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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.

National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee meets with political parties' work group

THE National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee (NSPNC) organized a discussion with the work group of political parties in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting was attended by Member of the State Administration Council Chairman of the NSPNC Union Minister at the Government Office (1) Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and committee members and leader of work group of political parties' group Chairman of Shan Nationalities Democratic Party U Sai Aik Pao and other representatives.

During the meeting, NSPNC Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and leader of political parties' work group U Sai Aik Pao extended greetings. The Committee then presented its findings on the Swiss federal system. The work group proposed nine points to be amended in the 2008 Constitution, and the participants held informal talks. As a general discussion, Lt-Gen Win Bo Shein, a member of the NSPNC, presented the agreements in the Union Accord's Parts 1, 2 and 3, and the



The meeting between National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee and political parties' work group is in progress on 29 May 2022.

points remaining to be discussed in the Table-2 of the Part 3. The findings of the analysis team of

the NSPNC were also presented. Then, the two sides' views were recorded, according to

the talks, and the meeting ended with concluding remarks by leader of political parties' work

group U Sai Aik Pao and NSPNC Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae.—MNA

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Re-invitation for basic education staff who are absent from duty

THE State Administration Council is implementing nine objectives, including a social goal of national health and higher education, and is working hard to restore education to the next generation of young people in order to develop the nation's human resources.

For the education of the new generation, basic education schools across the country were reopened on 1-11-2021, and higher education universities/colleges were reopened on 12-5-2022. Basic education schools for the 2022-2023 Academic Year will be reopened on 2-6-2022.

Basic education is very important in the education of the new generation of young people who will be the leaders of the future. So those students can learn fully and to make the teachers/students ratio balance, experienced teachers are needed.

In order to resume their teaching duties for the next generations, teachers and educators who have been away from their duties due to intimidation, participation in peaceful protest, or worry, and teachers and educators who have been prosecuted under staff discipline are informed to report to the relevant Township Education Offices where the schools are located or the nearest Township Education Offices in their current area of residence to file an appeal voluntarily by 31-5-2022.

Among the basic education staff who are absent from duty due to various reasons, those who are absent without leave due to various reasons, those under the investigation, and those who file an appeal, shall be considered as unpaid leave for the period of non-duty and will be re-employed except for those who have committed serious crimes.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Last batch of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine, medical equipment, mobile laboratory vehicles donated by China arrives in Yangon

THE People's Republic of China has donated 10 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine and 13 million sets of syringes to Myanmar, and the last batch of the donation arrived at the Yangon International Airport by Sichuan Airlines yesterday morning. In addition, two mobile laboratory vehicles donated by the Chinese Embassy arrived at Yangon via Muse border gate yesterday.

The handover ceremony of the donated vaccines, equipment, and the mobile laboratory vehicles, was held yesterday morning at the Yangon International Airport, attended by Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win, Ambassador of China to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai, and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein.

At the ceremony, the Chinese Ambassador said that donation showed the spirit of Sino-Myanmar community in the fight against the pandemic, as well as it was a further implementa-



Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win, Chinese Ambassador Mr Chen Hai and officials pose for documentary photo at handover ceremony of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine and medical equipment on 29 May 2022.

tion of the "China-ASEAN Health Shield" cooperation proposal of the President of the People's Republic of China. He said the Myanmar Centres for Disease Control (CDC) project would help build Myanmar's public health system and capacity to respond to public health emergencies.

The Union Minister for Health said China donated about 20 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to Myanmar; The donated vaccines will be given to students from 5 to 12 years of age in the soon-to-be-reopened primary schools and will continue to be given to out-of-school

children. He said the mobile laboratories will be used mainly at border crossings where there is no COVID-19 RT-PCR machine, and as the COVID-19 control and preventive measures will be effectively implemented in these areas, it will be very useful for the re-development of the border

trade sector.

The Myanmar Centre of Disease Control (CDC) which is important in Myanmar's epidemic control is being set up in Nay Pyi Taw, and the assistance of the Chinese government has been very helpful to Myanmar, the Union Minister continued. The centre will be able to serve as an international recognition centre not only locally but also internationally.

He said COVID-19 vaccination is being carried out nationwide and the incidence rate is now below 1 % and he decided to do further friendly cooperation under the leadership of the leaders of the two countries.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and the Ambassador cordially discussed matters related to cooperation in the health sector of the two countries. They also discussed the Sino-Myanmar border malaria eradication project and the animal disease laboratory project.—MNA

Delegation led by Vice-chairman of UWSP U Lau Yaku arrives in Nay Pyi Taw



Vice-Chairman U Lau Yaku of United Wa State Party and party being welcomed in Nay Pyi Taw by officials of NSPNC and local people on 29 May 2022.

AS Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 22 April called for peace talks with ethnic armed organizations-EAOs to achieve perpetual peace in the country and an end to the armed conflicts, a peace delegation led by Vice-Chairman U Lau Yaku of the United Wa State Party arrived in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

On arrival at the Horizon Lake View Resort in Nay Pyi Taw by car, the delegation was welcomed by members of the

National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee, ethnic people from the Department of Fine Arts under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and local people wishing to restore the perpetual peace holding the miniature State flags and placards bearing "Perpetual Peace is the real aspiration of the people", "Achieving peace is the true desire of all citizens", "Let's hold talks for peace in the Union", "Only the ethnic nationalities are in unity, stability, peace and tranquillity will be achieved". — MNA

Tatmadaw will implement harmoniously with the people for national politics

WE, soldiers, always have to safeguard our three main national causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of the National Solidarity, Perpetuation of Sovereignty as a national duty for the Union in which lives over 100 ethnic people. National affairs mean safeguarding national interests, and religion, religion, traditional culture and customs. Let the nation be led by any political system or any government, as our national policy, Tatmadaw has to maintain the Three Main National Causes concerning all nationalities. I would like to urge that Tatmadaw will implement harmoniously with the people for national politics.

(Excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing at the passing out parade of the 8th intake of Graduate Female Cadet Course on 22 December 2021)

MoE Union Minister inspects preparations for opening basic education schools in Southern Shan State

UNION Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe accompanied by Shan State Minister for Social Affairs U Aung Myint, Shan State Deputy Director General of Education Department U Myint Lwin and officials visited Basic Education High Schools in Southern Shan State including Shwenyaung BEHS, Heho BEHS No. 4 and BEHS No. 3, No.8 and No. 10 in Aungban of Kalaw Township yesterday morning.

The Union Minister checked preparations for opening of the schools, conditions of school maintenance, buildings, hall conditions, and greenery and cleanliness of the campus.

The Union Minister said that when the schools open on 2 June, the necessary measures must be taken for the students to study peacefully.



Union Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe views round development tasks of basic education high schools in Southern Shan State on 29 May.

“Teachers need to nurture and educate the new generation students in their states and regions to become educated and

good people. Only then will the abundance of educated people raise the national level,” he said. Teachers must always study

to improve their skills. In the past, only about 3,000 trainees from jobs were allowed to attend BEd course per year. At present, up to

20,000 teachers in the workplace are allowed to attend BEd course every year.

He noted that the list of those who have passed the matriculation examination will be released soon, so there will be winners and losers. Those who failed the exam and those who missed chances to take the matriculation examination for 2021-2022 academic year can take the exam again this year, he explained

At the time of transition to the new education system, this academic year is the last year of the old system matriculation examination, the Union Minister added.

He called on the teachers to work together to produce highly qualified students with the perfect character of their schools. —MNA

Peace delegation led by Chairman Saw Htaw Lay of KNU/KNLA (PC) leaves Nay Pyi Taw

A peace delegation led by Chairman Saw Htaw Lay of the Karen National Liberation Army-KNU/KNLA (PC) which arrived in Nay Pyi Taw according to the offer of Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to hold peace talks left Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning after the peace talks in Nay Pyi Taw.

On leaving the Horizon Lake View Resort in Nay Pyi Taw, the delegation was seen off by officials and members of the

National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee, departmental officials and ethnic people of the Department of Culture and the locals by holding miniature State flags and placards bearing, “Perpetual Peace is the real aspiration of the people”, “Achieving peace is the true desire of all citizens”, “Let’s hold talks for peace in the Union”, “Only the ethnic nationalities are in unity, stability, peace and tranquillity will be achieved”. — MNA



NSPNC officials and local people see off KNU/KNLA (PC) Chairman Saw Htaw Lay and party in Nay Pyi Taw on 29 May.

