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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.

Plan to open first-ever Fisheries Institute (Twantay) this December with admitting 44 trainees

MYANMAR'S first-ever Fisheries Institute (Twantay) will be inaugurated this December with admitting 44 trainees, according to the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

The Fisheries Institute (Twantay), established near Zeebyugon Creek between Zeebyugon Village and Myagoe Village in Twantay Township, with K1,001.083 million from the Union budget in the financial year 2018-2019.

The institute will conduct a three-year diploma course in fisheries and aquaculture. For this year's course, 44 trainees will be admitted, and those who have passed the matriculation examination will have to join the course.

In this course, the institute aims to produce skilled mid-level professionals for the improvement of fish and shrimp farming



Some students from undergraduate course of fishery subject under Zoology Department of Yangon University seen in practical work.



A photo shows Fisheries Institute in Twantay Township.

production in Myanmar and to primarily target to provide practical and theoretical training to the youths who are interested in aquaculture.

Moreover, the institute decided to conduct subjects on seawater environment, nature of water creatures and preservation of seawater resources

to the youths who have passed matriculation examination to have the job opportunities in conformity with their skills, to develop the Myanmar's fishery sector and turn out human resources who can participate in creation of new opportunities for livelihoods of farmers to improve rural regions.

More objectives of the institute are to enable the youths to understand natural environment, biological and ecological systems, water resources and production and utilization of water creatures with chemical contents and contribute to seawater fishery industry.

SEE PAGE-2

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

20 artists showcase 120 artworks to mark 37th anniversary at Waterlily Art Space, Yangon

PAGE-2

CURRENT AFFAIRS

ROK's EPS legally recruits over 700 Myanmar workers in November

PAGE-6



LOCAL BUSINESS

Price gaps still widen in paddy, edible oil, gold, currency markets

PAGE-7



22 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 4 December, total figure rises to 633,318

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,318** after **22** new cases were reported on 4 December 2022 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **607,847**, including **26** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to **19,488** on 4-12-2022 with no new death reported from the pandemic.

The country has vaccinated **30,781,238** people aged 18 and above for COVID-19 vaccines and **6,766,787** people aged under 18 till 3 December 2022.

Status of COVID-19 vaccination (as of 3 December 2022)

People aged 18 and above who received vaccines	30,781,238
People under 18 years old who received vaccines	6,766,787

According to the research, it is found that people who have been vaccinated

do not suffer severely from the disease, need not to be hospitalized and unlikely to die. If they have received booster shot, the death rates can be reduced more.

As such, the people need to follow the new normal way in living with COVID. Hence, all the people above five have to fully receive COVID-19 vaccination inoculated by the Ministry of Health free of charge. Six months after the vaccination, they have to take booster jabs at relevant health centres and ward/village administration offices without fail.

Moreover, they have to wear masks while in closed chambers and public places. They need to often wash hands with soap and water or the hand gel containing alcohol (at least 60 per cent) for 20 seconds.

People need to follow the social distancing rule and avoid the crowds as much as possible. While not wearing masks, if they cough and sneeze, they need to cover mouth and noses with elbows in line with the personal hygienic ways.

COVID-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health.—MNA

20 artists showcase 120 artworks to mark 37th anniversary at Waterlily Art Space, Yangon



Artistic works created by 20 artists are displayed at December Morning Exhibition at Waterlily Art Space in Yangon from 3 to 5 December.

A total of 20 artists staged a group show from 3 to 5 December to mark the 37th anniversary of the artistic journey displaying a variety of artistic styles and mediums at the Waterlily Art Space in downtown Yangon.

The December Morning

Exhibition has been held annually since 1987 to celebrate the unique mood, colours and vitality of the final month of the calendar.

In the foreword of the exhibition card, the artists have described the show stating that "For its 37th year, the exhibition

has been relayed to us. For the next generation, it is to keep this artistic journey alive."

Artist Ko Maung Kyaw Than, a 67-year-old well-known artist of Myanmar said that this exhibition has brought the memories of our past days with my

late art masters because they created spaces for us by holding this kind of exhibition to showcase our artworks."

"This exhibition has reflected that the generation of our age has handed over this artistic journey to the next generation,"

he said.

The exhibition displayed about 120 artworks of different mediums and perspectives.

The Waterlily Art Space is located at No 170, First Floor, Room No 40, Sule Tower 2, Sule Pagoda Road.—GNLM

Plan to open first-ever Fisheries Institute...

FROM PAGE-1

The government will provide K1,000 per day as stipend to students during the schooling days like other vocational training schools under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

Those who graduated from the institute will be appointed to the position of deputy assistant staff officer in the De-

partment of Fisheries, as well as to employment in livestock companies.

Upon successful completion of the three-year course, a Diploma in Fisheries and Aquaculture certificate will be presented to them and the qualified students will be admitted to the BSc (Fisheries and Aquaculture) course at the Yangon University.—TWA/KZL

The people are urged to receive vaccination of Covid-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of Covid-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increasing of death rate based on the disease.

Region/ State-wise industries will generate more job opportunities and reduce number of workers moving to cities

- Region/State-wise industries should be set up. Such activities will generate more job opportunities and reduce the number of workers moving to cities.
- Region/state-wise model farms should be set up. MSMEs can boost production in the respective areas through the use of raw materials produced by local farming industry. In this way they will support the local economy.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 8/2022 of the Union government on 1 November 2022)

Union Chief Justice attends 10th All-Russia Congress of Judges held in Moscow of Russia

A Myanmar delegation led by Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo attended the 10th All-Russia Congress of Judges at the invitation of Mr Vyacheslav Lebedev, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation and Mr Victor Momotov, President of the Council of Judges of the Russian Federation, which was held from 29 November to 1 December in Moscow, Russian Federation.

The Union Chief Justice attended the Congress together with Chief Justices, Presidents, Justices and Secretary General of the Committee from the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Cuba, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic



Chief Justice of the Union of Myanmar U Htu Htun Oo attends 10th All-Russia Congress of Judges in Moscow of Russia from 29 November to 1 December.

of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Republic of Abkhazia.

During the Congress, the affairs including an assessment of

the current state of the Russia's court system, determination on its development prospects and formulation of the proposals of the judiciary regarding the further improvement of the justice in Russia were performed. Those from the Supreme Court of the Union of Myanmar and the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation exchanged relevant experience and opinion on judicial and legal matters.

The 10th All-Russia Congress of Judges was attended by the Union Chief Justice together with U Lwin Oo, the Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation. During the visit, the Union Chief Justice held talks with Mr Victor Momotov, President of the Council of Judges of the Russian Federation.—MNA

40 trainees sent to India to attend Capacity Building Training Programme for Judges and Judicial Officers



Myanmar trainees bound for Capacity-building Training Programme for Judges and judicial officers seen at Yangon International Airport on 3 December.

THE Capacity Building Training Programme for Judges and Judicial Officers will be conducted at the National Judicial Academy, Bhopal, India from 5 to 8 December 2022. A total of 40 trainees comprising deputy permanent secretary, directors, deputy directors, assistant directors, staff officers, judges at Supreme Court of the Union and judges and judicial officers from district and township levels departed from Yangon for India on 3 December.

The trainees are going to learn the constitution of India, judicial system of India, judge ethic, writing judgments, court management, evidence act, court technology, civil and criminal laws, legal medical education, civil code of procedure, hearing civil cases, and solving the disputes in other ways and they will have the chance to observe the Medicine Research University, the district court and Central Jail in Bhopal, India.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Supreme Court of the Union of Myanmar and the National Judicial Academy of India, Myanmar judges and judicial officers were sent to India for training and capacity building.—MNA

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Union Minister & Union Attorney General meets officials and staff in Mandalay Region



UNION Minister for Legal Affairs and Union Attorney General Dr Thida Oo met with officials and staff in the meeting hall of the Mandalay Region Advocate-General's Office yesterday as part of inspecting the formation of new districts to accomplish the assignments for giving legal services to the people.

