

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

Bagan's local economy prospers amid travellers' surge in Thingyan period

THE beaches across the nation and Bagan were crowded with visitors during Thingyan long holidays from 9 to 17 April.

The Bagan residents expected most in April, the last Myanmar tourist season, and the Thingyan festival has not been held for two years due to COVID-19. This year, the government allowed to celebrate the Thingyan festival, and the travellers throng Bagan more than in 2019.

All the hotels, guest houses, food stalls, paintings and puppet shops saw good transactions, and the transportation services such as horse carts and electric motorcycles were also in good condition.

"There were between 4,000 and 7,000 visitors to Myinkaba pagoda per day in the Thingyan period. Unexpected Thingyan travels surged this year. It was more crowded than the previous Thingyan before the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been visitors so far since 12 April. This month is the final month of the travelling season and the Bagan, which was almost empty in tourism during the last two



Travellers are pictured against the background of Myinkaba Pagoda in Bagan during the Thingyan holiday. **PHOTO: KANU**

years, gets the best transactions during this Thingyan period. The residents are satisfied and run

their operations as usual. We are also glad that the economy came alive unexpectedly during

this recession. The international flights are also resumed, and we

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- ➔ Food Court

Special arrangements are made for Package Tours and group Pilgrimages.

BYIN OO LWIN

Pwe Gauk

(BE-FALLS)

Waterfalls Resort

open and upgrade again!

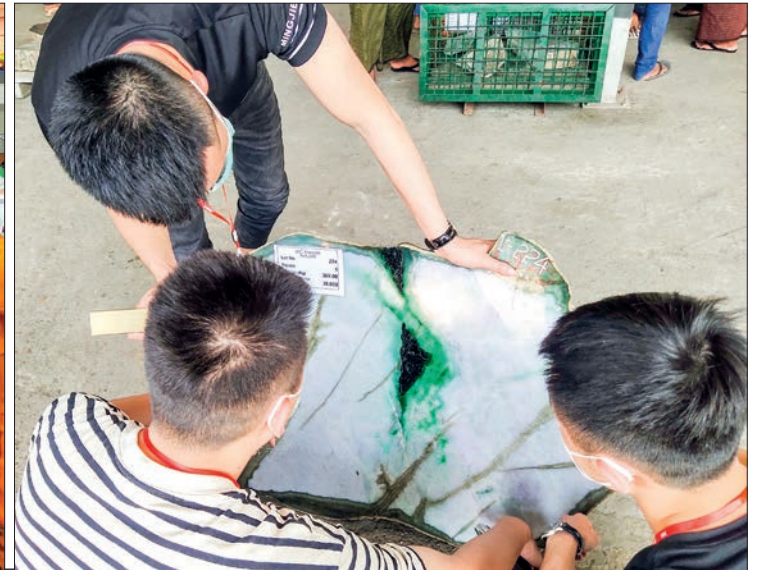
57th Myanmar Gems Emporium continues its second day

THE second day of the 57th Myanmar Gems Emporium continued yesterday at Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

Expatriate and local jewelers observed the pearls, jewels and jade sets on display at the Mani Yadana Jade Hall.

After that, the jewellers inspected the sets of pearls from Series 1 to Series 220 for sale at the fair and placed bids inside the tender boxes.

At the exhibition, the bidders for the 1st to 220th batch of pearls from 330 sets of pearls were opened by the officials.



Gem merchants are seen viewing around the Emporium.



In the evening, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Myanmar Gems Emporium and Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi, Deputy Minister U Min Min Oo and members of the Central Committee of the Emporium observed the auction of pearls inside the Mani Yadana Jade Hall through an open bidding system.

On the third day of the exhibition, out of 330 pearls, lots 221 to 330 were auctioned through open bidding which will be sold to local and foreign jewelers.

Yesterday, trainees from Shwe Kya Pin Gems and Jewel-

ery Vocational Training School in Zabuthiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw observed the pearls, gems and jade sets displayed inside and outside of the Mani Yadana Jade Hall.

There are also gems and jewellery shops inside the Mani Yadana Jade Hall, which attracts visitors.

The 57th Myanmar Gems Emporium will be held at Mani Ratana Jade Hall from 22 to 28 April.