17 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 29 May, total figure rises to 613,315

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **613,315** after **17** new cases were reported on 29 May 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **592,271** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at **19,434** without more casualties.

COVID-19 vaccine is being injected to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 28-5-2022, a total of **31,417,055** people have been vaccinated. Of them, **26,494,329** people have been fully vaccinated and **4,922,726** people have yet to get the second shots and **2,072,368** people have received booster doses.—MNA

COVID-19 vaccines distributed to different states/regions

IN collaboration with military doctors, health workers and civil society groups are working hard to provide health care services, and the COVID-19 vaccine is being transported by Tatmadaw aircraft and motor vehicle as per cold-chain standards.

COVID-19 vaccines —10 doses per Covishield bottle and 5 doses per Sinopharm and Myancopharm ampules — stored in central medical store depot of Public Health Department on Mindhamma Road, Mayangon Township were distributed to regions and states. A total of 24,790 Sinopharm ampules of the vaccines with 49,920 sets of the syringe to Myitkyin, Kachin State, 91 Covishield ampules of the vaccines, 1,313 Sinopharm ampules and 600 Myancopharm ampules with 19,200 sets of the syringe to Loikaw, Kayah State, 6,000 Sinopharm ampules and 2,440 Myancopharm ampules with 99,200 syringe to Kalay, Sagaing Region, 20,955 Sinopharm am-



An official accepts COVID-19 vaccines and medical equipment.

pules and 4,718 Myancopharm ampules with 9,920 syringe to Thandwe, Rakhine State, 26,643 Sinopharm ampules with 83,200 syringe to Lashio, Shan State (north), 2,314 Covishield ampules of the vaccines, 13,393 Sinopharm ampules and 2,620 Myancopharm ampules with 83,200 sets of the syringe to Kengtung, Shan State (East), 2,090 Covishield ampules with 12,800 sets of the syringe to

Paletwa, 760 Sinopharm ampules to Haka, 750 Sinopharm ampules with 12,800 syringes to Falam, 442 Sinopharm ampules with 6,400 syringes to Tiddim and 340 Sinopharm ampules with 6,400 syringes to Tonzang of Chin State were transported by Tatmadaw aircraft. Officials have received them and will distribute them to the relevant areas, authorities said. — MNA

Action to be taken for selling, storing palm oil at a higher price

IT was announced on 29 May that it would take action under the Important Goods and Services Act if the persons raise prices, store goods illegally and scam in the domestic market.

The Committee for the Supervision of the Import and Distribution of Edible Oils under the Ministry of Commerce has issued the statement in a bid to manage the domestic palm oil prices.

Depending on the daily monitoring of FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, transportation charges, bank expenses, and basic wholesale reference price to be traded in the local market are tak-

en into account, including taxes for setting the proper prices.

Palm oil prices slightly rises in the world's palm oil exporters this week then previous week, with FOB prices expected to rise sharply this week. From 30 May to 5 June, the basic reference of Yangon wholesale price of palm oil is K5,725 per viss.

These basic wholesale quotes are available on the Department of Consumer Affairs website: www.doca.gov.mm and on the Facebook page of the Myanmar Oil Traders and Oil Entrepreneurs Association.—MNA

Ripen Myeik areca nut fetches good prices

ACCORDING to the areca farm farmers, the price of one ripen Myeik areca nut fetches about K79 and that helps them reap healthy profits.

The areca nut produced across the nation get good prices and so the farmers receive good profits, according to areca nut market.

“One Myeik areca nut is priced at K79. The price ranges from K6,500 and K9,000 per viss,” said Ko Htoo Aung, an areca nut trader in Mandalay. The China offers good prices and the areca farm owners and farmers sell the immature areca nuts.

The areca plant blooms in April and May and the nuts are sold after plucking or collecting the falling ones. The raw areca nut is priced at K40 and the wholesale centres purchase immature areca nuts more. The most demand for areca nut comes from

China and Thailand.

Moreover, the local entrepreneurs purchase the immature areca nuts at the farm and produce them as snack, according to the areca nut merchants.

Areca plants are mainly grown in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi Region and the local consumers buy only the mature areca nuts.

In local market, the price of Myeik areca nut is K8,500 per viss while K8,000 per viss of Myitkyina areca nut, K8,000 per viss of Myeik areca nut-Ayaw Htoe, Gatonehee, K6,500 per viss of dried Myeik rought areca nut, K8,500 per viss of sliced dried Myeik Ansar areca nut, K9,000 per viss of sliced Myeik areca nut, K8,500 per viss of special sliced dried Myeik areca nut preserved with ginger and K9,000 per viss of split Myeik areca nut.—TWA/GNLM

US\$2.863 million worth of trade volume handled on Myanmar-Bangladesh border

THE trade volume from the two Myanmar-Bangladesh border trade camps at Shwemingan port in Sittway and Kanyinchaung trade zone

port in Maungtau was US\$ 2.863 million in April 2022, according to the Rakhine State Chambers of Commerce and Industry.



Export commodities are being loaded onto a motor schooner at a port of Rakhine State.

A total of 4,366 tonnes of various goods worth \$0.99 million were exported and T-shirts worth \$0.00105 million imported through Sittway trade camp. A total of 2,418 tonnes of various goods worth \$1.86 million were exported and PVC pipe fittings and water pumps worth \$0.0079 million imported from Kanyinchaung border trade camp of Maungtau.

In doing so, 51% of export goods were fishery products worth \$1.46 million, and only 0.3 % was the import. In addition to fishery products, Myanmar also exported onion, ginger, dried plums, tamarind seed, areca nut, jaggery, djenkol bean, coconut, peas, mangoes, dried chilies, plum jams, and local-made consumer goods to Bangladesh.—TWA/GNLM

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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.

Pepper price may rise due to drop in its yield

THERE is a possibility of a rise in pepper prices due to a dropping pepper yield because of heavy rains and rising chemical fertilizer prices, said U Hla Han, the owner of a pepper broker from deltaic area at the Bayintnaung Market.

Earlier this year, it was planted as a summer crop in the Ayeyawady delta region, and pepper growers and traders in the region say that due to heavy rains and rising oil prices, yields could be reduced by about half. In previous years, farmers had to buy fertilizers on credit, but this year only about 10 per cent of farmers have to buy it on the spot, facing insufficient fertilizer in pepper fields.

The price of fertilizer used to be 40,000 kyats per bag and the price of diesel was 200,000 kyats per barrel before. This year, the prices have risen to 90,000 kyats per a bag of fertilizer and 500,000 kyats per barrel of diesel.

“In previous year, there were imports of pepper from India; This year, there is not



Pile of pepper is seen in brokerage.



The plants bearing pepper fruits are thriving in the farm.

much to enter since the price has gone up abroad; We are stocking as much of the local pepper as we can make a profit with the money we have,” said a businessperson from the brokerage.

Locally grown peppers are stored in cold storage facilities in some industrial zones with the fees 75 kyats per viss per month. The quality of the peppers kept in there are much better compared to those stored outside, said Daw Aye, a pepper buyer.

The price of pepper may be higher than the current price due to the declining demand of pepper and the consumption of pepper by consumers, and the rising local pepper prices, according to the pepper business owners in Bayintnaung market. As the prices are likely to improve, the pepper stockholders are reportedly expecting economic benefits.

Compared to the same period last year, this year’s price is about double that of last year, according to commodity prices.—TWA/GNLM

104 illegal immigrants arrested in Yekyi township, Ayeyawady Region



The photo shows a group photo of illegally migrant Bengalis.

A combined inspection team arrested 104 Bengali immigrants during inspecting three vehicles at the Yenantha Combined Checkpoint in Yekyi Township, Patheingyi District, Ayeyawady Region, at around 3 pm on 27 May.

A total of 57 men, 42 women and five children, who were found in the vehicles were transferred to the Township Immigration Department.

Konpyin police station opened a case under Sections 367/114 of the Criminal Code (criminal case) 21/22 against Kyaw Soe Win, Zaw Zaw Naing, Tun Tun Win, Pyae Phyoo Win, and Chan Myae Oo (a) Phoe Chan, who transported the illegal immigrants into the country.—TWA/GNLM

YBS line No 128 to be launched on 1 June

THE Bandoola Public Company Bus Line Company will launch YBS line No 128 from 1 June to make the public transportation convenient. The new bus line will run from the main terminal at the Dagon University to Thakin Mya Park passing through Minye Kyawswa road, 7/8 junction, Pyidaungsu road, MaWaTa junction, Pinlon road, Bailey, Thanthumar road, South Okkalapa pagoda, Sanpya market, Laydauntkan road, Zawana, Athin Taik, East Horse Race Course road, Tamway roundabout, Shwegondine, Myenigon, Pyay road and Bahosi.