She clarified the current and prospective activities of the Ministry of Legal Affairs, providing legal advice in accordance with the law, follow up cases, elimina-

tion of of bribery cases, security for zoom meetings and online issues.

Mandalay Region Advocate-General U Myint Aung and Directors General of the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and officials attended the meeting.

After the meeting, the Union Minister and Union Attorney General inspected the newly established Mahaangmye, Aungmyethazan and Amarapura district law offices and left necessary instructions.—MNA

Union Minister for Legal Affairs and Union Attorney General Dr Thida Oo meets officers and staff at Mandalay Region Advocate-General office on 4 December.

Field operations began to increase agricultural sector, livestock activities in Shan State

DEPUTY Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi and departmental officials made field trips to southern Shan State to fulfill the needs for the development of agro-based micro, small and medium-scale businesses and the production.

The deputy minister visited the Research Centre in Aungban on 3 December, and stressed the need for officials to draw the crop patterns for serving the interests of farmers and distribution of high yield crops with resilience of plant diseases and agricultural techniques to farmers, and grow crops in double cropping and mix-cropping patterns.

At the Institute of Agri-



Deputy Minister for MoALI Dr Aung Gyi presents rice for people to Shan State Chief Minister Dr Kyaw Tun on 3 December.

culture (Heho), the deputy minister inspected admission of students from Heho

and Demawhso townships for first year course in the 2022-2023 academic year and the

lecture hall, a practical hall, a small-scale laboratory for the livestock diploma course, and

observed the construction of practical room, small laboratories and farms for cow, pig, layers and broilers as well as goats.

Next, the deputy minister, together with Shan State Chief Minister Dr Kyaw Tun, met with livestock businesspersons and farmers in southern Shan State and discussed development of Shan State's livestock sector and increasing investment in the livestock sector.

The deputy minister handed over rice donated by Japan under the ASEAN+3 emergency rice ration programme-3 to the people facing natural disasters in Shan State for poverty alleviation to the chief minister of the state.—MNA

Public Notice

1. The Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to effectively curb corruption.
2. The ACC used SMS on the mobile phone to ask the public who seek services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via Short Code No "1111" for feedbacks, including the Public Feedback Programme-PFP.
3. According to the PFP, the right replies of the citizens via Short Code No "1111" will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.
4. Therefore, the public should make a reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at Short Code No "1111" and such doing is a supportive measure for

PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

*Anti-Corruption Commission
Answer "1111" to fight against corruption
Answer "1111" to improve services
Let's work together to eliminate corruption towards prosperity*



70 Myanmar migrant workers leave for Thailand under MoU



Myanmar migrant workers seen at jetty in Kawthoung before departure for Thailand on 3 December.

A total of 70 Myanmar migrant workers left for Thailand under the memorandum of understanding through the Kawthoung border. Htoo Thit Zae Co Ltd, an overseas employment agency (Thailand) sent 55 men and 15 women to work in Thailand at Husker (Thailand) Co Ltd

under 2-year contract on 3 December. They were sent to Kawthoung from Yangon airport by the overseas employment agency (Thailand) and to Thailand by boat via Kawthoung border. Kawthoung District Labour Department, Immigration and Population Department,

Anti-human trafficking task force and relevant organizations made necessary inspections for workers whereas officials from the employment agency systematically transported those workers to the host company of Thailand. —Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)/KZW



Myanmar migrant workers seen at jetty in Kawthoung to leave for Thailand and officials meet them on 3 December.



1,164 Myanmar food processing businesses submit over 2,100 applications to GACC within one year

A total of 1,164 Myanmar food processing companies and factories submitted over 2,100 applications to the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) within one year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

According to GACC Decree No 248 and No 249, GACC registration is mandatory for food exporters starting from 1 January 2022.

Those individuals executing edible oil, oilseeds, stuffed pastry products, edible bird's nest and related products, edible grains, grains milling industrial products and malt, fresh and dehydrated vegeta-

bles, dried beans, plant species, nuts and seeds, dried fruits, unroasted coffee and cocoa beans, special dietary food excluding milk-based formula, functional foods, bee products, aquatic products including farm products, animal products and animal feed and livestock animals businesses need to apply for GACC licence in order to place their goods in China's market.

The relevant authorities for the registration with GACC are the Agriculture Department, the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, the Fisheries Department and the Food and Drug Administration Department.

During the period from 1 December 2021 to 2 December 2022, a total of 2,120 applications by 1,164 factories have been forwarded to the GACC. The Agriculture Department forwarded 1,981 applications from companies, the Fisheries Department 118, the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department 12 and the Food and Drug Administration Department nine.

Exporters can directly access China International Trade Single Window System through <https://cifer.singlewindow.cn> by creating accounts for those food groups which are not listed on those aforementioned 18 groups.—NN/EMM

Illegal foodstuffs, electronic accessories, industrial raw materials and vehicle seized

SUPERVISED by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, effective action is being taken against offenders to prevent illicit trade under the law.

An on-duty team under the supervision of the customs Department made inspection at the Myanmar Industrial Port Container Checkpoint on 3 December. Officials found home electronic accessories and industrial materials worth K242.05 million that were not matched the Import Declaration (ID). Action was taken under the Customs Procedures.

Similarly, a combined inspection team under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force of Kayin State made inspections at the Kawkareik (Tadakyo) checkpoint. They found ten rolls of textile worth K2.5 million, which were not declared in the ID and action was taken under the Customs Procedures.



Electronic equipment seized at Myanmar Industrial Port Container Checkpoint in Yangon on 3 December.

Furthermore, a combined team led by Customs Department under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force of Mandalay Region made inspections. They found 340 cartons of Singha Beer which were without customs declaration, worth K16.32 million near Milepost No 21/3 on Mandalay-PyinOoLwin road and action was taken under the Customs Procedure.

And then, an on-duty team under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force of Sagaing Region inspected at Kyweye combined checkpoint of Monywa and officials found a Toyota Mark II, without licence, worth K5 million and action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

Therefore, five cases at an estimated value of K265.87 million were taken action on 3 December, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee.—MNA



Cartons of beer seized on Mandalay-PyinOoLwin Road on 3 December.

CURRENT AFFAIRS



The office of Ministry of Planning and Finance is seen in Nay Pyi Taw.

Myanmar earns over K1,673 billion in levying various kinds of tax in Q1

LEVYING various kinds of tax totalled K1,673.74951 billion in the first quarter of 2022-2023 financial year, according to a statement issued by the Central Statistical Organization under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

During the first quarter, the government levied K1,673.74951 billion comprising over K607.3 billion in goods and services and commercial tax, over K305.107 billion in specific goods tax, K4.88614 billion in gems tax, over K722.781 billion in income tax, K30.96842 billion in stamp duty and K2.70583 billion in lottery tax.

In April 2022, K49.050 billion in specific goods tax, K110.327 billion in commercial tax, K233.472 billion in income tax, K10.232 billion in stamp duty and K840 million in lottery tax were

collected in Myanmar.

In May 2022, Myanmar's tax revenue accumulated K148.970 billion in specific goods tax, K266.484 billion in commercial tax, K233.160 billion in income tax, K9.701 billion in stamp duty and K912 million in lottery tax.

In June 2022, tax revenues were collected from K107.087 billion in specific goods tax, K230.489 billion in commercial tax, K256.149 billion in income tax, K11.035 billion in stamp duty and K953 million in lottery tax.

