered Division, Shan State (North), has been holding the 1383 ME Myanmar Traditional Thingyan water festival since 13 April. The festival's third day was held yesterday at the Central Thingyan Pandal in the Hopan ethnic cultural ground.

Hopan residents celebrated the festival with entertainment programmes such as Myanmar's tra-

ditional choral dance and modern songs three times per day. Performers were awarded cash prizes by the Hopan Township Administration Body and departmental officials.

In addition to Hopan residents, ethnic people from the surrounding towns such as Kunlong, Chinshwehaw, and Laukkai also visited the town, and people were provided with food. — District (IRPD)/GNLM

Global COVID-19 cases surpass 500 mln: WHO

THE number of confirmed COVID-19 cases worldwide has surpassed 500 million, according to the latest data from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Globally, as of 8:36 pm CEST (1836 GMT) on Thursday, there have been 500,186,525 confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 6,190,349 deaths, reported to WHO, according to the WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard.

The United States has the highest cumulative number of confirmed cases and deaths, with more than 79.71 million cases and 979,321 deaths -- both accounting for nearly 16 percent of the world's total.

The United States is followed by India and Brazil,



Pedestrians walk past a COVID-19 testing site near the World Trade Centre in New York, the United States, 29 March 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/WANG YING

which have recorded cases million respectively, as well exceeding 43 million and 30 as 521,737 and 661,493 deaths.

In terms of WHO regional offices, Europe and the Americas have so far reported more than 209 million and 151 million confirmed cases, as well as 1,964,786 and 2,711,779 deaths, respectively. The two regions combined account for over 72 per cent of the world's total in confirmed cases and over 75 per cent of deaths.

As the weekly numbers of new COVID-19 cases and deaths have continued to decline according to the WHO statistics, the agency said on Wednesday that the pandemic remains a public health emergency of international concern, advising countries to be prepared to scale up COVID-19 response rapidly.—Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hong Kong to relax social distancing measures as COVID-19 wave wanes

HONG KONG will ease some social distancing measures including dining restrictions from later this month as the city is recovering from its largest outbreak of the coronavirus, the city government said Thursday.

The city has seen a fifth wave of COVID-19 infections fuelled by the Omicron coronavirus variant since January, recording nearly 77,000 daily cases in early March. But cases gradually declined in the past month and decreased to 1,043 on Thursday.

Under the measures to be relaxed from Thursday next week, restaurants will be allowed to open until 10pm while they have been obliged to close at 6pm since early January, the government said.—Kyodo ■

Australia's COVID-19 cases, deaths continue to rise

AUSTRALIA reported more than 40,000 new COVID-19 cases and more than 30 deaths on Friday, including 16 in New South Wales, the country's most populous state.

According to the latest Department of Health data, a total of 5,073,311 COVID-19 cases have been reported in Australia, including 6,693 deaths, and approximately 435,702 active cases as of Thursday afternoon.

There were 3,138 coronavirus cases being treated in Australian hospitals including 126 in intensive care units.

Over the past week, there have been an average of 49,474 new cases reported each day. The median age of all cases is 30 years and the median age of deaths is 83.

So far about 69 per cent of the eligible population had received booster vaccines in the country.

On Friday, one state's strict coronavirus face mask mandate has been lifted after about nine months. People in South Australia (SA) are no longer required to wear masks in most public indoor spaces.—ANI ■

China's imports fall as Covid outbreaks, lockdowns hit demand

CHINA'S imports shrank on-year in March for the first time in nearly two years, official data showed Wednesday, hit by coronavirus lockdowns and weakening consumer demand.

The world's second-largest economy has stuck to a strict zero-Covid strategy as it tries to contain outbreaks fuelled by the Omicron variant in recent months.

The economic costs, however, have mounted—the waves of infections and resulting lockdowns have kept consumers at home, halted business operations and snarled supply chains.

Imports dropped 0.1 percent from a year ago, according to data from China's Customs Administration—the first such decline since August 2020, in the early phase of the pandemic. The figure was much lower than the forecast from a Bloomberg poll of economists,



The economic costs of China's strict zero-Covid strategy have mounted. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

and a far cry from the 15.5 percent growth for the first two months this year.

“Some unexpected factors

in the international and domestic environment have gone beyond our anticipation,” Customs Administration spokesman Li

Kuiwen told reporters.