During the route, the bus will pass Minye Kyawswa road/Yarzadarit road, Pyidaungsu road, Pinlon road, Thanthumar road, Laydauntkan road, Shwegondine road, Linkroad, Bagayar road, Pyay road, and Bogyoke Aung San road.

There are 60 bus-stops along the way and the bus fare is fixed at 200 kyats, and it will provide YPS card service.—TWA/GNLM



YBS bus has been prepared to run bus line No 128 on 1 June.



Daily imports of essential anti-COVID-19 equipment conducted in smooth process

THE Ministry of Commerce supervises the import of essential medical supplies as well as anti-COVID-19 devices that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities through border trade posts, international airports and

seaports.

A company imported 7.20 tonnes of masks by car via Chinshwehaw border trade camp yesterday.

Officials from the relevant departments provided necessary facilities in order to beef

up the standard operating procedures-SOP for the import process.

Everybody may browse the Ministry's Website—www.commerce.gov.mm—for notifications on importation of medicines and related accessories. — MNA

Cartons of masks imported via Chinshwehaw border trade camp were carried by car on 29 May.

CRIME NEWS

Illegal teaks, vehicles seized in different cities

UNDER the supervision of the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, effective action is being taken to prevent illegal trade in accordance with the law.

On 28 May, a combined inspection team conducted inspection at Mandalay's 16th-mile Kyaukchaw Inspection Camp, under the management of Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force.

A total of 0.5 tonne of illegal teak timber worth K500,000 and one TOYOTA REGIUS ACE vehicle carrying pieces of timber worth K11 million were seized and action is being taken in accordance with the forest law.

Similarly, investigations were carried out under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force in Sagaing Region.

A team led by the Myanmar Police Force seized one unlicensed 12-wheeler Hino Profia truck in Sagaing Township and it was worth of K3 million and one unlicensed truck in Shwebo Township worth K1.5 million and took action under the Import and Export Law.

An inspection team led by Sagaing Region Forest Department inspected 2.5922 tonnes of teak posts worth K150,000 in Kanbalu Township in accordance with the Forest Law and a net value of K4.65 million of goods were seized on the same day.

Similarly, a combined inspect team led by the Region Forest Department seized 14.7241 tonnes of illegal teak worth K8,980,620 in Bago and Toungoo districts, Bago Region



Vehicles are seized in Sagaing and Mandalay for transport of illegally imported goods on 28 and 29 May.

under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force on 29 May.

An inspection team led by the Myanmar Police Force is also taking action against one

unlicensed TOYOTA ALPHARD vehicle worth K1.8 million at the junction of DaikU-Sittoung Road (Strategic Road) and between mileposts 81/4 and 81/5 between Yangon-Mawlamyine Road.

Thus, a total of 13 arrests worth approximately K43,130,620 were made on 28 and 29 May, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee.—MNA

29.7 kilos of heroin worth more than K740 million seized in Phakant Township

A total of 29.7 kilos of heroin worth over K740 million was seized in Phakant Township of Kachin State, according to the Myanmar Police Force.

The anti-drug police squad searched a PAJERO driven by Win Oo accompanied by Ma Mu Dann and Tay Zar Lin in Yumar Village, Phakant Township, Kachin State at 3 pm on 23 May and seized 19.8 kilos of heroin.

According to the investigation, heroin traffickers Tun Tun Htike and Ma Nang Moe Moe Aye were arrested at a restaurant in Yumar village.

Next, 9.9 more kilos of heroin was confiscated from Ma Aye Pang's house in Seikmu village, Phakant Township at 6 pm on



Chart shows suspects and vehicle used in trafficking heroin in Phakant Township on 28 May.

the same day and thus 29.7 kg of heroin in total worth over K740 million was seized from them.

According to the investigation, the seized heroin was trans-

ported from Shan State (south) to Kachin State. They are being prosecuted under the law and the perpetrators are still being investigated.—MNA

Stimulant tablets seized in Myitkyina, Kengtung townships

ANTI-DRUG police force searched a motorcycle driven by Aye Swe (alias) Phoe Kywet near 21st-mile combined checkpoint of Namkham Village, Loikhaw Village-tract, Myitkyina Township at 3:30 pm, on 27 May and seized 1,900 stimulant tablets.

According to the investigation, police also seized Thaug Htike along with a motorbike at Rampu Ward, Myitkyina at 5 pm on the same day.

Similarly, an anti-drug force seized 46,000 stimulant

pills from a motorcycle driven by Kya He in Yanglao Village, Kengtung Township at 6:30 pm on 28 May.

At 7:30 pm on the same day, police searched a TOYOTA HILUX REVO driven by Sai Phone near the checkpoint on Mongnai-Namsang Road, Aung Thabyay Ward, Mongnai Township and seized 47,000 stimulant tablets.

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

LOCAL BUSINESS

Green gram price escalating after China reopens border posts

GREEN gram market sees an upward trajectory in prices tracking the resumption of China's border posts.

Additionally, newly harvested green grams are steadily flowing into the markets.

The prices of green gram stand at K140,000-K152,000 per bag in Mandalay market depending on the quality.

Next, the newly harvested green grams are priced K48,000 per 19-viss basket (a viss equals 1.6 kg) at the commodity centre in Minbu town, said U Tin Maung Tun, an owner of No.3 commodity centre.

"I just started to cultivate Yezin-14 green gram strain on three acres this year. As the green gram fetches K48,000-K50,000 per basket in the beginning of the harvest season, we are commercially doing well. The cultivation costs



Green gram plants bear successful fruits in the farm.

K400,000 per acre. The yield rate is estimated at 40 baskets per acre. As we have alluvial soil in our area, we need to utilize fertilizer in small quantity. Although I farm on a manageable scale, the

good yield and good price allow me to earn great profits," said Ko Soe Lin Aung, a grower from Ngwethaung village in Minbu Township.

According to the newsletter

(7/2022) dated 23 May issued by the Ministry of Commerce, traders need to seek export licence for various beans and pulses, oil crops and edible oil in order to alleviate the impacts on the

domestic edible oil prices amid the global oil export slump. This notice will come into effective starting from 1 August 2022 and traders must seek export licence for those goods whatever trade routes (sea, border or air) they use. China accounts for 60 per cent of Myanmar's green gram exports.

China prefers green grams (Shwewah) variety. China produces value-added products made of green grams and sends them to foreign markets. Moreover, it produces bean by-products as feedstuffs.

Myanmar conveyed US\$97.9 million worth over 125,877 tonnes of green grams to foreign trade partners between 1 April and 20 May of the current financial year (2022-2023), according to the Ministry of Commerce's trade data.—Zeyar Htet, KK/GNLM

Cashew nut prices jump to K3,300 per viss on low supply

THE prices of cashew nut increased two times to K3,000-K3,300 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) this year on the back of strong domestic demand.

Last year, cashew nuts fetched only K1,000-K1,500 per viss, according to the Ministry of Commerce's news posted online.

There are over 300 acres of cashew in Shwedaung Township, Pyay District, Bago Region. About 60 cashew trees can be planted per acre, with a yield rate of 30 viss per acre.

Last year, about 60 viss of cashew nuts were produced per acres. This being so, the production declined by half this year. The heavy rainfall affected the cashew trees during the flower blooming time.

The cashew nuts do a roaring trade in Yangon market despite the low yield. The nuts are widely seen in markets across

Yangon city. They are sun-dried or roasted.

Prior to the COVID-19, about 2,000-3,900 tonnes of cashew nuts were yearly shipped to foreign trade partners.

The exports of cashew nuts brought in around US\$14 million per year. Myanmar shipped the nuts to Viet Nam, China, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the African countries, Japan, and India.

Lack of advanced packaging methods is weakening productivity and leading to lower export volumes. In Myanmar, cashews are grown in the Yangon, Bago, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi regions, and in Mon, Kayin, and Rakhine states.

Of the 200,000 acres of farmland available for cashew cultivation across the country, around 150,000 acres is fertile.—KK/GNLM

HASS avocado from Kayah State targeted to penetrate US market

APPROXIMATELY 2,000 tonnes of HASS avocado from Kayah State are planned to be conveyed to the US market as it is offered eight US dollar per kilo, said a local businessperson.