The Central Statistical Organization under the Ministry of Planning and Finance citing a temporary report of the Internal Revenue Department stated that levying tax in Myanmar amounted to K2,931.269 billion in the six-month mini budget of 2021-2022 financial year.—TWA/KZL

ROK's EPS legally recruits over 700 Myanmar workers in November

A total of 720 Myanmar workers were recruited in the Republic of Korea through the Employment Permit System (EPS) in November this year, according to a statement of Myanmar's Embassy in Seoul.

The numbers of legal MoU workers sent to the ROK were 149 on 29 November, 110 on 24 November, 126 on 17 November, 148 on 15 November, 51 on 10 November, 27 on 3 November and 109 on 1 November respectively.

Those workers are new workers and experienced ones with re-entry permits engaged in manufacturing, construction, agriculture and livestock businesses.

The labour attaché of My-

anmar Embassy in Seoul welcomed them at the Incheon Airport and directed them the dos and don'ts and work etiquette and provided the needs.

More than 37,000 people are expected to take the EPS-TOPIK (Employment Permit System) qualification test which is held from end-September 2022 to mid-2023 in the respective batch.

At present, there are over 50,000 migrant workers legally working in Korea. And more workers are to join them monthly.

The first batch for the manufacturing job test will be held between 31 October and 29 December. Between 3 January and 3 April 2023, the second batch of

entry exam for manufacturing jobs will be held. Those who want to join construction jobs can take the exam between 17 April and 15 May 2023.

Employers in Korea recruit potential candidates among those who passed the EPS-TOPIK test, according to POEA.

At present, the government of South Korea is continuously recruiting new workers and experienced workers.

The minimum wage in South Korea stood at 9,000 Won per hour in 2022. As there are employment protection legislations in South Korea, local people are keen on hunting jobs in South Korea, the Ministry of Labour stated.—TWA/EMM



Some Myanmar MoU workers sent to South Korea were seen at Yangon International Airport in November 2022.

Nine companies to implement contract farming for 33,793 acres of summer paddy in Taikkyi Township



A total of 33,793 acres of summer paddy will be cultivated through the contract farming system by nine companies in Taikkyi Township, Yangon Region in 2023, according to the Department of Agriculture.

More than 5,000 farmers from 38 villages in Taikkyi Township and nine companies will develop the contract farming system to grow 33,793 acres of summer paddy. According to the contract farming system, about quality seeds, medicines

and fertilizers worth K200,000 will be provided for each acre, and the crop will be purchased at the market price at the harvest time.

Farmer group, input company group and rice trading companies are to sign the contract for implementing the contract farming system. Practically, officials from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Cooperative will sign the contracts as witnesses.

In the last monsoon rice season in Taikkyi Township, three companies were able to plant more than 4,000 acres through contract farming system.—TWA/KZW

A paddy plantation thriving in Taikkyi Township.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Price gaps still widen in paddy, edible oil, gold, currency markets

JUST business entities in the fuel oil sector comply with the reference price set by the institution concerned, so the fuel consumers are delighted with that.

Furthermore, those engaged in the forex market and in the gold market are found to have weak compliance at the reference prices. The consumers are bearing the burden of those extra costs.

The reference price was set for fuel oil and edible oil depending on the market price and foreign exchange rate.

"I could buy the fuel oil according to the daily wholesale and retail reference prices," Ko Than Win, a taxi driver, told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The fuel oil wholesale reference prices stood at K1,867 per litre of Octane 92, K1,941 for Octane 95 and K2,291 for diesel. The retail prices were K1,965 per litre of Octane 92, K2,041 for Octane 95 and K2,410 for diesel. Those reference prices were effective on 2-4 December and the fuel buyers were able to reach them.

Next, the wholesale reference price of edible oil for the Yangon market is released on a weekly basis on Mondays depending on the foreign palm oil market conditions. However, the consumers find it hard to buy them at the reference prices, said a trader.

Every month, approximately 30,000 tonnes of edible oil are imported from the foreign markets and mobile market trucks offer them at the retail reference price. Nonetheless, the sales quota volume is extremely low. That being so, there is a gap of thousand Kyats between the reference price and the market price.

In August 2022, there was a price difference of K4,000 per viss. On 3 December, it narrowed to K1,200 per viss of palm oil, according to the Yangon edible oil market.

Likewise, the institutions concerned set the reference prices for exchange rate and daily gold price. Weak culture of compliance by traders in those industries resulted in exorbitant market prices compared to the reference prices.



A person exchanging foreign currency for Kyat.

Moreover, the floor price for 2022 monsoon paddy (low-grade) and 2023 summer paddy (low-grade) was set at K630,000 per 100 baskets (46 pounds per basket), according to the leading committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Interests of Farmers. Actually, the market price hit K1 million to K1.3 million per 100 baskets (50 pounds per basket), said a rice

dealer from Wakema Township.

The committee set the floor price for paddy at K540,000 per 100 baskets for 2021 monsoon paddy and 2022 summer paddy. They were sold at K600,000 per 100 baskets.

Unlike reference price, the traders are notified of purchasing the paddy at floor price if the market price falls below that.

The farmers received high-

er prices than the floor price in the past two years.

Next, the importers and the traders who keep the stocks in hands of the certain goods earn a great profit amid the weak compliance. A buyer called for enforcement for the regulatory compliance so that they can enjoy the reference prices of those certain commodities and goods.—TWA/EMM

Palm oil price likely to decline as international markets show signs of cooling down

DUE to the international market cooling down, the wholesale price of palm oil was estimated at K5,680 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) on 4 December. It is expected to decline on 5 December, a seller in Yangon city said.

The price of Malaysian palm oil touched only 3,950 Malaysian Ringgit per metric tonne on 4 December, whereas the palm oil fetched just K5,600 in Yangon markets, Ko Phyo, who distributes palm oil to the regions outside Yangon from the Bayintnaung wholesale market, told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

Malaysian palm oil price decreased from 4,005 Ringgit per tonne in early December. It has tremendously soared to 7,000 Ringgit prior to the mid-2022. The price then hit 4,250 Ringgit



A photo depicts an edible oil tank on Strand Road in Kyimyindine Township.

in November.

On 28 November 2022, the delivery order price was only K5,450 per viss, while the wholesale price stood at K5,500-K5,550 per viss, Ko Swe Win, a seller from Nyaungpinlay market told the GNLM.

On 3 December, the whole-

sale prices were K5,600-K5,650 per viss in Yangon's Bayintnaung market and K5,750-K5,800 per viss in Mandalay market.

The wholesale reference price of palm oil for the Yangon market was set at K4,425 per viss for a week from 28 November to 4 December. The reference

price in November increased at a small pace from K4,225 in early November to K4,425 per viss at the end of November. The reference price is issued on a weekly basis on Mondays.

The market prices of palm oil in November decreased from K6,250 to K5,600, indicating a drop of K650 per viss.

These days, the international prices of palm oil remain unchanged. Within a week ending 4 December, as per the official release, the palm oil prices were US\$1,009 per tonne of CIF CP8 C Max IV58 and \$1,159 per tonne of 18-litre jerry can CIF IV58. The original price is K4,340 per viss if it is calculated on the exchange rate for a US dollar at K2,478.

The market price of the palm oil is likely to go down below K5,000 per viss as the palm oil usually freezes in the winter and

the foreign markets are cooling down. Therefore, the difference between the market price and the reference price will continue to narrow. Consequently, the importers and the sellers will abide by the directives of the authorities and the consumers can buy the oil at fair price.

The locally produced peanut oil and sesame oil that do not freeze in the winter are valued at K9,000-K9,500 per viss in the markets. The gap between the vegetable price (18-litre jerry can) and the palm oil market price was not that different in the previous months. Yet, there is a difference of K1,000 per viss this month, Ko Htay, a seller from Myingyan Township, told the GNLM.