“Achieving the goal of stabilizing foreign trade will require greater effort.”—AFP ■

UK approves Valneva's Covid-19 vaccine

BRITAIN has approved a new coronavirus vaccine by the Austrian-French drugmaker Valneva, the UK regulatory authority MHRA said on Thursday.

“An approval has been granted after the Valneva Covid-19 vaccine was found to meet the required safety, quality and effectiveness standards,” the Medicines and Healthcare prod-

ucts Regulatory Agency said in a statement. Last month, Valneva's Covid-19 vaccine—which uses the traditional technology of inactivated virus—received its first approval with an emergency authorization for use in Bahrain.

Valneva had committed to supplying the Gulf kingdom with one million doses in an advance purchase agreement last year.

The Austrian-French firm had also signed an agreement with the EU Commission over the supply of up to 60 million doses in 2022 and 2023.

Valneva is the sixth coronavirus vaccine to be approved in the UK, after AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna, Janssen (Johnson & Johnson), and Novavax.

“The independent Commis-

sion on Human Medicines and its Covid-19 Expert Working Group has carefully considered the available evidence (and) the benefit risk balance is positive,” the commission's president, Munir Pirmohamed, said in the statement. The vaccine is approved for use in people aged 18-50 with the two doses to be taken at an interval of at least 28 days.—AFP ■

S.Korea's automotive production, sale, export fall in March

SOUTH Korea's automotive production, sale and export fell last month due to the global supply chain disruption, a government report showed Friday.

The number of cars produced in local factories was 302,161 in March, down 9.5 per cent from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.

It was attributed to the disruption of global supply chain, especially semiconductors used to make vehicles.

The domestic sale of locally-made and imported vehicles

sank 19.1 per cent over the year to 138,647 units in March.

The number of exported cars retreated 7.7 per cent to 179,630 last month. In terms of value, the automotive export reduced 9.7 per cent to 3.97 billion US dollars.

Solid global demand continued for environmentally-friendly vehicles, the export of which surged 45.5 per cent from a year earlier to 41,320 units in March.

The local sale of the environmentally-friendly vehicles jumped 26.8 per cent to 38,784 units last month.—Xinhua ■



Assembled buses are seen at the Hyundai Motor Co assembly line in Jeonju, 200 kms south of Seoul. PHOTO: TRUCKNBUS/HYUNDAI/FILE

NEWS IN BRIEF

IMF to downgrade forecast for over 140 economies amid Russia-Ukraine conflict

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief said Thursday that the organization will revise down its global growth forecast amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the impact of which will contribute to downgrades for 143 economies this year.

"To put it simply: we are facing a crisis on top of a crisis," IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said in a curtain raiser speech ahead of the 2022 spring meetings of the IMF and the World Bank scheduled next week. "In the past seven weeks, the world has experienced a second major crisis - a war on top of a pandemic. This risks eroding much of the progress we have made over the past two years, climbing back from COVID," said Georgieva.—Xinhua ■

China to tighten regulation on virtual currency

CHINA will tighten regulation on new areas, including virtual currency, as the latest move to fend off risks in the financial sector, a central bank official said Thursday.

Wen Xixiang, an official with the People's Bank of China, told a press conference that the financial-sector regulation is getting complex and arduous as fund-transfer methods and tools of criminals are constantly innovating. Wen warned that swindlers could use virtual currency, underground banks, and other channels to avoid monitoring and interception.—Xinhua ■

Biden's biofuel: Cheaper at the pump, but high environmental cost



A biofuel production plant in Iowa. PHOTO: MANDEL NGAN/ AFP

IN an effort to ease Americans' pain at the gas pump, President Joe Biden has announced his administration will ease restrictions on the sale of E15 — gasoline that includes 15 per cent ethanol — and new investments in biofuels as a whole.

But the decision hasn't pleased scientists who study the environmental impact of ethanol.

What is ethanol?

Fuel ethanol is based on the

same type of alcohol used in beverages, but with "denaturant" additives that make it unsuitable for drinking.

Blending ethanol with gasoline eases reliance on crude oil.

Most gas now sold in the United States is E10. American ethanol is generally produced by fermenting sugar from corn starch. Other countries such as Brazil rely on sugar from sugar cane. In 2011, the US Environmental Protection Agency approved the use of E15 following

research on its pollution impact.