Paddy and corn are the primary crops in Kayah State. However, perennial avocado is also increasingly cultivated. There are about 100 acres of HASS avocado varieties in Loikaw Township. It is of New Zealand origin and a sapling is worth K15,000. It produces fruits after three years of cultivation. Approximately 100 avocado trees can be planted per acre. The cultivation costs K2.2 million per acre, according to the news released by the Ministry of Commerce online.

The price of avocado stood at K6,000 per kilo last year. This year, the price remains unchanged at K6,000 per kilo.

Earlier, Myanmar's avocado was shipped to Thailand, India, China, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR. The avocado export came to a stop during the COVID-19 pandemic. Myanmar shipped 500 kilo of avocado to Thailand in 2021. It is now heavily reliant on the domestic market only.

The quality avocados can be sold through online platforms. The fair market value is set in order to avoid overpaying for the

consumers and underpricing for the growers. The consumers will receive much fairer price when the bulk supply of avocado enters the market, said a trader.

Avocado is perennial and the harvest time varies depending on the height above the sea level. It is harvested between September and February. Hass avocado variety is mostly demanded in the market.

The Pinkerton avocado was priced K4,500-K5,000 per kilo last year, while HASS avocado fetched up to K7,000-K8,000 per kilo. Nevertheless, the traders

cannot expect the high price registered in the previous year.

The avocado is commonly grown in Chin Hills, Shan plateau, Nawnghkio and PyinOoLwin areas, covering around 25,000 acres. There are a thousand of Myanmar avocado varieties, and avocado of foreign origins are also found in the country.

Myanmar's avocado is abundant in October and the harvest season extends up to April. Myanmar prioritizes the fruit quality that meets international market standards for market potentials.—Htet Myat/GNLM



A photo catches quality HASS avocado fruits at the plants.

OPINION

Effectively utilize natural energy for benefiting the people

ELECTRIC power is crucial in the development of society. Currently, utmost efforts are being made through various ways and means for ensuring the sufficiency of electricity not to cause energy deficiency.

Myanmar primarily uses hydropower in addition to natural gas, coal and diesel energy. Hence, electricity is being generated from wind power, solar power and tidal power. Meanwhile, solar power from the sunray is being used to generate electricity throughout Myanmar in order to meet the local demand.

Global countries take the issues of environmental conservation into consideration for solving the problems of environmental pollution. Using renewable energy can overcome such kinds of difficulties, while remarkably reducing the import volume of fuel. Hence, the government emphasizes the implementation of small-, medium- and heavy-scale solar power projects so as to generate electricity.

The government set an aim to generate eight per cent of energy from renewable energy in 2021 and 12 per cent in 2025. Hence, all need to strive for the implementation of solar energy power generation to improve the socio-economic life of the people.

The electricity to be generated from the power plant supplies to the national grid via a 230 kV Thabyaywa main power station with the use of overhead cables. Likewise, more solar power plants will feed electricity to the national grid.

Indeed, solar power is abundant in Myanmar, so it is expected to generate 1,060 megawatts from solar power plants across the nation. International experts assessed that Myanmar can generate 51,937.8 TWh per year with the use of solar energy. Myanmar is highly potential for consuming solar power in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region. Until today, Myanmar is still generating electricity through solar energy less than Thailand and Vietnam.

The government set an aim to generate eight per cent of energy from renewable energy in 2021 and 12 per cent in 2025. Hence, all need to strive for the implementation of solar energy power generation to improve the socio-economic life of the people.

The solar power plant is under construction in Minbu of Magway Region to generate 40 megawatts for the first phase and 170 megawatts for operating the plant at full capacity. Moreover, two projects to generate 150 megawatts each are slated to be built in the Myingyan and Wundwin townships of the Mandalay Region. Moreover, Thabyaywa solar power plant project is being implemented to produce electricity with 30 megawatts generating capacity near Thabyaywa Village of Thazi Township in the Mandalay Region. It will be the second solar power plant in the country.

Thabyaywa solar power plant generates more than 200,000 KWh per day and more than 66 million kWh per year.

WHO countries seek better guard for next pandemic

COUNTRIES meeting at the World Health Organization this week are thrashing out how to prepare for future pandemics - amid warnings that the planet is wide open to the next crisis.

WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said Wednesday that infectious diseases were being amplified by weak public health services and poorly-managed urban settings.

Citing the monkeypox outbreaks in non-endemic locations, he told countries that the spread of the virus was "directly related to our inability, or unwillingness, to manage those risks earlier in their cycle of epidemic generation".

Global health system

The COVID crisis laid bare major deficiencies in the global health system, and countries last year agreed numerous changes

were needed to better prepare the world to face future threats.

At this week's annual World Health Assembly of 194 member states - the WHO's decision-making body - countries want some progress on filling the gaps in alertness and readiness that helped COVID spread worldwide, killing millions and trashing economies.

Ryan also warned about holes in surveillance.

COVID-19 testing has dropped off dramatically in many countries in recent months, meaning the virus could be spreading and mutating under the radar.

"We need data. We are becoming blind to the future of this pandemic and we are becoming blind to the emergence of others," Ryan said.

World 'remains unprepared' WHO chief Tedros Adhanom

Ghebreyesus warned countries that there was no time to lose.

"Building health emergency preparedness, response and resilience is an urgent priority because the pandemic has shown that the world was, and remains unprepared," he told the assembly.

Amendments are being considered to the International Health Regulations - a set of legally-binding international laws governing how countries respond to acute public health risks.

And negotiations are under way towards a new "legal instrument" - possibly a treaty - aimed at streamlining the global approach to pandemic preparedness and response.

A progress report on the new instrument will be submitted at the 2023 World Health Assembly, with the final outcome presented for consideration at the 2024 WHA.

"A legally-binding instrument

is a promise to future generations to ensure the world can respond to the next pandemic or health emergency," Tedros said.

The IHR, adopted in 2005, set out countries' rights and obligations in handling health emergencies that could spread abroad.

They also define what constitutes a so-called public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) - the highest alarm the WHO can sound.

Wake up to the danger

The COVID PHEIC declaration on January 30, 2020 did little to shake countries into action and it was only when Tedros called the situation a pandemic on March 11 that many countries seemed to wake up to the danger.

The United States, the European Union, Britain, Japan, Australia and South Korea have brought forward a draft resolution



Customers enjoy a drink and the sunshine at the terrace of Cafe Quadri on St. Mark's Square by the basilica in Venice on 12 June 2020 as the country eases its lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of the COVID-19 infection, caused by the novel coronavirus. PHOTO: ANDREA PATTARO / AFP / FILE

on strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health

emergencies. The US especially has insisted

on the need to clarify roles and responsibilities, increase trans-

parency and accountability, share best practices, and communicate in real-time on emerging problems.

The resolution would, among other things, seek to shorten dramatically the period between the adoption and implementation of IHR amendments, in a bid to speed up change.

"I am hopeful that we will reach consensus," said Loyce Pace, assistant secretary for global affairs at the US health ministry. Countries and the WHO must do "everything that we can... to protect the global community from anything like this ever again", she told reporters.

The COVID pandemic "has been a nightmare that we've lived through, but if we don't do anything about it, then what are we here for?"

SOURCE: AFP

Japan tops world tourism ranking despite COVID restrictions

JAPAN on Tuesday came out ranking highest on a list of destinations in a 2021 travel and tourism development report by the World Economic Forum, despite the country being closed to foreign tourists due to restrictions against the coronavirus.

Topping the list for the first time, Japan ranked highly for its

cultural resources and in several infrastructure categories, with the United States ranked second and Spain third.

Japan ranked fourth overall in the biennial report for air transport infrastructure and cultural resources, sixth for ground and port infrastructure, and 12th for natural resources. But it ranked

low for its response to climate change, coming in 107th place.

Other than Japan, Western nations took the top six spots, with the next highest ranking Asia-Pacific countries being Australia in seventh place and Singapore in ninth place, out of a total of 117 countries and regions.

The tourism industry slowly recovers

As the tourism industry slowly recovers from impacts of the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, "it will be crucial that lessons are learned from recent and current crises and that steps are taken to embed long-term inclusivity, sustainability and resilience into the travel and tourism sector as it faces evolving challenges and risks," the report said.

"In doing so, the sector can continue to be a driver of global connectivity, peace and economic and social progress."

Prior to the pandemic, Japan had been keen to boost tourism as a key pillar for economic growth

and set a goal to attract 40 million foreign visitors in 2020 when it was originally scheduled to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games, which were postponed for a year due to the pandemic.