The palm oil with Iodine Value of above 58 (IV 58) does not freeze in the winter, said a dealer.—TWA/EMM

OPINION

Sympathize with volunteers for recognition of charity measures

THE Myanmar society honours volunteers in all aspects of their charity performances. It is because those volunteers sacrifice their spare time, strength and capacity at their young age and all attachments to their environments in conducting philanthropic affairs.

The International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development which falls on 5 December every year, more commonly referred to as International Volunteer Day (IVD), is an international observance mandated by the UN General Assembly in 1985.

On International Volunteer Day (IVD) 2022, global people need to celebrate the theme of solidarity through volunteering. For the future of the planet Earth, all global people must act together and must act now. This is not an era to stand alone but together, as one, in solidarity with each other. That is why all need to sympathize with the volunteers as well as pay attribute to them.

event, those volunteers performed rescue and relief measures in all kinds of disasters such as the Bago earthquake, Bagan earthquake, Turkiye earthquake, cyclonic Nargis, storms Mala and Giri and so on.

They do not hope for any rewards from their efforts in rescue and relief measures. They do not wish to possess recognition for their volunteer work. But they stand for their belief to give a helping hand to those from the plights. As such, anyone should not underestimate those volunteers and don't misunderstand their work.

It is so thankful to the United Nations for adopting the decision to celebrate the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development for honouring the actual volunteers and their noble spirit. Hence, all global people should never forget the gratitude of the volunteers in both economic and social development in order to uplift the standards of society.

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The significant day for 2022 is aimed to celebrate the theme of solidarity through volunteering efforts. In fact, it is a campaign which highlights the power of collective humanity to drive positive change through volunteerism. Actually, those volunteers perform noble acts to fill the blanks in society to be able to smooth all processes for all living beings.

Volunteers and their works contribute to the pleasantness, peace and prosperity of the world. In Myanmar, volunteers sacrifice their life and limbs in giving a helping hand to the people who suffered from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in various waves. Even some of them lost their lives while assisting in helping others in order to save those persons. As a significant

event, those volunteers performed rescue and relief measures in all kinds of disasters such as the Bago earthquake, Bagan earthquake, Turkiye earthquake, cyclonic Nargis, storms Mala and Giri and so on.

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Hospitalization during COVID-19 damages lungs: Study

INTERSTITIAL lung disease is known to cause severe lung damage. And as per a study published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, a significant percentage of COVID-19 patients were suffering from the disease after getting discharged.

The American Thoracic Society's study was taken up to determine the exact percentage of patients who had this disease, which is a type of fibrotic lung damage. It requires consistent follow-up care after discharge.

UKILD Long-COVID Study

In "Residual Lung Abnormalities Following COVID-19 Hospitalization: Interim Analysis of the UKILD Long-COVID Study," the authors examined evidence of abnormal lung patterns on follow-up CT scans from COVID-19 patients discharged from the hospital—patterns which could be suggestive of interstitial lung disease. The

characteristics of the 209 study participants who had CT scans were applied to a wider post-hospitalization cohort of almost 3,500 people without a CT to stratify risk of residual lung abnormalities.

"Interstitial lung disease" refers to a broad group of diseases that are characterized by lung scarring, including idiopathic lung fibrosis. This scarring makes it difficult to breathe and get oxygen into the bloodstream. Lung damage from this group of diseases may be irreversible and get worse over time.

"We estimated that up to 11 percent of hospitalized COVID patients had fibrotic patterning after recovery from the acute illness," said corresponding author Iain Stewart, PhD, advanced research fellow (Rayne Foundation), Margaret Turner Warwick Centre for Fibrosing Lung Disease, National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College London. "Whilst many people experience prolonged

breathlessness, the major implication of these findings is that a substantial number of people discharged from a COVID hospitalization may also have fibrotic abnormalities in their lungs. These results should help concentrate efforts to closely follow at-risk patients. This follow-up should include repeat radiological imaging and lung function testing."

Fibrotic patterns

He added, "For some people these fibrotic patterns may be stable or resolve, while for others they may lead to longer term lung fibrosis progression, worse quality of life and decreased life expectancy. Earlier detection of progression is essential to improving outcomes."

The UK Interstitial Lung Disease (UKILD) study was performed in cooperation with the PHOSP (post hospitalization)-COVID study, which consists of researchers and clinicians from

across the United Kingdom, to look at how different patients who were hospitalized with COVID-19 subsequently recovered. The UKILD COVID study excluded patients in PHOSP-COVID who had interstitial lung disease prior to COVID-related hospital admission.

Interim study participants were discharged from the hospital by the end of March 2021, while interim data were collected until October 2021, restricting the analysis to 240 days after discharge. The researchers identified patients with thoracic CTs from the PHOSP-COVID database. The primary outcome they sought to determine was the prevalence of residual lung abnormalities in people discharged from a COVID-19 hospitalization. Analyses were performed to determine participants' risk factors of residual lung abnormalities in those who did not receive a CT scan. These risks were used to estimate prevalence in the overall population hospitalized by the end of March 2021.

Residual lung abnormalities

According to the authors, "The UKILD Post-COVID interim analysis of in residual lung abnormalities patients hospitalized for COVID-19 offers the largest assessment of prevalence in hospitalized individuals to date, and is consistent with findings from a number of smaller studies that demonstrate persistent radiological patterns and impaired gas transfer during the extended follow-up of patients with COVID-19. At the time of this interim analysis it is not possible to determine whether the observed residual lung abnormalities represent early interstitial lung disease with potential for progression, or whether they reflect pneumonitis that may be stable or resolve over time."

"The next phase of the study is a primary analysis, which will



A doctor wearing a face mask looks at a CT image of a lung of a patient at a hospital in Wuhan, China. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ AFP / FILE**

be performed at 12 months. At that time, we will also use linked electronic health records of hospital admissions and mortality early 2023." We expect to have the final results in

SOURCE: ANI

Study shows new and more detailed world map of antimicrobial resistance

DURING the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has become aware of the value of using sewage analyses to monitor disease development in an area. However, at DTU National Food Institute, a group of researchers has been using sewage monitoring from throughout the world since 2016 as an effective and inexpensive tool for monitoring infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance.

By analysing sewage samples received by DTU from 243 cities in 101 countries between 2016 and 2019, the researchers have now mapped where in the world the occurrence of resistance genes is highest, how the genes are located, and in which types of bacteria they are found.

Different genetic contexts

The results from the new metagenomic study — which have just been published in Nature Communications — have surprised the researchers. In



A laboratory employee holds an indicator culture plate for the detection of resistant bacteria, in Bavaria, Erlangen, Germany. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/AFP/FILE**

fact, the study shows that the genes have appeared in many different genetic contexts and bacterial types, indicating greater transmission than the

researchers had expected.

"We've found similar resistance genes in highly different bacterial types. We find it worrying when genes can pass

from a very broad group of bacteria to a completely different group with which there is no resemblance. It's rare for these gene transmissions to occur

over such long distances. It's a bit like very different animal species producing offspring," explains Assistant Professor Patrick Munk.

If the genes are in bacteria that don't usually make people sick — such as lactic acid bacteria — it's of less concern. However, if the resistance genes find their way into bacteria that are important to human health — such as salmonella — it's a completely different story.

No treatment is available

"This makes it much more likely that the bacteria will actually kill people — for example in a hospital — because no treatment is available," emphasizes Patrick Munk.

Hotspots for transmission of resistance genes

In different places in Sub-Saharan Africa, the researchers have found the same resistance gene in a number of different bacteria.

"We interpret this to mean that we may be quite close to a transmission hotspot, where there is a gene transmission from one to another to a third bacterium. That's why we're seeing the gene in so many different contexts precisely

there," Patrick Munk explains. **Surprising transmissions**

He adds that many of the surprising transmissions appear to occur in the Sub-Saharan Africa. These are also countries with the least developed programmes for monitoring resistance, which means that there is very little data on the resistance situation.