A total 120 gems and 2,000 jade lots will be auctioned through open bidding. They will be sold to local and foreign jewelers, officials said. —MNA

Bagan's local economy prospers amid travellers' surge in Thingyan period

FROM PAGE-1

welcome the foreign tourists," said U Tin Hla Oo, secretary of the Myinkaba pagoda board of trustees.

Hotels and guesthouses were fully reserved. Some visitors stayed at monasteries and houses in the Thingyan period. According to the residents, there were almost 100,000 travellers to Bagan per day between Thingyan Akyo Day to New Year's Day.

"The most travellers visited on Thingyan Akyo, Akya, Atet and New Year day. No one expected that the region would host such numbers of visitors. The stalls, garments and regional product shops saw good sales worth about one million a day. We, hand painters, were also busy and earned a good income daily. The tourists came here, but it was just a few. The Bagan people get an unexpected economic opportunity during the Thing-



Marionettes – Myanmar traditional puppets are seen hanging from the trees.

yan period. Local people rely on the travellers, and all are happy when they receive the news that the visitors will come. The Bagan region, full of Myanmar cultural heritage, always welcomes do-

mestic and foreign visitors," said U Zeya Than, a hand painter at Myinkaba pagoda.

There are 3,280 pagoda and stupas in Bagan. The visitors mostly visit Shwezigon,

Dhammayangyi, Alotawpyae, Htilominlo, Ananda, Gadawpalin, Thatbyinnyu, Maha Bodhi, Buu Phaya, Dhammayangyi, Sulamani, Manuha, Mya Zedi, Lawka Nanda, Shwesandaw,

Ngatpyit Taung and also to Sarkyatpone, Sarkyathit, Shwekuncha, Shwelatetuu, Kyaukku, Myathet, Thameewat and Kyan-sitha caves.—Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

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

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

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

MoFA publishes 2021-Thar Kaung Taman (good diplomat) Magazine

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the launching ceremony of Thar Kaung Taman (good diplomat) Magazine for 2021 in Yangon yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin and officials of the ministry, magazine distribution committee members, writers, advertisers and guests.

First, the Union minister remarked, and Deputy Minister U Nyunt Swe (retired) made a greeting speech on behalf of article writers.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued its annual magazine in 1997, and the 2021 Thar Kaung Taman Magazine is the 23rd magazine. The magazine covers the experiences, diplomatic affairs and international affairs encountered by senior diplomats, counsellors of the ministry, directors-general, retired diplomats, employees in current operations and external writers in both Myanmar and English languages. — MNA



The launching event of the MoFA's Thar Kaung Taman Magazine for 2021 in progress.

MoRAC Union Minister attends opening ceremony of Anaga Yadana Myay-MraukU photo contest

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko, accompanied by Rakhine State government officials, paid homage to State Ovadacariya Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Ratha Guru Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Gandhavasaka Pandita Dr Bhaddanta Pannayasami at Aung Mingala Monastery in MraukU Township yesterday.

Then, the Union Minister and party attended the opening ceremony of Anaga Yadana Myay-MraukU photo contest, which was jointly conducted by the ministry and the Rakhine State government at Andaw Thein Temple.

In his speech, the Union



The MoRAC Union Minister opens the Anaga Yadana Myay-MraukU photo contest in MraukU Township yesterday.

Minister said the complete nomination dossier for MraukU cultural heritage zone was sub-

mitted to World Heritage Committee in time. The photo contest was held for the first time

and is estimated to convene in Sittway, Thandwe, Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and

Bagan. MraukU photographers will show a total of 120 photos in the competition. He also highlighted the advantages in job opportunities, high income and socio-economic development when MraukU cultural heritage zone is listed on World Heritage List.

Then, the Union minister viewed the photos and visited Andaw Thein Temple, Chainkite Pitaka Chamber and Laungpunpyauk pagoda.

He also inspected the MraukU Palace, MraukU Archaeological Museum, Cultural Museum in Sittway, Buddha Museum, and renovation works on Lawkananda pagoda and offered cash donations.—MNA

19 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 April, total figure rises to 612,733

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **612,733** after **19** new cases were reported on 23 April 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **591,609** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at **19,434** without casualties. —MNA

Union Ministers U Maung Maung Ohn, U Aung Naing Oo give virtual interview to foreign news agencies

CONTINUED FROM
YESTERDAY

He said Myanmar will reduce its total domestic gas production with two objectives, in line with the UNFCCC's decision and the Paris Agreement, with a target of reducing the BAU from 105.24 million tonnes by 2030 if the country receives international support.