Japan has closed its borders to foreign tourists since the early stage of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, tightening its border control in November last year to effectively ban the entry of non-resident foreign nationals in response to the emergence of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

Japan has been easing COVID-19 border controls since March, planning to double the cap on overseas arrivals to 20,000 people per day starting in June.

Criteria for the report had been revised since its last publication in 2019, when Japan ranked fourth place. If the 2019 findings were evaluated under the new criteria, Japan would have ranked second place then, according to the WEF.

SOURCE: Kyodo



Operations of a swan-shaped sightseeing boat, called Hakucho Maru, resume at Lake Inawashiro in the Fukushima Prefecture town of Inawashiro, northeastern Japan, on 29 October 2021, under a new operating company after its predecessor went bankrupt amid the coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO: KYODO / FILE

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Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 29 May 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea, South Bay, East Central Bay and Northeast Bay of Bengal. Weather is partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 30 May 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, and Magway regions and Kayah State, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan and Chin states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Bago, Yangon, and Ayeyawady regions and Kayah and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squall with moderate or rough seas are likely at times in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon- Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squall may reach (30-35) mph. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-10) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon- Taninthayi Coasts and (5-7) feet off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Bago, Yangon, and Ayeyawady regions and Rakhine State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 May 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 May 2022: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 May 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

TECH\ENVIRON WORLD

Traffic jams just a maths problem, says Israeli AI firm

ISRAEL'S traffic congestion ranks near the worst among developed economies but an algorithm can help, says one of the country's IT firms engaged in the auto and mobility sector.

ITC, or Intelligent Traffic Control, was one of the artificial intelligence players at Tel Aviv's recent EcoMotion showcase where high-tech and AI firms hope to make transport more efficient and cleaner. Its AI software collects real-time data from road cameras and then sends instructions to manipulate traffic lights based on vehicle flows.

"ITC managed to prove mathematically that many traffic jams can be prevented — if you intervene early enough," said its co-founder and chief technology officer Dvir Kenig,



Traffic piles up along a highway as rain storms disrupt the roads and rail system in the Mediterranean coastal city of Tel Aviv. **PHOTO: AFP PHOTO/JACK GUEZ/FILE**

citing a 30 percent drop in traffic at the two junctions using their system.

The company says road

congestion is a global scourge, calculating that the average driver spends three days a year stuck in traffic, also pumping

out greenhouse gas emissions.

The problem is acute in Israel where, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and De-

velopment says, "transportation infrastructure lags significantly behind" most member countries and "road congestion is one of the worst in the OECD".

Military innovations

EcoMotion's founder Meir Arnon told AFP that surging global interest in smart mobility had made Israel an auto industry player, even though it doesn't manufacture any cars.

"Cars changed," said the industrialist turned investor. "Cars were metal and wheels and a radio. Today these things don't matter, they're all mass produced by the same companies for everyone. "What differentiates car manufacturers today is the driving experience... the vehicle's ability to adapt itself to the driver," he said. —AFP

Toxic smoke and suspicious plastic plant fires in Turkey

THE number of fires breaking out in plastic recycling plants has soared in Turkey.

Experts and activists suspect it's not a coincidence, believing that some entrepreneurs want to get rid of unwanted rubbish sometimes imported from Europe.

In Kartepe, an industrial town in the country's north-west,

one of these sites was closed by the authorities in December after the outbreak of three fires in less than a month. One burned for more than 50 hours, spewing toxic black smoke over the area wedged between the mountains and the Sea of Marmara.

"We don't want our lakes and springs to be polluted," said Beyhan Korkmaz, an environmental

activist in the city.

She is concerned about the polluting dioxin emissions from a dozen similar fires within a five-kilometre (three-mile) radius in less than two years.

"Should we wear masks?" she said. There was a fire every three days in Turkey's plastic reprocessing plants on average last year. —AFP

Russia sends saved tiger back to forest

A rescued Amur tiger was released back to the forest in Russia's Far East on Friday by the Amur Tiger Centre, a local wildlife protection agency.

The injured tiger, which is two years old and more than 1.5

meters long, was found near the village of Verkhniypereval, Primorsky Territory, and taken to a wildlife rescue centre. A medical examination found it had a broken fang and lacerations on its front paws that needed stitching.

After three months of treatment and training, animal protection experts believed that the tiger was fully recovered and ready for returning to its natural habitat.

The State Hunting Supervision Bureau will track the tiger's movement through a data belt, which is tied around the tiger's neck and can send location data to a monitoring satellite, said Alexey Surovy, first deputy minister of forestry and wildlife conservation of Primorsky Territory.

The rescue was jointly organized by the Ministry of Forest and Wildlife Protection of Primorsky Territory, the Amur Tiger Centre, the Rescue Centre for Tiger and Other Rare Animals, and the Roscongress Foundation of Russia. This is the 14th tiger sent back into nature since 2013. — Xinhua



A rescued Amur tiger was released back to the forest in Russia's Far East on Friday by the Amur Tiger Centre, a local wildlife protection agency. **PHOTO: AMUR TIGER CENTER/XINHUA**

NEWS IN Brief

Population of endangered Gobi bears exceeds 50 in Mongolia

THE population of Mongolia's critically endangered Gobi bears (Mazaalai) has exceeded 50, Bat-Ulzii Bat-Erdene, the Mongolian minister of environment and tourism, has said.

Only 36 Gobi bears remained in the world at the end of 2018, according to the Institute of General and Experimental Biology at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.

While releasing the update, the minister appreciated China's help on Mazaalai protection as the two countries signed an agreement on the implementation of a technical assistance project in 2018 to save Mazaalai and improve their range.

"Thanks to the technical support of China and joint efforts of experts from our two countries, the conservation and breeding of Mazaalai has achieved some results. — Xinhua

Downpours in Brazil leave at least 34 dead

TORRENTIAL rains that have plagued Brazil's northeastern Pernambuco state since Tuesday have left at least 34 dead, 29 of which occurred over the previous day, according to the latest official update.

"From last Wednesday until midday this Saturday, 34 deaths were recorded in the state," said the Civil Defence in a statement.

The most dramatic event occurred early Saturday morning when 19 people died in a major landslide in the Jardim Monteverde community, on the border between state capital Recife and the municipality of Jaboatao dos Guararapes.

Six others were killed in another landslide in the municipality of Camaragibe. Two died in Recife and another in Jaboatao dos Guararapes.

Five others died earlier in the week, according to the Civil Defence. Local press reports said three were killed by a landslide in Olinda, and a fourth person died after falling into a canal, also in Olinda. — Xinhua

Bill Gates lauds India's vaccination drive in meeting with Mansukh Mandaviya at Davos

MICROSOFT co-founder Bill Gates on Saturday has appreciated India's vaccination drive in a meeting with Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Switzerland's Davos.

Gates said, "It was great to meet Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya and exchange perspectives on global health. India's success with the vaccination drive and the use of technology to drive health outcomes at scale offers many lessons for the world."

On 25 May, Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya shared photos with Bill Gates and wrote, "A pleasure to interact with @Billgates at #WEF22. He appreciated India's success in #Covid19 management and mammoth vaccination efforts."



A child runs past a wall mural depicting healthcare workers wearing face masks along a road in New Delhi, India on 21 March 2021. **PHOTO: SAJJAD HUSSAIN /AFP**

Mandaviya further wrote, "We discussed a wide range of subjects relating to healthcare including the promotion of digital health, disease control manage-

ment, creation of mRNA regional hubs, and strengthening the development of affordable and quality diagnostics & medical devices, etc."—ANI

Beijing relaxes COVID measures despite high-risk areas

WHILE the Chinese capital, Beijing, gradually returns to normalcy, experts noted that the work to prevent COVID-19

cannot be relaxed as the city still has many high-risk areas where Omicron flare-ups can be seen.

Even if the government has

decided to put in place several relaxed measures, there are still seven high-risk areas and 16 medium-risk areas in the city.

Wang Guangfa, a Beijing-based respiratory expert, told the Global Times, that the city must not lose focus, because there are still risks of imported cases. Beijing's sports bureau announced on Saturday, that gyms and fitness centres will be reopened in an orderly manner in districts. Gyms can open at 50 per cent customer limits. Except for controlled areas, public transportation, metros and taxis are resuming service in Chaoyang, Shunyi and Fangshan districts. —ANI



Tourists pose for a group selfie in front of the Temple of Heaven during the National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival holiday in Beijing, capital of China, 4 October 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

Vietnam logs 1,114 new COVID-19 cases

VIETNAM recorded 1,114 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, down by 125 from Friday, according to its Ministry of Health. All the new infections were domestically transmitted in 44 provinces and cities. The Vietnamese capital Hanoi was the pandemic hotspot with 285 new cases recorded on Saturday, followed by the northern Vinh Phuc province with 70 and the northern Yen Bai province with 83.