Important trends

"We risk overlooking important trends because we don't have data," he suggests, stressing that solid data is exactly what is needed to develop effective strategies for combating resistance:

"Right now, we have huge knowledge about how resistance behaves in the West and — based on that knowledge — we plan how to combat resistance. It now turns out that if we look at some new locations, the resistance genes may behave very differently — presumably because they have more favourable transmission conditions. Therefore, the way in which you combat resistance must also be adjusted and tailored to the local conditions."

SOURCE: ANI



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 4 December 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 5 December 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region and isolated in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and Southern Shan, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Nay Pyi Taw, Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Rakhine and Kayah states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at time Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squall may reach (30-35) mph. Sea will be slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-9) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and (4-6) feet off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers in in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 December 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 December 2022: Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 December 2022: Generally fair weather.

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

NASA's Orion spacecraft begins journey back to Earth



NASA's Orion spacecraft has left its distant lunar orbit and is on its return journey back to Earth, according to NASA. **PHOTO: NASA**

NASA'S Orion spacecraft has left its distant lunar orbit and is on its return journey back to Earth, according to NASA.

Orion conducted an engine

burn on Thursday to propel the spacecraft out of its distant lunar orbit.

The burn is one of two maneuvers required ahead of

Orion's splashdown in the Pacific Ocean on 11 December, according to NASA.

The second will occur on 5 December, when the spacecraft will fly 126.7 kilometres (79.2 miles) above the lunar surface and perform the return powered flyby burn, which will commit Orion on its course toward Earth.

Orion was launched onboard NASA's Space Launch System rocket on 16 November from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

The Artemis I flight test is an uncrewed mission around the moon that will pave the way for a crewed flight test and future human lunar exploration as part of NASA's Artemis lunar program.—Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indonesia villagers race to escape eruption as sky turns black

THOUSANDS of villagers living near Indonesia's Mount Semeru were racing for refuge Sunday to the wail of emergency sirens as lava snaked towards their homes under a black sky after the volcano erupted.

Locals fled on motorbikes sometimes three at a time as a mushroom cloud of ash approached and monsoon rains lashed the area in East Java. "It was dark and raining. The rain did not consist only of water, but also volcanic ash. It was like mud," said an AFP journalist on the scene. —AFP

Tanzania to introduce white rhinos in national parks

THE Tanzanian wildlife authority said on Friday that plans are underway to introduce white rhinos in two national parks and one conservation area.

John Nyamhanga, assistant conservation commissioner of the Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA), said it will be the first time for Tanzania to have white rhinos in its national parks.—Xinhua

China's Shenzhou-14 separates from space station combination

CHINA'S Shenzhou-14 manned spaceship separated from the space station combination at 11:01 am Sunday (Beijing Time), according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

Three astronauts, Chen Dong, Liu Yang and Cai Xuzhe, have lived and worked in the space station complex for 183 days.

Prior to the separation, the astronauts had completed var-

ious work, such as completing the in-orbit rotation with the Shenzhou-15 crew, setting the status of the space station complex, sorting and downloading experiment data, and clearing and transferring supplies kept in orbit, with support from sci-tech staff on the ground, the CMSA said.

The Shenzhou-14 spaceship will reenter the Earth atmosphere at an appropriate time

under ground control and start its journey home.

The three Shenzhou-14 astronauts were sent to the space station on 5 June. They have completed multiple tasks over the past few months, including overseeing five rendezvous-and-dockings, performing three extravehicular activities, giving one live science lecture, and conducting a number of sci-tech experiments.—Xinhua



Three astronauts, Chen Dong, Liu Yang and Cai Xuzhe, have lived and worked in the space station complex for 183 days. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

Drought in Peru Andes proves fatal for alpacas, potato crops

A drought in the Peruvian Andes has ravaged alpaca flocks and withered potato crops, forcing the government to declare a state of emergency on Saturday for 60 days in more than 100 districts.

Hardest hit are rural communities in the Arequipa and Puno departments in Peru's southern region, where the government decreed a state of emergency "due to imminent danger from water shortage."

The national weather service, Senamhi, described the drought as one of the worst in the past half century, exacerbated by the offshore La Nina



A peasant walks among her alpaca herd in Lagunillas in the Peruvian department of Puno on 2 December 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

weather phenomenon in the central Pacific Ocean.

"November 2022 was one of the driest (months) in the last 58 years in various weather stations in the Andean region," Senamhi reported.

Andean hamlets for Quechua- and Aymara-speaking indigenous groups have faced critical losses of crops and livestock herds.

"For lack of forage and water, the alpacas are dying. My alpacas have died," Isabel Bellido, an alpaca farmer, told AFP from her mountain home in Lagunillas near Puno, a regional capital at 4,200 metres

(12,550 feet) in elevation some 850 kilometres (530 miles) southeast of Lima.

Carlos Pacheco, a veterinarian and expert in llamas and alpacas, said a worst-case scenario would be for the drought to endure.

"The animals are already underweight, and there is no pasture," he said.

At high altitude in the Andes, temperatures can drop to minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus four degrees Fahrenheit), and cause mass deaths of sheep and alpacas, vital to the subsistence of dwellers in mountain hamlets.—AFP

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

Japan nursery school teachers arrested over abuse of toddlers

THREE female teachers who used to work at a nursery school in the central Japan city of Susono near Mt. Fuji were arrested Sunday for allegedly abusing toddlers in their care.

They were held hours after police searched the private school following the city's disclosure Wednesday that the teachers were involved in 15 cases of abuse between June and August, including holding the toddlers upside down by their feet, forcibly removing their pants and brandishing a cutter knife in a threatening manner.

The teachers were among six in charge of the 1-year-olds'

class at the school, Sakura Hoikuen. The three, who left the nursery school recently, admitted the behavior but said they were trying to discipline the children, according to the city in Shizuoka Prefecture.

The police, suspecting that the abuse at the nursery was continuous, will analyze seized documents. They are believed to have conducted the search out of concern that evidence could be destroyed as it was also found that the school had made all of its staff sign an oath not to disclose what took place there.

An investigative source said the three former teachers are in



Investigators enter a nursery school in the Shizuoka Prefecture city of Susono in central Japan to search the facility on 4 December 2022. PHOTO: KYODO

their 30s, adding that the police have already determined what they did and to whom among the toddlers.

The city and prefectural governments on Saturday started carrying out a special audit of the school, questioning its head, Toshihiko Sakurai, and having him present the three teachers' work records, according to officials.

The abusive behavior was brought to light after the city received a report in mid-August. It had met with Sakurai for its probe but kept the case secret for more than three months. —Kyodo

Singapore to see new wave of COVID-19 infections: health minister



Singaporeans should expect a new wave of COVID-19 infections with more people traveling and due to the upcoming year-end festivities. PHOTO: AFP

SINGAPOREANS should expect a new wave of COVID-19 infections with more people traveling and due to the upcoming

year-end festivities, the Straits Times website quoted Health Minister Ong Ye Kung as saying on Sunday.

"There is bound to be more infections but it is not something we have not seen before. This year alone, we have already seen three infection waves," he said.

Ong said at an event held at Nanyang Junior College on Sunday that it is more important to monitor developments overseas and watch if a new variant of concern emerges when winter hits the northern hemisphere.

Singapore reported 1,052 new cases of COVID-19 on Saturday, bringing the total tally to 2,171,550. —Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australian COVID-19 cases continue to rise

THE number of new coronavirus cases in Australia has risen for consecutive weeks.

According to the latest weekly update from the Department of Health, more than 100,000 new COVID-19 cases were reported across Australia in the seven days to 29 November – an average of 14,346 per day.