But it is currently offered at just 2,300 gas stations in the country, according to officials.

What has Biden announced?

Speaking at a bioethanol production plant in the Midwestern state of Iowa, Biden said Tuesday that the EPA would lift a restriction prohibiting the sale of E15 between 1 June and 15 September — a constraint that was imposed to limit air pollution.—AFP ■

Ecuador expands oil extraction from Amazon reserve

ECUADOR said Wednesday it had begun pumping oil from a third field located partly on a protected nature reserve in the Amazon rainforest.

Extraction of 3,600 barrels per day started in the Ishpingo oil field which together with the nearby fields of Tiputini and Tambococha form the so-called ITT block, which holds more than 40 per cent of the South American country's proven crude reserves.

The three fields together hold over 1.0 billion of former OPEC member Ecuador's four billion barrels of proven oil reserves.

Extraction at Tiputini and Tambococha started in 2016 after years of fraught debate over whether to drill inside the Yasuni national park.

Then president Rafael Correa had tried to persuade the international community to pay Ecuador \$3.6 billion not to exploit the ITT block — an ultimately failed initiative to protect the



Ecuador said Wednesday it had begun pumping oil from a third field located partly on a protected nature reserve in the Amazon rainforest. PHOTO: PIXABAY/CCO PUBLIC DOMAIN/AFP

Amazon and help curb climate change.

With his government strapped for cash amid a plunge in global oil prices, the leftist leader in the end asked Congress to give the go-ahead to drill.

Current rightwing President Guillermo Lasso has plans to double Ecuador's oil production in spite of opposition from

indigenous communities and environmentalists.

"If this well (at Ishpingo) maintains the current production trend of 3,600 barrels per day... about \$60 million will be generated annually, which will be invested in improvements to the education, health and safety system," a government statement said Wednesday.—AFP ■

Shanghai lockdowns could force China carmakers to stop production, XP



Chinese electric car maker XPeng has warned it may have to halt production if Covid lockdowns continue **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

CHINESE auto makers may have to put the brakes on production if strict Covid-19 curbs in Shanghai persist, said the founder of electric carmaker XPeng, as a prolonged lockdown of the economic hub menaces supply chains.

The lockdown has kept Shanghai's 25 million residents mostly at home, forcing manufacturers to halt operations, and has made China's GDP growth target of around 5.5 per cent look increasingly difficult to achieve. Covid outbreaks

across the country and the associated reductions in economic activity have already hit the auto industry hard, with car sales dropping 10.5 per cent in March.

"If supply chain companies in Shanghai and its surrounding areas cannot

find a way to dynamically resume work and production, all original equipment manufacturers may have to stop production in May," XPeng chief He Xiaopeng said Thursday on social media.

XPeng has been touted as a Chinese challenger to US electric car giant Tesla, and its chief said that businesses were hoping for more support from the authorities to navigate the Covid closures.

Volkswagen also said it has been "severely hit by Covid-19 outbreaks in Changchun and Shanghai", where the German titan's Chinese joint ventures are located. The firm is "temporarily unable to meet high customer demand", said Volkswagen Group China CEO Stephan Wollenstein on Thursday. — AFP ■

West Japan city says tourism "princess" can now be of any gender

A western Japan city that has held annual contests to recruit single women "princesses" to serve as tourism ambassadors will drop the gender requirement from this year, in a move organizers say

ascension to the throne. The reigning empress created Fujiwara-kyo — Japan's first planned capital city that served as the center of government from 694 to 710 and whose site is now occupied by Kashihara.

The tourism board in Kashihara, Nara Prefecture, says it will keep the title "Princess Sarara" but throw the recruitment process open to anyone aged 18 or over who lives, studies or works in the prefecture, excluding high schoolers. It will also drop the single-status requirement.