The infections brought the

total tally to 10,716,361 with 43,078 deaths. Nationwide, as many as 9,439,913 COVID-19 patients, or 88 per cent of the infections, have so far recovered. More than 220.6 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the country, including nearly 199.1 million shots on people aged 18 and above, said the ministry. Vietnam has by far gone through four coronavirus waves of increasing scale, complication, and infectivity. As of Saturday,

it has registered more than 10.7 million locally transmitted COVID-19 cases since the start of the current wave of infections in April 2021, said the health ministry.—ANI

Designer Do Quyen Hoa (C) checks colourful hand-embroidered face masks, used as a preventive measure against the spread of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, at her workshop in Hanoi on 13 April 2020. **PHOTO: NHAC NGUYEN / AFP/FILE**



NEWS IN BRIEF

US California governor tests positive for COVID-19

THE GOVERNOR of the U.S. state California Gavin Newsom tested positive for COVID-19 and will remain in isolation at least through 2 June and until he tests negative, his office said Saturday. Newsom said on Twitter that he is "experiencing mild symptoms" and "following health guidelines and will be isolating" while working remotely.

He has been vaccinated and has received two booster shots, including as recently as 18 May, according to the statement. In recent weeks, COVID-19 transmission rates are steadily climbing in California, home to over 40 million residents. The state had reported a total of 8,896,174 COVID-19 cases and 90,612 related deaths as of Friday, according to the California Department of Public Health.—ANI

Football fans allowed for China's Covid-delayed kick-off

FANS will be allowed in when the coronavirus-delayed Chinese Super League season kicks off on Friday despite the country's strict Covid controls, state media reported.

The season will finally see action three months later than usual in three neutral cities, as China sticks to a strict zero-Covid strategy that has meant tens of millions of people have been locked down in cities such as business hub Shanghai.

Analysts had expected the Chinese Super League (CSL) season to begin in empty stadiums, but organisers said spectators will be allowed at the opening match when defending champions Shandong Taishan play Zhejiang in the southern city of Haikou on June 3.

"We hope to bring more confidence to the sports industry through our efforts," Xinhua news agency reported Saturday citing CSL chairman Liu Jun.

"During such special circumstances, the opening of the CSL is of great significance to the whole football industry."

Liu said local authorities in the three host cities, the other two are Dalian on China's east coast and Meizhou in the south — have "made great efforts" to ensure that the games are not interrupted by virus outbreaks.

Players and staff from the CSL clubs were quarantined for three weeks in their hotels before being allowed to enter each city's virus-secure bubble, Chinese media reported.

"Organisers also expect that the local governments of the three host cities will open up important matches to fans," Xinhua said, without saying how many fans would be allowed.—AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cash-strapped Sri Lanka gets Russian oil to ease shortages

CASH-STRAPPED Sri Lanka took delivery Saturday of Russian oil — which could soon be subject to a European embargo — to restart operations at the country's only refinery, the energy minister said.

The island nation is suffering its worst economic meltdown since independence, with shortages of fuel and other essentials making life miserable for its 22 million people. The state-run Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) refinery was shuttered in March following Sri Lanka's foreign exchange crunch, which left the government unable to finance imports, including crude.

The Russian crude delivery had been waiting offshore of the capital Colombo's port for over a month as the country was unable to raise \$75 million to pay for it, energy minister Kanchana Wijesekera said.—AFP

Pan-African coffee summit ends with pledge to boost trade in the commodity

A three-day African coffee summit ended Friday evening in the Kenyan capital Nairobi with delegates pledging to upscale trade in the commodity across the continent.

More than 500 delegates who attended the summit noted that intra-Africa trade in the commodity would boost growth in the continent, create new jobs and boost foreign exchange earnings.

The delegates urged governments to facilitate and provide a supportive environment for trading in coffee through good policies, extension services, certification of inputs, transport infrastructure and removal of trade barriers. Drawn from 25 African countries, the participants called for harmonization of legislation, policies and quality standards to boost trade in coffee. Solomon Rutegea, Secretary-General of the Inter African Coffee Organization (IACO) called on regional blocs to lead the process of harmonization of policies, processes, and standards to help support regional trade and improve efficiency.—Xinhua

Eurasian Economic Union seeks to expand int'l cooperation



The Petrolesport, a general cargo terminal located on an island off St. Petersburg that can handle 1 million TEU per year. **PHOTO: AFP**

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin said Friday that Russia supports the initiative to extend an interim free trade agreement

between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Iran until a new deal is reached.

Negotiations are active-

ly underway on a full-fledged free trade agreement between the EAEU and Iran to replace the current temporary pact of

2018, Putin said during an online meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the economic block's highest governing body.

Thanks to the current agreement, the EAEU-Iran trade turnover increased by 73.5 per cent to 5 billion US dollars in 2021, he noted.

"Despite the confrontation unleashed by the so-called collective West ... it is quite obvious to all of us that many foreign partners have shown growing interest in the activities of the EAEU," Putin said.

He said that Russia considers it appropriate to intensify the negotiations on a free trade agreement with Egypt, start similar talks with Indonesia, and study the possibility of a preferential trade agreement with the United Arab Emirates.—Xinhua

China leverages targeted policies to bolster property market

CHINA has actively rolled out targeted measures such as relaxing restrictions on purchases or sales, adjusting housing provident fund policies, and lowering mortgage interest rates to better cater to the residential buying market, and boost the development of the property market.

Beset by factors such as COVID-19, an expected fall in personal income and debt default risks of certain property developers, China's real estate market has seen contractions this year.

In the first four months of the year, commercial housing sales dived 20.9 per cent in terms of floor area and 29.5 per cent in

terms of value.

While reiterating the principle that "housing is for living in, not for speculation," a key meeting of China's top decision-makers held last month called for efforts to improve real estate policies, an important underpinning for the economy.

China's property industry, with a size of 10 trillion yuan (about 1.48 trillion US dollars), involves scores of subsectors across the supply chain. Official data showed that the industry's value-added output accounted for 6.8 per cent of the country's gross domestic product in 2021.

At the State Council's executive meeting on Monday, the



Prospective tenants visit the public rental housing at the Xinyue apartments in Shanghai. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

country once again stressed that city-specific policies will be adopted to meet people's basic

housing needs and their wish to improve housing conditions.—Xinhua

Turkey, UAE pledge to boost cooperation, sign trade agreement



This picture taken on 1 February 2021 shows a view of the Museum of the Future in Dubai. **PHOTO: GIUSEPPE CACACE / AFP**

TURKEY and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) pledged Friday to boost their cooperation in a wide range of fields by increasing mutual investment opportunities.

"We are working with all our institutions to improve our relations in a broad spectrum from trade to agriculture, from the defence industry to health and tourism," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said at a joint press conference with UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Istanbul.

Turkey and the UAE also seek ways to cooperate in third countries, Cavusoglu said, noting that they have been working on "very important" transportation projects that will connect the Gulf region with Europe through Iraq.

The Turkish minister added that the two countries agreed to sign a comprehensive trade agreement before the end of this year. The trade volume between the two countries reached 8 billion US dollars in 2021, promising hope to achieve a 10 billion dollar target in the near future, according to Cavusoglu.—Xinhua

UK companies to trial four-day workweek

LOUIS Bloomsfield inspects the kegs of beer at his brewery in north London, eagerly awaiting June, when he will get an extra day off every week.

The 36-year-old brewer plans to use the time to get involved in charity work, start a long-overdue course in particle physics, and spend more time with family.

He and colleagues at the Pressure Drop brewery are taking part in a six-month trial of a four-day working week, with 3,000 others from 60 UK companies.

The pilot — touted as the world's biggest so far — aims to help companies shorten their working hours without cutting salaries or sacrificing revenues.

Similar trials have also taken place in Spain, Iceland, the United States and Canada. Australia and New Zealand are scheduled to start theirs in August.

Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, a programme manager at 4 Day Week Global, the campaign group behind the trial, said it will give firms “more time” to work through challenges, experiment with new practices

and gather data.