However, due to the abundance of renewable energy in Myanmar because of its abundant natural resources, the short-term/long-term projects with the help of foreign technology will ensure that there will be no shortage of natural gas and oil at home.

Regarding the natural gas project and the solar project, Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn added that three oil and gas companies left Myanmar. The reason for leaving may be dissatisfaction with the current government and external pressure, mainly because natural gas production in their blocks is declining, and production will decline further in a few years, he said. He also said human right was just an excuse, and they left just because the contract was about to expire and the profit was about to decline. As only a tiny percentage of Myanmar's oil and gas sector leaves, he said there is no big impact or loss on investment in the energy sector.

There is no significant impact and loss on investments due to this exit. According to the regulations, the Union Minister said, the oil blocks are being handed over to PTT (EPI) of Thailand and POSCO of Korea. He also added that the government would do its best with any company from any country that will benefit the country and the people, not just a Thai company.

Regarding electricity, Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn said about 60 million people exist in the country, and more



Union Ministers & Foreign Correspondents.

than six million live in Yangon. He said that the power outage was caused due to the sharing of electricity with other cities and the destruction of infrastructures by PDFs. Arrangements are made to replenish them, and solar power plants, such as the Letpanhla project, which will produce 40-megawatt and the Nyaungbingyi project, which will produce 30-megawatt, are underway. More than half of the work is completed, he added.

He also said that 18 solar power projects are tendered. Myanmar is working on plans to provide electricity to the whole country by 2030. As such, nine per cent of electricity generation is managed by the solar energy system. It also aims to generate electricity from wind renewable energy sources and to achieve this goal, 13 solar projects with a capacity of 370 megawatts are implemented.

In addition, three more projects to generate 390 megawatts of electricity are implemented. Special efforts are made to continue floating solar projects, rooftop solar projects, and small and medium hydropower projects where possible throughout Myanmar.

Hydropower projects which produce the country's current electricity needs include 152 MW from Middle Paung Laung, 280 MW from Upper Ye Village, 111 MW from Thu Htay Hydropower, 51 MW from Upper Kengtung, and 6 MW from Napiin, and the current projects are also pushed forward.

Regarding the questions of China Central Television (CCTV): "As international airlines will be allowed to enter Myanmar on 17 April, is it a sign that Myanmar will make tourism a key focus of economic development?" Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn replied that the domestic tourism was launched as the first phase, and now the international tourism will start on 17 April 2022, under the COVID-19 entry requirements, adding that the COVID-19 disease has affected the global economy. Tourism has been one of the most affected sectors.

As the tourism industry is a smokeless industry and a source of foreign exchange for the country, and one that creates many job opportunities, especially for young people and women, he said. Since the COVID-19 infection is significantly

under control, the Hotels and Tourism Ministry has worked with relevant ministries to welcome international tourists.

To prevent the disease infection through tourists, travellers must have a COVID-19 negative PCR test within 72 hours before arrival in Myanmar and a copy of health insurance purchased from Myanmar Insurance. He explained that the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and relevant ministries are scrutinizing and providing necessary services inside the airport.

There are 67 HSP Certified Quarantine Hotels in Yangon. The tourism sector plays an essential role in our country. I would also like to extend a warm invitation to neighbouring China. In consultation with the Consul-General in Mandalay, arrangements have been made to increase the number of visits, he said.

Although our country is unstable in some places, it is fully secure in the main destinations and has been prepared for more than two years. The tourism in-

Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo said Myanmar is drawing up and implementing an economic recovery plan to remedy its economy. To increase investments, we prioritize businesses related to the energy sector, such as oil production, refining, and fertilizer production. Secondly, he said that domestic and foreign investments would be invited to provide sufficient electricity in the country's electricity sector. We are also working to attract investment in the production of construction materials needed for infrastructure in the country, he said. There is great potential for Chinese investment in the food production sector in agriculture and livestock, which are traditional industries.