It marks a 20 per cent increase from 11,953 new cases per day in the previous week. —Xinhua

Uganda issues new COVID-19 rules to curb flare-up

UGANDAN President Yoweri Museveni on Friday issued new guidelines to prevent the flaring up of COVID-19 cases in the country.

All Ugandans above 12 years old must be vaccinated twice, and get a boost COVID-19 vaccine every six months, said the president in a national address on health matters.

A COVID-19 vaccination certificate or a negative PCR test result will be needed to access a public office, he said, adding that wearing face masks is recommended for all individuals in closed places or public gatherings. —Xinhua

Czech detects 1st African swine fever case in 5 yrs

THE Czech Republic confirmed its first case of African swine fever for the first time in almost five years and veterinarians were taking measures to prevent its spread, the Czech Ministry of Agriculture said on Friday.

The disease was detected in a dead wild piglet in Jindřichovice pod Smrkem in the northern Liberec Region near the border with Poland, accord-

ing to the State Veterinary Administration (SVS). This is the first such case detection in the country since early 2018.

Authorities have delineated a zone of infection of approximately 200 square km around the location where the piglet was found.

Hunting of wild pigs will be temporarily prohibited, but the movement of the population in nature will be restricted and

authorities will monitor the disease spread within the wild pig population.

"All the measures taken are primarily aimed at preventing the further spread of the disease in the wild pig population and preventing the disease from reaching domestic pig farms," Petr Satran, director of the veterinary section of the SVS, said in a press release. —Xinhua



The file photo dated on 5 June 2019 shows health officials and veterinarians throw a dead pig into an isolated quarantined pit in Hanoi to stop the spread of African Swine Fever. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/MANAN VATSYAYANA/AFP/FILE

ECONOMY WORLD



Vietnamese automaker VinFast, which ceased production of gasoline-powered cars in August, is gearing up to get a bite of the US market. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ AFP/FILE**

Viet Nam's industrial production up 8.6% in 11 months

VIET NAM'S national index of industrial production advanced 8.6 per cent year on year in the first 11 months of this year, according to the country's General Statistics Office on Friday.

The processing and manufacturing sector, the main driver behind the increase, went up by 8.9 per cent. The electricity production and distribution

sector expanded by 7.7 per cent, and the water supply and waste management sector increased by 7.1 per cent, said the office.

In November alone, the industrial production index rose 0.3 per cent against October and 5.3 per cent year on year.

The industrial production growth of Viet Nam slowed down due to decreasing de-

mand, rising input costs and a shortage of material supply, the office said.

In the 11-month period, the production of beer witnessed the largest output increase year on year of 34.9 per cent, followed by processed seafood and automobiles, both up 17.3 per cent, and phone accessories, up 16.9 per cent.—Xinhua

Thai central bank, BIS joint meeting focuses on addressing financial challenges

THE Bank of Thailand (BOT) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) jointly held a conference here on Friday to discuss the central banks' roles in economic growth, inflation control and other issues.

The conference, with a theme of "Central Banking amidst Shifting Ground," attracted senior executives from foreign central banks and international financial institutions to exchange views on economic conditions, inflation, financial innovations and climate change.

In the opening remarks, BOT governor Sethaput Suthiwartnarueput highlighted three challenges facing central banks worldwide, namely a rapidly changing

economic backdrop that has transformed the nature of the underlying policy challenge, shifting conceptual frameworks needed to guide policy, and emerging institutional pressure points on policy mandates and central bank independence.

Sethaput said inflation has "returned with a vengeance," and the strong post-pandemic rebound in global demand combined with a rotation of that demand from services to goods put huge pressure on global supply chains.

He said increasing fragmentation and ageing population, along with the necessary but costly green transition will likely exert supply headwinds and upward price pressures going forward.—Xinhua

Germany's foreign trade slows down in October: Destatis

GERMAN exports in October fell slightly by 0.6 per cent month-on-month to 133.5 billion euros (140.5 billion US dollars), the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) said on Friday.

Imports decreased 3.7 per cent to 126.6 billion euros. The foreign trade surplus was 6.9 billion euros, down by almost half year-on-year.

Germany's foreign trade was "clouding over," warned Dirk Jandura, president of the German Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services Association (BGA). "In particular, the weakness in imports indicates that the foreign trade engine is starting to sputter."

China remained the most important trading partner of Europe's largest economy in October. As in the previous month, goods worth 8.9 billion were exported to the country. Imports from there rose by 0.8



Small boats pass in front of a COSCO Shipping Corporation container ship as it is unloaded at the Port of Hamburg on 26 October. **PHOTO: AXEL HEIMKEN / AFP**

per cent month-on-month and reached 16.9 billion euros.

The new figures come at a time when global container shipping congestion is easing. For the first time in more than a year, the share of goods shipped worldwide that are stuck in congestion fell below 10 per cent, according to the Kiel Institute for the World

Economy (IfW Kiel).

As a result, the economic institute paints a more positive outlook than the BGA and expects exports from all major economies to rise in November. While Germany's exports would rise by 4.1 per cent month-on-month, exports from China would even increase by 6.6 per cent.—Xinhua

Cyprus expects 6% GDP growth in 2022: minister

THE economy of Cyprus is projected to grow around 6 per cent in inflation-adjusted terms in 2022, Finance Minister Constantinos Petrides told Parliament on Friday as he presented the country's budget for 2023.

Petrides said that despite the 2013 economic crisis, Cyprus's bailout by the Eurogroup, the coronavirus pandemic and geopolitical instabilities, he was submitting "a balanced budget and delivering a healthy and robust economy."



A file picture shows people shopping for groceries at a stall in a market in the northern coastal city of Kyrenia, Cyprus. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

He said that public debt, which exceeded 104 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) as a result of the bailout and the need to support the economy during the coronavirus pandemic, was brought down to 89.3 per cent of GDP this year.

The unemployment rate, which had reached 17 per cent at its peak, is expected to fall to 7 per cent this year and to 5 per cent by 2025 as the economy will continue to grow.

He said that the real growth of the economy in the

next three years is expected to be around 3 per cent each year, with an additional growth of 7 per cent resulting from the influx of 4.4 billion euros (4.63 billion US dollars) in European Union (EU) funding by the end of 2027. This equals around 20 per cent of Cyprus's GDP.

President Nicos Anastasiades announced earlier that Cyprus received on Friday the first tranche — 85 million euros — from the EU's Recovery and Resilience Plan and the Cohesion Fund.—Xinhua

Morocco reaps cash, clout from fertilizer supply shock

A global fertilizer supply shock deepened by Russia's Ukraine invasion has brought boom times for the North African phosphate superpower Morocco and earned the kingdom new diplomatic capital.

Rabat is using the leverage especially in the decades-old fight over the disputed desert territory of Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony also claimed by Algeria-backed rebels, analysts say.

Morocco is set to chalk up record revenues for a second year running as farmers worldwide scramble for phosphate, made scarce by sanctions against top world producer Russia and a Chinese ban on exports.

Phosphate is a key ingredient of artificial fertilizers, which are vital for industrial

agriculture and global grain supplies despite the long-term damage they inflict on soil and groundwater.

"It's a strategic mineral for the future because it's crucial for global food security," said Abderrahim Handouf, an agricultural policy expert.

"As populations grow, fertilisers are the most effective way to increase farm productivity."

According to Morocco's state-owned phosphates firm OCP, the kingdom controls around 31 per cent of the international trade in the substance.

The OCP, which holds a national monopoly in the trade, is on track to record more than 131 billion dirhams (\$12.4 billion) in revenue this year, up 56 per cent on 2021 — already a bumper year.—AFP



A phosphate facility operated by Morocco's state-owned OCP near Laayoune in the disputed Western Sahara. **PHOTO: FADEL SENNA / AFP/FILE**

China's internet sector R&D spending logs robust growth in Jan-Oct

CHINA'S major internet enterprises saw their spending on research and development (R&D) resume a double-digit expansion in the first 10 months of 2022, official data showed.