Smaller organisations should find it easier to adapt, as they can make big changes more readily, he told AFP.

Pressure Drop, based in Tottenham Hale, is hoping the experiment will not only improve their employees' productivity but also their well-being. At the same time, it will reduce their carbon footprint.

The Royal Society of Biology, another participant in the trial, says it wants to give employees “more autonomy over their time and working patterns”. —AFP



Bosses at the brewery hope it will improve employees' productivity as well as their well-being. **PHOTO: AFP**

Foreign-funded banks support Shanghai's enterprises amid epidemic



Passengers perform self-service personal health confirmation at Terminal 2 building of the Shanghai Pudong International Airport in east China's Shanghai, 24 November 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/DING TING/FILE**

AMID the latest resurgence of COVID-19, foreign-funded banks in Shanghai have provided various financial

services to enterprises and helped them raise capital and hedge risks.

Considering the im-

pact of COVID-19 on the automobile industry, Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ (China) engaged in five asset-backed securities (ABS) transactions to raise capital for companies in the auto industry, underwriting 400 million yuan (about 59 million US dollars) and buying 600 million yuan of ABS in April, said Chen Shile, head of the capital market department of the bank.

Global banks in Shanghai have also helped foreign trade companies hedge the risks of exchange rate volatility. For a client importing iron ore using US dollars, BNP Paribas (China) pro-

posed a hedging plan for payments worth 30 million dollars.

Although the yuan depreciated against the US dollar, the forward exchange contract guaranteed stable income and expectations for the enterprise, said Zhang Dafan, a senior expert of the bank.

United Overseas Bank (China) Limited has facilitated qualified enterprises in cross-border Chinese renminbi settlements during the period to help them avoid trade risks associated with exchange rate fluctuations. — Xinhua

Despite some sharp wage rises, low-paid US workers have far to go

FAST-FOOD employees in Manhattan demonstrating for a wage of \$20 an hour: a demand unthinkable before the Covid-19 pandemic has become unexceptional, as short-handed companies offer big wage increases without, however, doing much to narrow a yawning income gap.

The upward wage pressure has come from several sources, includ-

ing an unusually tight labour market and childcare challenges linked to the pandemic, as well as chronically underpaid workers unwilling to return to pre-pandemic conditions.

Employers have not only had to raise wages but in some cases have offered improved health care insurance and bonuses.

“The country's major



Employees at a McDonald's restaurant in New York are seen on 27 May 2022; demands by some Manhattan fast-food workers for an hourly minimum wage of \$20 would once have been unthinkable. **PHOTO: AFP**

employers have understood that they need to bring wages up to scratch if they want to attract reliable workers who can help

them navigate this period of major uncertainty,” said Gregory Daco, chief economist at Ernst & Young Parthenon. —AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

China and Algeria ink 490-mln-USD oil exploration contract

CHINESE oil company Sinopec Overseas Oil and Gas Limited (SOOGL) and Algeria's oil giant Sonatrach signed here on Saturday a 490-million-US dollars contract on oil and gas exploration in Algeria's Zarzaitine field, some 1,500 km southeast of Algiers.

According to a joint press release by the two companies, SOOGL and Sonatrach will cooperate in the drilling of new wells, the replenishment of existing wells, the revamping of oil facilities, and the reduction of carbon emissions. Under the contract, 95 million barrels of oil are expected to be produced.

Algeria's Minister of Energy and Mines Mohamed Arkab, who attended the signing ceremony, hailed Sinopec as a key partner for Sonatrach. — Xinhua

Oil prices rise ahead of US summer driving season

OIL prices climbed on Friday amid tight supplies ahead of the US summer driving season.

The West Texas Intermediate for July delivery added 98 cents, or 0.9 per cent, to settle at 115.07 US dollars a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude for July delivery increased 2.03 dollars, or 1.7 per cent, to close at 119.43 dollars a barrel on the London ICE Futures Exchange. Prices found some support from buoyant gasoline demand and low gasoline stocks in the United States.

According to data from the US Energy Information Administration, US gasoline inventories currently stood about 8 per cent below the five year average for this time of year.

“Americans are facing record-high pump prices, but this does not appear to be deterring them from travelling or driving at the moment,” Daniel Briesemann, analyst at Commerzbank Research, said Friday in a note.

Traders bet that a tight market is likely to remain in place as the upcoming US Memorial Day weekend marks the start of the summer driving season. — Xinhua

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Jerusalem on high alert ahead of Israeli 'flag march'

JERUSALEM is bracing for a controversial "flag march" by Israelis on Sunday that has sparked warnings of a new escalation from Palestinian factions.

The "March of the Flags" threatens to exacerbate weeks of tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, and comes as Israel marks "Jerusalem Day", commemorating the city's unification following the capture of east Jerusalem in 1967.

Some 3,000 policemen are to be deployed ahead of the march, due to begin at 4:00 pm (1300 GMT).

Clashes surrounding the Jewish calendar date for Jerusalem Day last year led to an 11-day conflict after Hamas fired rockets at Israel, prompting Israel to launch strikes in



Nationalist Israel Jews wave Israeli flags as they march outside the Damascus Gate to Jerusalem's Old City, on 15 June 2021. PHOTO: AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP

response. The war cost the lives of 260 Palestinians, including 66 children, while 14 people were

killed in Israel, including one child.

Hamas, the Palestinian Is-

lamist movement that rules the blockaded Gaza Strip, warned last week against the march

passing through the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, saying it would use "all possibilities" to confront them.

Israeli marchers are expected to enter the Old City via Damascus Gate, heavily used by Palestinians, before making their way to the Western Wall.

But Israeli authorities have not approved requests to enter the flashpoint Al-Aqsa compound.

The path of the march has never included Al-Aqsa.

The Al-Aqsa mosque compound is Islam's third-holiest site, which is also the most holy site for Jews, who call it the Temple Mount. By long-held convention, Jews are allowed to enter the compound but not to pray there.—AFP

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Russia conducts another test-launch of Tsirkon hypersonic missile

RUSSIAN frigate Admiral Gorshkov successfully test-fired a Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile from the Barents Sea on Saturday, Russia's Defence Ministry said.

The missile hit a naval target

about 1,000 km away in the White Sea and the flight of the projectile corresponded to the designed parameters, it added.

The Tsirkon missile has been test-fired several times from the Admiral Gorshkov frigate and a

nuclear-powered submarine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the Tsirkon missile is capable of flying at Mach 9 or nine times the speed of sound and striking a target over 1,000 km away.—Xinhua

Zelensky to address EU summit as oil sanction plan stalls

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelensky will speak via video link with EU leaders on Monday as the bloc struggles to agree oil sanctions on Russia in the teeth of opposition from Hungary.

EU chief Charles Michel said

in a letter sent to leaders on Friday that Zelensky would virtually join the beginning of the two-day emergency summit taking place in Brussels.

The gathering will tackle Ukraine's immediate need for

cash, the energy and food crises ensuing from the war, and how to build up a coordinated European defence military industry, Michel's letter said.

Much of the attention though will be on Brussels' stymied effort to impose an import embargo on Russian oil as part of stepped-up punishment on Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine. Announced by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on May 4 as a plan to be phased in over this year, the oil ban has run aground on resolute refusal by Hungary to accept it. The government of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban — a longtime thorn in Brussels' side for his rolling back of democratic norms — says it needs financial "solutions" from the European Union first, given the country's dependence on piped-in Russian oil.—AFP



Much of the attention though will be on Brussels' stymied effort to impose an import embargo on Russian oil. General view shows the Rosneft oil refinery plant in the town of Gubkinsky in west Siberia. PHOTO: AFP/DELPHINE THOUVENOT/FILE

Russia presses eastern Ukraine, Zelensky says situation 'very difficult'



An unexploded Russian missile in a residential area of Severodonetsk. PHOTO: TWITTER/AFP

RUSSIA pressed its onslaught on eastern Ukraine Saturday, saying it had captured the strategic town of Lyman and claiming to have surrounded the urban centre of Severodonetsk.

"The situation is very difficult, especially in those areas in Donbas and Kharkiv region, where the Russian army is trying to squeeze at least some result for itself," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his evening address.

His remarks came as Russia, in another exercise in military muscle-flexing, said it had successfully tested hypersonic missiles in the Arctic.

A Ukrainian official denied Moscow's claim that Severodonetsk had been encircled,

saying government troops had repelled Russian forces from the outskirts of the key city.