The invited sectors will focus on producing materials and service-related activities needed for the country's economic recovery. China is the most major investor in Myanmar, which accounts for 27 per cent of all foreign investment, he said. He welcomed the Chinese investment in the investment sector,



dustry is well equipped with full health facilities and new tourist destinations. He invited all countries, especially neighbouring China, to visit Myanmar.

In response to the question of the China Central Television (CCTV) on which businesses Myanmar would focus on to recover its economy in the future, apart from the tourism sector,

which will continue to work together to boost Myanmar's economy.

Regarding the question of the China Central Television (CCTV) on how Myanmar's Ministry of Commerce assesses the negative impact of the Central Bank's announcement to exchange foreign currencies in

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various bank accounts must be exchanged for kyats at the official exchange rate, as importers say that their businesses have been hit according to Myanmar media reports, Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo said the announcement aimed to make the Myanmar kyat stable. One US dollar exchange rate was K1,350 when the State Administration Council took office. Recently, opposition groups have tried to destabilize the local economy and try various means to devalue the kyat. Last month, before the order, was issued, the Myanmar kyat depreciated to K2,100 per dollar. The depreciation of the kyat has further

upset the local economy. The order issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar is to prevent the devaluation of the kyat. By doing so, there may be various effects in the recent months, but in the long run, it is a good plan for all, he said. Business people who are always exporting goods in Myanmar are welcome. Some welcome that the exchange rate is stable and the calculation is faster. There are also criticisms. However, our government has set up a Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee to minimize the negative impact. It is constantly monitoring and making necessary adjustments to reduce the negative impact on foreign exchange and en-

sure the smooth running of the economy.

In reply to the question of the China Central Television (CCTV) on how the relevant authorities can improve security and whether the security situation will affect the next general election next year, as there are reports of shootings and arsons across the country, Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn said that the government is tackling the security situation. He said the country's stability and development are beginning to accelerate, with more than one year in office, whereas CRPH and NUG groups are stepping up their terror acts.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



New Grade-5,8 and 11 Curricula Courses to be launched in coming year



THE Management Capacity-Building Workshop for Region/State Education Officers and District Education Officers was held

at 10 am yesterday at the meeting hall of the Department of Basic Education.

First, Deputy Minister U

Zaw Win said that education reforms are being carried out in Myanmar, and the new KG + 12 system curriculum is being

implemented year by year.

“New Grade-5, Grade-8 and Grade-11 curricula courses will be opened in the upcoming 2022-2023 academic year.

“Currently, Grade-5; Grade-8, and Grade-11 new TOT courses are also being opened from 4 April,” the deputy minister said.

“Therefore, education officials must support the systematic conduct of follow-up training in their respective regions. In terms of management, special care must be taken to avoid mistakes in management,” he added.

Regarding financial procedures, 1/2017; 35/2017, and 1/2022 directives must be carried out. Employees will be trained to improve their performance, and

performance scores will be recorded and sent to headquarters.

The development of the basic education sector depends a lot on the teachers. District education officers, Township education officers and principals must systematically develop the management, finance, and education sector following the directives, the deputy minister added.

The deputy minister discussed that teachers should learn and make efforts to produce good citizens who can be relied on for the country's future.

Then, education officers from regions and states presented the basic education sector activities of the states and regions, and the deputy minister coordinated the requirements. —MNA

Construction Deputy Minister inspects road development, Central Training School in Yangon Region

DEPUTY Minister for Construction U Win Pe accompanied by departmental officials, inspected the working process on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway (Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon) Road Milestone (75) 1 and 2 and checked the condition of the Kyan Creek Bridge access road on 22 April.

Regarding the road boundary of Mile Post (76) parking lot, Director-General Hla Tun Oo from the Road Department explained the step-by-step procedures.

The Deputy Minister instructed the responsible persons to prioritize tourists' safety and follow the road boundaries, installation of directional warning signs to reduce traffic accidents and meet the specified standards.

After that, he inspected the construction site of Mile Post

(26-0) and ordered the necessary work.

Next, the Deputy Minister and party inspected the No. (7) (City Circular Road) Mile (1/7-10/0) in Hlegu Township, Yangon North District.