During this period, R&D spending of these firms totaled 63.67 billion yuan (about 9.03 billion US dollars), up 10.4 per cent year on year, with a pace 1.6 percentage points faster than that recorded in the first three quarters, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

The combined business revenue of major internet companies and related services companies edged down 0.8 per cent year on year to 1.22 trillion yuan, but the decline narrowed 0.1 percentage points from the first three quarters, the data showed.



A staff member of China Electronic Technology Group Corporation (CETC) demonstrates a wearable exoskeleton robot during the Light of Internet Expo in Wuzhen, east China's Zhejiang Province, 8 November 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA/JIANG HAN**

Specifically, business revenue of firms mainly providing online sales services soared 16.3

per cent compared to one year earlier — a pace 1 percentage point faster than the Jan-Sept period.—Xinhua

TotalEnergies cuts North Sea investment over UK windfall tax

FRENCH company TotalEnergies will cut North Sea oil and gas investment by 25 per cent next year after the UK government extended a windfall tax on energy firms.

Jean-Luc Guizou, head of the company's UK production operations, has said that "following another change to the fiscal environment for energy investors in the UK, we are now evaluating

the impact of this change on our current and planned projects".

"For 2023 alone, our investments will be cut by 25 per cent," he added in a statement reported by specialist publication Energy Voice on Thursday.

TotalEnergies confirmed the statement to AFP Friday.

Total will cut its North Sea investment by £100 million (\$123 million) in 2023, impacting work

on new wells, after finance minister Jeremy Hunt ramped up a windfall tax on oil and gas giants, whose profits have surged on fallout from the Ukraine war.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman on Friday said "it's right and fair that those with the broadest shoulders, and who are able to, contribute the most so we can continue to support the vulnerable".—AFP

OPEC+ likely to maintain oil output levels

MAJOR oil-producing countries led by Saudi Arabia and Russia look set to maintain their current output levels at a meeting Sunday, ahead of fresh sanctions against Moscow coming into force.

The alliance's Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) kicked off their gathering Sunday, a source close to OPEC told AFP, ahead of the full ministerial conference afterwards which was expected to be brief.

The 13-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will consult with 10 other oil-producing

nations including Russia — known collectively as OPEC+ — to review their decision in October to cut production by two million barrels per day.

On Friday, the EU, G7 and Australia agreed a \$60-per-barrel price cap on Russian oil, which will come into effect on Monday or soon after, alongside an EU embargo on maritime deliveries of Russian crude oil.

It will prevent seaborne shipments of Russian crude to the European Union, which account for two thirds of the bloc's oil imports from Russia, an attempt to deprive Mos-



Nigeria has a total of 159 oil fields and 1481 wells in operation according to the Department of Petroleum Resources. **PHOTO: THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL PETROLEUM COMPANY LTD (NNPC)**

cow's war chest of billions of euros. While Russia denounced the incoming price cap on Saturday, threatening to suspend deliveries to any country that adopted the measure, Ukraine suggested the cap should have been set even lower.

For OPEC+, the big unknown in the oil equation is how heavily sanctions will hit Russian supply.

"The uncertainty for Russian supply is significant", DNB analysts said. OPEC would therefore "aim for a low-profile meeting that leaves existing production quotas unchanged".—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

China's ice, snow market reports steady expansion, upgrading

CHINA'S ice and snow market has seen robust growth and strong upgrading momentum as winter sports become more and more popular among consumers.

The market value rose 51.88 per cent year on year in 2021 and is expected to exceed 800 billion yuan (about 113.41 billion US dollars) this year. It is likely to top 1 trillion yuan in 2025, according to a report on the development of the industry.

Ice and snow tourism is popular among Chinese consumers, and the number of skiers has seen rapid growth, said Shen Jiani, a researcher with online travel agency Trip.com Group, noting that the number of skiers on its platform surged over 70 per cent year on year in the 2021-2022 snow season.



Tourists enjoy themselves at the Shichahai skating rink in Beijing on 6 February 2017, the first working day after the Spring Festival holiday. **PHOTO: ZOU HONG/CHINA DAILY/FILE**

"Instead of merely experiencing something new, consumers are taking skiing as their hobby," said Shen, citing the significant consumption growth related to learning skiing in the

previous two snow seasons.

Eyeing the strong potential of the market, measures have been taken to promote industrial upgrades to meet the diversified demand of consumers.—Xinhua

US gun violence claims over 1 mln lives amid rampant firearm abuse, proliferation

THE United States has seen over 1 million firearm fatalities over the past three decades with the death rates reaching a 28-year high in 2021, amid a surge in both gun violence and ownership.

There were 1,110,421 deaths related to firearms in the country from 1990 to 2021, nearly 86 per cent of them among males, according to a recent study released in the JAMA Network Open, an open-access medical journal published by the American Medical Association.

The death rates per 100,000 people per year, after reaching a low of 10.1 in 2004, began to climb back up, eventually increasing by 45.5 per cent to 14.7 in 2021.

"Firearm fatalities accelerated dramatically during the COVID pandemic," said Eric Fleeegler, one of the authors, who takes responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis.

"Multiple potential factors have likely contributed to this including severe economic distress, an erupting mental health crisis, and a significant uptick in the sale of firearms," said Fleeegler, associate professor of pediatrics and emergency medicine at Harvard Medical School and emergency medicine physician at Boston Children's Hospital. The study has also underlined increasing disparities in firearm fatality rates among racial and ethnic groups.—Xinhua

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Ukraine war strips shine off Merkel legacy

ANGELA Merkel left the German chancellery on 8 December 2021 at the height of her global stature. Twelve months on, it is hard to find a more precipitous drop in popularity and prestige in modern European politics.

The offices accorded to the former leader are in view of the Russian embassy, where since the Ukraine invasion in February Berliners regularly leave signs and flowers pro-

testing the war.

Long called the world's most powerful woman, Merkel these days has pulled back from the spotlight, working on her memoirs and enjoying the occasional television series, such as "The Crown", which tells the story of Queen Elizabeth II's turbulent decades on the throne.

But in many quarters the broad German support she once enjoyed as a staunch de-

fender of Western liberal values has curdled.

"One year on, the world is in flames, Russia invaded Ukraine, gas and petrol prices are through the roof and Germany fears the winter," wrote Der Spiegel magazine's Alexander Osang, a longtime Merkel confidant.

"Angela Merkel went from role model to culprit, from crisis-manager to crisis-causer."—AFP



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has laid blame at Merkel's feet. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Russia denounces oil price cap agreed by EU, G7



The \$60 oil price cap will come into effect on Monday or soon after, alongside an EU embargo on maritime deliveries of Russian crude oil. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

RUSSIA on Saturday denounced a \$60 price cap on its oil agreed by the EU, G7 and Australia, even as Ukraine suggested it was not tough enough and might have to be revisited.

"We will not accept this price cap," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told domestic news agencies, adding that Russia, the world's second-largest crude exporter, was "analysing" the move.

The \$60 oil price cap will come into effect on Monday or soon after, alongside an EU embargo on maritime deliveries of

Russian crude oil.

The embargo will prevent seaborne shipments of Russian crude to the European Union, which account for two thirds of the bloc's oil imports from Russia, potentially depriving Russia's war chest of billions of euros.

But while Kyiv welcomed the price cap earlier Saturday, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his evening address that the level set was not "serious" as it would not do enough damage to the Russian economy.

"Russia has already caused huge losses to all countries of the world by deliberately destabilizing the energy market," he argued in his nightly address, describing the decision on the price cap as "a weak position".

It is "only a matter of time when stronger tools will have to be used", Zelensky added.