After setbacks in its attacks on Kyiv and Kharkiv, Russia has been waging all-out war for the eastern Donbas — Ukraine's industrial heartland, where Zelensky has accused Moscow of carrying out a "genocide" and where another Ukrainian official denounced Russia's "scorched-earth tactics".

"The town of Krasny Lyman has been entirely liberated from Ukrainian nationalists," the Russian defence ministry said Saturday, using Moscow's name for Lyman and confirming an announcement made a day earlier by pro-Moscow separatists.—AFP

Hong Kong holds legal conference on Basic Law to mark 25th anniversary of return to motherland

A legal conference on the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) was held here on Friday, one of the celebratory events for the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland.

Organized by the Department of Justice of the HKSAR government, the conference, themed "Stability to Prosperity", brought together prominent and heavyweight speakers from different sectors to discuss how the central government can consolidate the constitutional order of the HKSAR and bring Hong Kong's democratic development back on track, the interpretation and practice of the Basic Law, as well as how to boost Hong Kong's economy.

Carrie Lam, chief executive



Tourists take a sightseeing boat at the Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong, south China, 12 June 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA/WU XIAOCHU

of the HKSAR, said in her speech that Hong Kong is an inseparable part of China, and "one country"

is undoubtedly the backbone as well as a major prerequisite for the sustained development of

"two systems".

She firmly believed that only by acting in accordance with the

Constitution and the Basic Law, relying on the central government and safeguarding national security can Hong Kong's prosperity and stability be ensured.

Over the past 25 years, the practice of "one country, two systems" has been a universally recognized success, said Wang Linggui, deputy director of the State Council Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office.

The next five years will be crucial for Hong Kong as it has transitioned from chaos to order and is advancing to prosperity, Wang said, adding that Hong Kong should stay firmly committed to the right path of "one country, two systems" and ensure the full and accurate implementation of the Basic Law. — Xinhua

Japanese Red Army founder Shigenobu freed from prison

FUSAKO Shigenobu, the 76-year-old female founder of the once-feared Japanese Red Army, walked free from prison Saturday after completing a 20-year sentence for a 1974 embassy siege.

Shigenobu was one of the

world's most notorious women during the 1970s and 1980s, when her radical leftist group carried out armed attacks worldwide in support of the Palestinian cause.

Shigenobu left the prison in Tokyo in a black car with her

daughter as several supporters held a banner saying "We love Fusako".

"I apologise for the inconvenience my arrest has caused to so many people," Shigenobu told reporters after the release.

"It's half a century ago... but we caused damage to innocent people who were strangers to us by prioritising our battle, such as by hostage-taking," she said.

She is believed to have masterminded the 1972 machine gun and grenade attack on Tel Aviv's Lod Airport, which left 26 people dead and injured about 80.

The former soy-sauce company worker turned militant was arrested in Japan in 2000 and sentenced to two decades behind bars six years later for her part in a siege of the French embassy in the Netherlands.—AFP



Japanese Red Army founder Fusako Shigenobu (centre) after her release from jail Saturday in Akishima, western Tokyo. She is flanked by her daughter Mei Shigenobu (right) and her lawyer (left). PHOTO: AFP

Deadly nose-bleed fever shocks Iraq as cases surge

SPRAYING a cow with pesticides, health workers target blood-sucking ticks at the heart of Iraq's worst detected outbreak of a fever that causes people to bleed to death.

The sight of the health workers, dressed in full protective kit, is one that has become common

in the Iraqi countryside, as the Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever spreads, jumping from animals to humans.

This year Iraq has recorded 19 deaths among 111 CCHF cases in humans, according to the World Health Organization.

The virus has no vaccine and

onset can be swift, causing severe bleeding both internally and externally and especially from the nose. It causes death in as many as two-fifths of cases, according to medics. "The number of cases recorded is unprecedented," said Haidar Hantouche, a health official in Dhi Qar province.—AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran police tear-gas protesters after building collapse: media

IRANIAN police fired tear gas and warning shots to disperse protesters in the southwestern city of Abadan where a tower block collapse killed 28 people, local media reported on Saturday.

A large section of the 10-storey Metropal building that was under construction in Abadan, Khuzestan province, crumbled on Monday in one of Iran's deadliest such disasters in years.

It was the third night of protests in Abadan and other cities of the province which borders Iraq, local media reported.

Security forces in Abadan "used tear gas and shot in the air near the collapse site" on Friday night to disperse hundreds of protesters, who were mourning the lives lost and demanding justice for the perpetrators of the incident, Fars news agency said.—AFP

Nigeria issues measures to prevent possible spread of monkeypox

THE Nigerian government on Friday set up an inter-ministerial committee to prevent the possible spread of the monkeypox disease in the country.

There was no recorded case of monkeypox in Nigeria yet, said Mohammad Abubakar, minister of agriculture and rural development, at a news conference in Abuja, the nation's capital, on Friday.

Abubakar said his ministry, through the department of veterinary and pest control services, is working assiduously in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and agencies to sensitize the public on the monkeypox virus for early containment.

The ministry is also creating awareness among hunting communities and the public, he said.

"In view of the current outbreaks in Europe and the Americas, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development works assiduously in collaboration with relevant sectors and stakeholders to intensify surveillance in the animal population and at the point of entry for wildlife," Abubakar said.— Xinhua



SPORT

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Wint Phoo Nadi Aung wins 4th place in Bella Vista Classic Golf Tournament

THE Bella Vista Classic Golf Tournament, organized by Women's All-Pro Tour, USA, took place on 26 and 27 May 2022 at Bella Vista Village— County Club and Bella Vista Village— Highlands in the United States, and Myanmar professional golfer Wint Phoo Nadi Aung (a) Angela Aung was ranked 4th.

The event was previously scheduled from 26 to 29 May, but was limited to two days due to climatic conditions.

Wint Phoo Nadi Aung (a) Angela Aung, a female professional golfer from Myanmar, won three strokes short of the target with a total of 140 strokes, finishing the fourth and winning USD 2,000.

A total of 71 players from the United States, Singapore, Scotland, South Africa, South Korea, Australia, Hong Kong, Taipei, the Philippines, Brazil, New Zealand, India, Sweden and other countries competed in the tournament.

Myanmar professional Wint Phoo Nadi Aung is a regular participant in the Women's Professional Golf Tournament in the United States.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Myanmar professional Wint Phoo Nadi Aung eyes the golf ball during the Bella Vista Classic Golf Tournament in the United States on 29 May 2022. **PHOTO:MGF**



UEFA said French police had fired tear gas to disperse thousands of frustrated fans who were building up outside the Stade de France as a result of the fake tickets issue. **PHOTO: AFP**

UEFA blames 'fake tickets' for Champions League final delay

EUROPEAN football governing body UEFA blamed "fake tickets which did not work in the turnstiles" for a 35-minute delay to Saturday's Champions League final between Liverpool and Real Madrid in Paris, but the English club heavily criticised the treatment of their supporters. UEFA said French police had fired tear gas to disperse thousands of frustrated fans who were building up outside the Stade de France as a result of the fake tickets issue.

But Liverpool said they were "hugely disappointed" that their supporters had been subjected

to an "unacceptable" breakdown of the security perimeter at France's national stadium. The final of Europe's most prestigious club competition was supposed to kick off at 9:00pm (1900 GMT) but was pushed back due to the queues of mainly Liverpool fans who could not get into the ground.

"In the lead-up to the game, the turnstiles at the Liverpool end became blocked by thousands of fans who had purchased fake tickets which did not work in the turnstiles," UEFA said in a statement.—AFP

No.1 Scheffler seizes PGA Colonial lead with closing birdie

TOP-RANKED Masters champion Scottie Scheffler closed with a 30-foot birdie putt to seize a two-stroke lead after Saturday's wind-whipped third round of the US PGA Charles Schwab Challenge.

The 25-year-old American, chasing his fifth victory of the year, fired a two-under par 68 to stand on 11-under 199 after 54 holes at Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas.

"The winds were up really high. The greens were actually pretty firm, and so it was challenging," said Scheffler. "The birdies were not coming easy to anybody out there late in the day." Scheffler, among eight players sharing the 18-hole lead and four co-leaders after 36, had not made a bogey over the first 52 holes before stumbling at the 17th. But he responded with a dramatic birdie at the 18th to stretch his lead back to two entering Sunday's final round.—AFP



Top-ranked Masters champion Scottie Scheffler fired a two-under par 68 to grab a two-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the US PGA Charles Schwab Challenge at Colonial Country Club. **PHOTO: AFP**