Deputy Director of Yangon Region Director Office U Htin Kyaw explained the repairing the damaged area of the asphalt road within 1/7-5/2 miles, construction of 40 feet wide earth turret within 8/4-8/7 miles, construction of 24 feet wide concrete paving and RCC Box Culvert being carried out by the Road Department.

After that, the deputy minister and party arrived at Central Training School (Thuwunna), and Principal (Urban) Director U Pyae Phyo Se explained the needs of the training school.

Deputy Minister urged offi-



cial to form Central Committee for Training and Supervision and Teaching sub-committee according to the training sub-schools.

“According to the motto of the Central Training School

(Thuwunna) named “We must improve through quantity to training”, it is necessary to continuously acquire qualified staff and carry out construction work in line with the theme of

speed-good-convenience,” the Deputy Minister said.

Afterwards, the Deputy Minister and party inspected the renovated teaching hall and trainees' dormitories. —MNA

MoEE to ensure electric supply under long-term, short-term projects amid power shortage



Union Minister U Aung Than Oo makes the speech at the meeting regarding the power distribution sector, held at No. 27 office of MoEE in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 April.

MINISTRY of Electricity and Energy will accelerate its short-term and long-term energy projects amid the power shortage as power supply plays a pivotal role in Myanmar's economic growth, said U Aung Than Oo, Union Minister for MoEE.

He remarked at the meeting regarding the power distribution sector, held at No. 27 office of MoEE in Nay Pyi Taw at 10 am on 21 April.

He instructed to make a constructive approach as people have limited access to energy with the hour shifts due to the load management. He addressed minimizing energy

waste, providing adequate electric supply, and collecting meter bills for the State's revenue.

He added that tree trimming near power lines and warning of electrocution, evaluation of energy grids, and maintenance of equipment for sustainable power grids and power distribution are required.

According to the MoEE's statement on 20 April, the maximum electric generation was estimated at 2,662.8 MW, and the demand requirement was 3,550 MW. Power supply fell short of 887.2 MW on 19 April amid peak demand. — Htun Htun/GNLM

Myanmar nationals return through land borders

THE border camps receive Myanmar returnees from foreign countries. Two hundred sixty-seven people – 136 males and 131 females – returned to Muse Township in Shan State (north), while 16 people – ten males and six females to Chinshwehaw Township on 22 April and 253 people – 144 males and 109 females to Myawady Township

of Kayin State yesterday.

The health officials, Tatmadaw medics and other officials provided health-related matters for quarantine.

Then, township administrative officials sent them to their respective towns by vehicle, and those who tested positive for COVID-19 were confined to designated places. — MNA



Court orders Kachin State ex-chief minister Dr Khet Aung, ex-ministers U Wai Lin, U Win Nyunt, U La Saing (aka) U Da Shi La Saing, U Nawli (aka) Za Khaung Kham Yan, U Zaw Win, U Nay Win, state municipal director U Soe Naing to jail under Anti-Corruption Law

ANTI-CORRUPTION Commission inspected the complaints against Kachin State ex-chief minister Dr Khet Aung, ex-ministers U Nay Win, U Zaw Win, U Wai Lin, U Win Nyunt and their close partners under the Anti-Corruption Law.

According to the inspections, Kachin State ex-chief minister Dr Khet Aung and ex-ministers U Wai Lin and U Win Nyunt allowed a private company to pave AC tar road of 23 miles long Myitkyina-Bhamo road. It was not mentioned in the budget of the 2017-2018FY, using K11007.009 million that must be returned to the government without calling tender as per the President's Office Directive 1/2017. According to the QC team, the road was unqualified and was repaired, and it did not follow the terms and conditions of the contracts, and it caused losses to the State budget.

Kachin State ex-chief minister

Dr Khet Aung and ex-ministers U Wai Lin and U La Hsaing (aka) U Dar Shi La Hsaing failed to follow President's Office Notification 1/2017 when they sold the confiscated 10,000 tonnes of quartz in 2020. They sold 5,000 tonnes each to two companies at K36,000 per tonne, and it caused K240 million losses to the State budget. According to Order No 70/2020 of the Union Government, they failed to pay 20 per cent of quartz sales – K72 million to the Union Budget, and it caused losses to the State budget.