Previously the ambassadorship was recruited under the name of Kashihara Campaign Lady, but the title was changed in 2009. "We hope many people, regardless of gender, apply for the role so that we can spread awareness of the city's attractions," a board official said. The deadline for applications is 6 May. Three people will be chosen to fulfil the role at events taking place over about 30 days in a year. — Kyodo ■



Supplied photo taken in August 2021 shows three individuals previously chosen to fulfil the Sarara princess tourism ambassador role in the Nara Prefecture city of Kashihara. **PHOTO: KASHIHARA CITY TOURISM ASSOCIATION/KYODO**

China's time-honoured trade fair opens online amid pandemic

CHINA'S time-honoured trade fair, the China Import and Export Fair, opened online Friday with a record number of exhibits amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 10-day event, also known as the Canton Fair, has attracted over 25,500 domestic and overseas exhibitors. It will offer them a variety of online services

such as online showcases, business exchanges and product launches.

Participating companies have submitted more than 2.9 million exhibits, including over 900,000 new products and more than 480,000 green and low carbon products, all record highs, said Xu Bing, spokesperson for the fair.

Its import section hosts over 400 enterprises from 32 countries and regions with products in such sectors as household appliances, food, and home textiles.

The spring session includes online exhibitions, market match-making and cross-border e-commerce. It will introduce new ser-

vices involving China-Europe freight trains and shipping, as well as new business forms such as cross-border e-commerce and overseas warehousing. Organizers expect the online fair to help boost foreign trade and stabilize the global supply chain hit hard by the pandemic. — Xinhua ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V JAI HE

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V JAI HE VOY. NO. (2200550)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-4-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **IBTT** 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 MCL 17

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 17 VOY. NO. (04/2022)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-4-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AIPT** 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 NEGAR VOY.NO. (SCY1124)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NEGAR VOY. NO. (SCY1124)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-4-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S LAND AND SEA INTERMODAL LOGISTICS
SDN BHD LINE

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Japan's population down 640,000 in 2021, biggest drop on record

JAPAN'S population totalled 125,502,000 as of 1 Oct, down 644,000 from a year earlier, marking the biggest decline on record, according to government data released Friday.

The fall was attributed to stricter border restrictions propelled by the coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said. The tally includes foreign nationals.

Tokyo's population shrank for the first time in 26 years. All of Japan's 47 prefectures except Okinawa posted a fall in the number of residents in the year to October last year.—Kyodo ■

UK freezes £10 bn in assets of two Russian oligarchs

THE UK on Thursday announced it was freezing assets worth around £10 billion (\$13 billion, 12 billion euros) of two more Russian oligarchs, both longstanding business associates of Chelsea Football club owner Roman Abramovich.

The sanctions against Eugene Tenenbaum, a director of Chelsea, and David Davidovich bring the total number of oligarchs, family members and associates sanctioned by London to 106 since Russia invaded Ukraine in February.

London said the asset freeze — the largest in UK history — would cut key revenue sources for Russian President Vladimir Putin's "war machine".

"We are tightening the ratchet on Putin's war machine and targeting the circle of people closest to the Kremlin," said Foreign Secretary Liz Truss.

"We will keep going with sanctions until Putin fails in Ukraine. Nothing and no one is off the table."

A travel ban has also been placed on Davidovich, who is described by Forbes as "Abramovich's much lower profile right hand man". Tenenbaum is one of Abramovich's closest business associates, and took control of an Abramovich-linked investment company immediately following Russia's invasion.—AFP ■

G-20 finance chief meeting to highlight rift, not post-pandemic unity

FINANCE chiefs of the Group of 20 major economies will likely do little more than highlight the deep rift that has formed among member nations next week when the forum holds its first ministerial-level meeting since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

G-20 members, including Russia and the United States, have a plethora of issues to negotiate if they hope to pull the world's economy out of the COVID-19-induced doldrums and mitigate the impact of the Ukraine crisis.

US President Joe Biden said in late March that Russia should be expelled from the G-20 framework as a response to its invasion of Ukraine, and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said last week the United States will boycott some G-20 meetings if Russian

officials show up.

Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov has reportedly confirmed he will attend the gathering virtually, which means a clash is likely.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said that the G-20 is an important format but his nation's exclusion would not be "fatal" given most members are "in a state of economic war with us", according to Russia's Tass news agency. The G-20 meeting involving finance ministers and central bank governors will convene on Wednesday on the sidelines of the spring sessions of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Washington.

"The G-20 has played a role in identifying global problems and raising awareness of them," At-



Although Western countries have managed to limit Moscow's capacity to export oil, the Arab Gulf monarchies are unlikely to be able to benefit in the near term. This may change in the long run, however.