The G7 nations — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States — along with Australia have already said they are prepared to adjust the price ceiling if necessary.—AFP

NEWS IN
BRIEF

Chinese spokesperson says US lets ally Europe pay price of crisis

CHINESE Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Friday said the United States is letting its ally Europe pay the price in the crisis.

Zhao made the remarks at a press briefing when asked to comment on French President Emmanuel Macron's criticism of the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act launched by the United States, which Macron said will "fragment the West" while creating differences between the United States and Europe. —Xinhua

UN chief calls for renewed efforts to end slavery

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Friday called on governments and societies to recommit to eradicating slavery, and underscored the need to recognize the painful legacy of slavery and the growing of its modern forms.

In a message to mark the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, Guterres stressed the need "to recognize that the legacy of the transatlantic trade of enslaved Africans reverberates to this day, scarring our societies and impeding equitable development."

"We must also identify and eradicate contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, child labour, forced marriage and the use of children in armed conflict," he said. —Xinhua

UK, Greece in 'secret talks' on Parthenon Marbles: report



The ancient sculptures, also known as the Elgin Marbles, were taken from the Parthenon temple in Athens in the early 19th century by British diplomat Lord Elgin and have been held by the British Museum ever since. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE British Museum and the Greek prime minister are in the "advanced stage" of "secret talks" over the "possible return" of the Parthenon Marbles, local media reported on Saturday.

The ancient sculptures, also known as the Elgin Marbles, were taken from the Parthenon temple in Athens in the

early 19th century by British diplomat Lord Elgin and have been held by the British Museum ever since. Greece wants them returned.

The behind-the-scenes talks between British Museum chair George Osborne and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis "have been taking place in London since

November 2021", daily newspaper Ta Nea reported.

It said the latest discussions took place at a hotel this week, while Mitsotakis was in the British capital to promote Greek business interests.

The "delicate" negotiations between Osborne, a former British finance minister, and the Greek leader were at "an advanced stage" but Greek officials cautioned they could still "hit a stalemate at the eleventh hour", the paper said.

"It is possible that a mutually beneficial solution can be found. The Parthenon Sculptures can be reunited and at the same time the concerns of the British Museum can be taken into account," ANA-MPA news agency reported Mitsotakis as saying on Monday.

"I understand that there is momentum. I am consciously talking about 'reunification' of the Sculptures and not about a 'return'". —AFP

S. Africa's scandal-hit president 'not resigning': spokesman



Ramaphosa has been under fire since June, when a former spy boss filed a complaint with the police alleging that the president had hidden a February 2020 burglary at his farm in northeastern South Africa from the authorities. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

SOUTH Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, embroiled in scandal and under threat of impeachment, has no intention of resigning and will fight both politically and judicially, his spokesman said Saturday.

Pressure mounted this week for Ramaphosa to quit or be forced from office over the burglary of more than half a million dollars in cash from

his farm, which he allegedly covered up.

On Wednesday, a three-member parliamentary panel, including a former chief justice of the country's highest court, said Ramaphosa "may have committed" acts contrary to the law and the constitution, paving the way for impeachment proceedings.

"President Ramaphosa is

not resigning based on a flawed report, neither is he stepping aside," his spokesman Vincent Magwenya said.

Ramaphosa has been under fire since June, when a former spy boss filed a complaint with the police alleging that the president had hidden a February 2020 burglary at his farm in northeastern South Africa from the authorities.

He allegedly organised for the burglars to be kidnapped and bribed into silence.

Ramaphosa, who is head of the African National Congress (ANC) ruling party, has denied any wrongdoing.

The president has not been charged with anything at this point, and the police inquiry is ongoing.

But the scandal, complete with details of more than half a million dollars in cash being hidden under sofa cushions, comes at the worst possible moment for the president. —AFP

Palestinian Santa brings festive cheer to Jerusalem

IN Jerusalem's Old City there are dozens of churches, but as Christmas beckons there is just one Santa Claus — a towering Palestinian former basketball player.

Each December, the streets sparkle green and red as Christian pilgrims and others arrive to celebrate Christmas in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem. Seven years ago one resident, Issa Kassissieh, transformed the ground floor of his 700-year-old home into

a grotto, complete with candy, mulled wine and a chance to sit on Santa's lap.

Welcoming the season's first visitors to Santa House, the red-suited and bearded Kassissieh belted out a "Ho, ho, ho!" at families queueing to see him.

"We are dealing with many religions here in Jerusalem. We have Muslims, Christians and Jews. I have all religions come to my house. I open my hands to everybody," said Kassissieh, himself a Christian. —AFP



Issa Kassissieh, dressed as Santa Claus, poses for a picture as he rides a camel at Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem's Old City. **PHOTO: AFP**



SPORT



Myanmar female footballers plan to play abroad

MYANMAR female footballers are trying to join foreign clubs at the end of this year, according to the officials.

Myanmar women footballers started getting the opportunity to play abroad in 2021, and until now, Myanmar women's national team striker Win Theingi Tun and team captain Khin Malar Tun have been able to play abroad.

Win Theingi Tun is the first Myanmar female footballer playing abroad. She joined Indian club Gokulam in 2021 and Lords FA of India in 2022. Now, she was offered by some Indian clubs, including her former club.

Win Theingi Tun will decide her future soon and she plans to visit India this month. The female striker is helping some other Myanmar women footballers to play in Indian clubs.

Captain of the Myanmar women's

national team Khin Malar Tun has also been offered by her former club College of Asian Scholars of Thailand, and a decision will be made soon.

If the number of Myanmar women footballers who play abroad increases larger, their qualification will prove more and will contribute to the development of Myanmar women's football arena, officials stated.—Ko Nyi Lay/KZL



Myanmar woman football star Win Theingi Tun. PHOTO: WTGT FACEBOOK

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.

Giroud and Mbappe guide France past Poland and into World Cup quarter-finals

KYLIAN Mbappe set up a history-making goal for Olivier Giroud and then scored two himself as holders France eased into the quarter-finals of the World Cup with a 3-1 win over Poland on Sunday.

Giroud's opening goal a minute before half-time was his 52nd for his country, allowing him to pass Thierry Henry and become France's all-time

record marksman.

Mbappe's lethal strike in the 74th minute killed off any prospect of a Poland comeback and he netted again at the death to move to nine goals in just 11 World Cup appearances, the second-most for a French player at the tournament.

At the other end the threat

of Robert Lewandowski was snuffed out by the French defence although the 34-year-old Poland captain did get the consolation of scoring a stoppage-time penalty.

France, though, march on to the quarter-finals and remain on course to become the first team to successfully defend the World Cup since Brazil 60 years ago.—AFP



France's forward #09 Olivier Giroud greets the supporters after the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between France and Poland at the Al-Thumama Stadium in Doha on 4 December 2022. PHOTO: AFP

Japan primed to show 'samurai spirit' against Croatia at World Cup

JAPAN will "fight like samurai" in Monday's World Cup last-16 clash with Croatia as they battle to reach the quarter-finals for the first time, defender Yuto Nagatomo said.

Japan reached the knockout round after stunning Germany and Spain to top Group E but they are not satisfied with what they have achieved so far in Qatar.

Veteran Nagatomo is appearing at his fourth World Cup and urged his team-mates to "show the samurai spirit to the world" against Croatia. "Before battle, the samurai would polish their weapons and refine their technique, but if they were scared in battle, all that would count for nothing," the former Inter Milan left-back said Sunday.

"It's the same as football. Of course tactics and technique are important, but if we're scared, it doesn't matter how much we've trained over the past four years because our technique will be no use.—AFP

Fifa World Cup 2022

21:30 MST (5-12-2022)

Japan - Croatia

01:30 MST (6-12-2022)

Brazil - Korea Republic