PHOTO: AFP

sushi Takeda, a chief economist of the Itochu Research Institute, said. "But this time, whether it can function is entirely dependent on who will be at the meeting."

The potential division among members, who represent 80 per

cent of the world's gross domestic product, would serve as a significant setback at a time when coordinated efforts are vital to address emerging and ongoing challenges, economists say.—Kyodo ■

Clashes erupt at Jerusalem holy site, more than 100 Palestinians injured



Palestinian demonstrators clash with Israeli police at Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque compound on 15 April 2022. PHOTO: AFP

MORE than 100 people were wounded Friday in clashes between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli police at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound, in fresh violence as Jewish and Christian festivals overlap with Ramadan.

Israeli police said that before dawn "dozens of masked men" marched into Al-Aqsa chanting and setting off fireworks before crowds hurled stones towards the Western Wall — considered the holiest site where Jews can pray.

A Palestinian Red Crescent official said 117 people were rushed to hospitals and "dozens of other injuries" were treated

at the scene. Israeli police said three officers were hurt. The latest clashes come after three tense weeks of deadly violence in Israel and the occupied West Bank, and as the Jewish festival of Passover and Christian Easter overlap with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Al-Aqsa is Islam's third-holiest site. Jews refer to it as the Temple Mount, referencing two temples said to have stood there in antiquity. Witnesses said Palestinian protesters threw stones at Israeli security forces, who fired rubber-coated bullets and sound grenades towards some of them.—AFP ■

Norwegian cruise line cancels tour over Russia sanctions

NORWAY'S Havila Voyages said Thursday it was finally cancelling a scheduled cruise, after being delayed in port for two days, due to uncertainties about how the ship was impacted by sanctions on Russia.

About 230 passengers had been stranded in the port of Bergen in southwest Norway after boarding the Havila Capella for a 12-day cruise that was meant to depart on Tuesday night.

"They've spent two nights on the ship at quay, so they were treated as they would have been during the sailing with food and service," Lasse Vangstein, head of communications at Havila Voyages, told AFP.

The trip was initially de-

layed "due to an uncertainty related to insurance coverage," the company said late Tuesday, as a "result of sanctions against the leasing company that has financed Havila Capella."

"Havila Capella is financed via a leasing agreement with GTLK Asia, which was put on the EU sanction list last Friday," Vangstein explained.

GTLK Asia is a Hong Kong-based but Russian-owned leasing company. Most passengers stayed onboard while the company tried to work out whether it would be affected by sanctions as it was running a Norwegian flag, with a Norwegian crew and a Norwegian operating company.—AFP ■



Havila Capella is a brand new ship on the Norwegian coastal route that provides caters for cruise passengers, residents travelling as foot passengers and also transports freight. PHOTO: OFFSHORE ENERGY/AFP/FILE

Russia 'would deploy nuclear arms' near Finland, Sweden if join NATO



Representational Image: Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev warned Thursday that Russia would deploy nuclear weapons close to the Baltic States and Scandinavia if Finland or Sweden decide to join NATO. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE: AFP/FILE**

FORMER Russian president Dmitry Medvedev warned Thursday that Russia would deploy nuclear weapons close to the Baltic States and Scandinavia if Finland or Sweden decide to join NATO.

Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council and president from 2008-2012, wrote on Telegram that if the countries joined, this would more than double Russia's land border with NATO members.

"Naturally, we will have to

reinforce these borders," he said.

"In this case, it would not be possible to talk any more about the Baltic non-nuclear status. The balance has to be restored," he said, indicating that Russia would be entitled to deploy nuclear weapons in the region.

The former president said Russia would "seriously reinforce its group of ground forces and air defenses and deploy significant naval forces in the Gulf of Finland."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry

Peskov, asked about the comments by journalists, said that "this has been talked about many times" and President Vladimir Putin has issued an order on "reinforcing our western flank" due to NATO's growing military potential.

Asked if this reinforcement would include nuclear weapons, Peskov said: "I can't say... There will be a whole list of measures, necessary steps. This will be covered at a separate meeting by the president."—AFP ■

Canada to send troops to Poland on humanitarian mission



Ukrainian evacuees queue as they wait for further transport at the Medyka border crossing, after they crossed the Ukrainian-Polish border, in southeastern Poland, on 29 March. **PHOTO: ANGELOS TZORTZINIS/AFP**

CANADIAN Minister of National Defence Anita Anand announced Thursday that up to 150 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel could deploy to Poland on a humanitarian mission to support Ukrainian refugees, reported Xinhua.

Anand said that with the immediate deployment of approximately 100 CAF personnel in the coming days they will provide assistance in reception centres operated by the Polish Territorial Defence Force located across the country. These centres are

coordinating the onward movement of Ukrainian refugees in Poland and across Europe.

The CAF will provide support, limited medical care, mental health supports and spiritual services, enabled by Ukrainian-speaking CAF personnel to assist with the immediate care and processing of refugees, Anand said. "In many ways, the world is a much less safe place than it was two years ago, and certainly two months ago, and we must take stock and take action in order to remain a valuable reliable ally and partner for decades to come," said Anand.

According to the Defence Ministry, Canada has committed 145 million Canadian dollars (116 million US dollars) in humanitarian assistance, and 35 million Canadian dollars (28 million US dollars) in development assistance to provide direct support to Ukrainians.—Xinhua ■

QUICK SUMMARY

Here are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine:

Russian flagship sinks

RUSSIA'S guided-missile cruiser Moskva sinks in the Black Sea after being damaged, Russia's defence ministry says.

"While being towed ... towards the destination port, the vessel lost its balance due to damage sustained in the hull as fire broke out after ammunition exploded. Given the choppy seas, the vessel sank," the state news agency TASS quotes the ministry as saying.

The ministry had earlier said that the fire had been contained and the ship could remain afloat.

Ukraine resumes evacuations

UKRAINE says it is reopening humanitarian corridors through nine routes in the east and south, to facilitate the evacuation of civilians from war-scarred regions after a day-long pause that Kyiv attributed to Russian violations.

CIA nuclear warning

RUSSIA'S setbacks could lead President Vladimir Putin to resort to using a tactical or low-yield nuclear weapon, CIA director William Burns says.

"Given the potential desperation of President Putin and the Russian leadership, given the setbacks that they've faced so far, militarily, none of us can take lightly the threat posed by a potential resort to tactical nuclear weapons or low-yield nuclear weapons," Burns says.

Kharkiv offensive continues

RUSSIA'S offensive on Ukraine's second city of Kharkiv has claimed a further four lives, governor Oleg Synegubov says. The city near the Russian border has been on the eastern frontline since the start of the war and suffered massive destruction.

US warns China

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warns that China's stance towards Russia and its invasion of Ukraine could affect countries' willingness to collaborate and trade with Beijing.

Prisoner swap

UKRAINE says that 30 prisoners of war are being returned to the country as part of the most recent exchange of captives with Russia, following an order from President Volodymyr Zelensky.

It says in a statement on social media the swap involves five officers and 17 servicemen, along with eight civilians, including one woman.

4.7 million refugees

MORE than 4.7 million Ukrainians have fled their country in the 50 days since Russia invaded, the United Nations says.

SOURCE: AFP

Ukraine internally relocates more than 250 enterprises

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said on Wednesday that his government has relocated more than 250 enterprises from the conflict-affected areas to safer places inside the country, the cabinet's press service reported. Out of these companies, 121 are already fully operational in the new location, Shmyhal said. Another 430 manufacturing companies will move their facilities to safer regions with the government assistance soon, he added. Besides, the government has allocated some 200 million hryvnias (about 6.8 million US dollars) to employers who hire internally displaced persons, Shmyhal said.—Xinhua ■

Cambodian SEA Games to feature 40 sports categories

ACCORDING to the SEA Games committee, the 32nd SEA Games 2023, which Cambodia will host for the first time, will feature 40 kinds of sports.

The Cambodian Olympic Committee has announced the sports that will be included in the 32nd SEA Games after a recent meeting.

According to the Cambodian SEA Games officials, Cambodia will put its traditional sports and martial arts in

addition to the regular sports included in the SEA Games.

The 40 approved sports are athletics, aquatics, badminton, basketball, boxing, billiards, cycling, canoe and rowing, chess, dance sports, fencing, football, golf, gymnastics, hockey, judo, karate, Muay, petanque, sailing, Sepak Takraw, soft tennis, tennis, table tennis, taekwondo, triathlon, volleyball, wrestling, weightlifting, Wushu, Arnis, bodybuilding, E-sports, floor-

ball, Jiu-jitsu, Jet Ski, , Kun Bokator, Vovinam, and Martial Arts Korea.

The 32nd SEA Games will be held from 5 to 16 May 2023 in Phnom Penh.

The 31st SEA Games, hosted by Viet Nam, has been postponed to May 2022 due to the COVID-19 epidemic, and the 32nd SEA Games will be held a year later. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Myanmar national futsal team to resume training for SEA Games

MYANMAR Football Federation officials said that the Myanmar national futsal team will resume the training ahead of the 31st Vietnam SEA Games in the coming days.

The Myanmar squad returned to Yangon on 12 April after the 2022 ASEAN Futsal Championship and resume the training to meet medical standards.

The Myanmar Futsal team will take training with the pre-selected players before the ASEAN Futsal Championship and have more than two weeks to prepare for the SEA Games.

Team Myanmar begins training in January for the ASEAN Futsal Championship in April and

the SEA Games in May.

Before the tournament, Myanmar competed in the Thai Invitational Futsal Championship held in Thailand from 15 March to 20 and finished fourth.

In the ASEAN Futsal Championship, the results were good in the group stage, but in the semi-finals, the team lost to Indonesia, and in the third-place match, they lost to Viet Nam and were satisfied with the fourth place.

The Myanmar national futsal team has competed in every futsal event at the SEA Games and has never won a medal, so this time we are trying to grab the very first medal, MFF officials said. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Kim Hyo-joo seizes LPGA Lotte Championship lead

SOUTH Korea's Kim Hyo-joo fired a second straight five-under par 67 on Thursday to capture the 36-hole lead at the LPGA Lotte Championship at windy Hoakalei Country Club in Hawaii. Kim's five birdies included three in her last six holes as she pulled three strokes clear

South Korea's Kim Hyo-joo on the way to the 36-hole lead in the LPGA Lotte Championship in Hawaii. PHOTO: AFP



of Australia's Sarah Kemp in search of a fifth LPGA tour title.

"First of all, I'm satisfied," said Kim, a 26-year-old whose resume includes a major title at the 2014 Evian Championship. "I played the same score and bogey-free round as yesterday, but I'm more satisfied with today's play than yesterday."

Kim, ranked 13th in the world, said she was lucky with the windy weather. "The wind was fine on the front nine this morning," she said. "There was strong wind when I turned into back nine, so it made a high level of difficulty. But I think when it's windy, the front nine is affected by wind more than the back nine.

"So I think I had a little luck that the wind blew in my back nine." Kemp chipped in for birdie on the par-four 14th to highlight a three-under par 69 that left her alone in second place on seven-under 137.—AFP ■

Premier League club Burnley sack manager Dyche



Burnley have sacked manager Sean Dyche. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

RELEGATION-THREATENED Burnley announced on Friday they had sacked long-serving manager Sean Dyche with eight games of the Premier League season remaining.

The Clarets are 18th in the English top-flight four points adrift of safety after just four league wins all season.

"Results this season have been disappointing and, while this was an incredibly difficult decision, with eight crucial

games of the campaign remaining, we feel a change is needed to give the squad the best possible chance of retaining its Premier League status," chairman Alan Pace said in a club statement.

Pace said he wanted to "place on record our sincere thanks to Sean and his staff for their achievements at the club over the last decade".

The 50-year-old Dyche, who signed a new contract due to

run until 2025 in September, had been the longest-serving manager of any club in the Premier League, having taken charge in October 2012.

He twice led the Clarets to promotion from the Championship and brought European football to Turf Moor in 2018 despite a limited budget, but his side have been in the bottom three virtually all season and last week's 2-0 defeat at fellow strugglers Norwich was a major setback in their survival bid.

Pace, whose ALK Capital group took over at Turf Moor in December 2020, said club captain Ben Mee would be part of the coaching staff for Sunday's trip to West Ham.

"The process of replacing Sean has begun and further announcements will be made to supporters in due course," he said.

Burnley have 24 points after 30 games, four behind Frank Lampard's Everton, who are in 17th place.—AFP ■