Ex-chief minister Dr Khet Aung and ex-minister U Wai Lin used over K1,492 million from the General Reserve Fund (GRF), which is not allowed to use, for the 2018-2019FY in constructing a two-storey guesthouse for the Kachin State government without following financial rules and regulations.

Ex-chief minister Dr Khet

Aung and ex-minister U Wai Lin also spent more than K248 million on the construction of tar road, concrete bridge and canal in Myaymyint, Tatkon and Dukahtaung wards in 2019-2020FY without calling tender in line with the President's Office notification no 1/2017.

The ex-minister U Zaw Win received about K2.1million of bribes from the in-charge and staff of the border inspection camp in 2019 and 2020.

The ex-minister U Wai Lin took more than K57million when he divided the K525 million cash prizes received from the seized fertilizer auction on the Waingmaw-Sadon-Kanpaikti Road in 2019.

He asked for K30 million from the state company owners, giving reasons for the construction of the Mogaung township party office in 2020.

Ex-minister U La Hsaing

(aka) U Dar Shi La Hsaing misused his power and took K96 million from gem entrepreneurs to construct a township party office and Hpakan township party office in 2019 and 2020.

Ex-minister U Win Nyunt misused his power and took K20 million from business people under the title of construction Waingmaw township party office and K25million to purchase materials for Nay Pyi Taw party research office in 2019 and 2020.

Ex-minister U Nay Win and U Nawli (aka) Za Khaung Kham Yal, and Director U Soe Naing of the Kachin municipal department used K219 million for fuel and maintenance and heavy maintenance of 23 unregistered vehicles in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020FYs.

Ex-chief minister Dr Khat Aung, ex-ministers U Wai Lin, U Win Nyunt, U La Hsaing (aka) U Dar Shi La Hsaing, U Nawli (aka)

Za Khaung Kham Yal, U Zaw Win and U Nay were charged under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption Law. Kachin State municipal department ex-director U Soe Naing was charged under Section 56 of the Anti-Corruption Law at Kachin State High Court.

As they were found guilty, the court sentenced Dr Khet Aung to 12 years in prison with labour under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption Law and U Wai Lin to nine years in jail with labour under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption Law. U Win Nyunt, U La Hsaing (aka) U Dar Shi La Hsaing, U Nawli (aka) Za Khaung Kham Yal, U Zaw Win and U Nay Win were sentenced to three years in prison with labour under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption Law and ex-director U Soe Naing to eight months in jail with labour and K300,000 fine under Section 56 of the Anti-Corruption Law on 22 April. —MNA

Bago Region Chief Minister inspects agriculture, farming and production in Waw, DaikU

CHIEF Minister of Bago Region U Myo Swe Win, accompanied by ministers of the regional government and department officials, made an inspection tour of concrete paving work on the Waw-Kyalaha-UMoeSu Road and the Nyaungkhashay security checkpoint in Waw Township on 22 April.

Afterwards, the region chief minister met officials from the township administration body and general administration department in DaikU Township. He coordinated the necessary things regarding agriculture, livestock and production work.

Next, the chief minister arrived at the People's Hospital in DaikU Township and met health personnel and provided cash assistance to health staff.

Then, the region chief minister visited the three-crop farm of U Soe, a farmer from Doetan Village, DaikU Township. The farm planted monsoon paddy, green peas and summer paddy.

Next, he instructed farmers to identify hectare plots, re-dig irrigation canals and educate peer farmers to grow three crops per year. The chief minister provided 20 fertilizer bags to the farmers. — MNA



Kayin State Chief Minister inspects land designated for fish breeding zone



KAYIN State Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo, accompanied by ministers of the Kayin state

government and department officials, made an inspection tour of designated land for fish farming

zone, conducted by Aung Ngwe Phu Co., Ltd, in Thanvan village in order to ensure fish sufficiency.

First, the state chief minister and party arrived at the Thanvan Village Agricultural Research Breeding Farm and discussed the proposed land for the fish farming zone at the Farm Administration Office.

Hpa-an District Administrator U Aung Lwin, State Fisheries Department Director U Sone Maing and officials from Aung Ngwe Phu Co., Ltd. explained plans to implement the fish farming zone on an estimated area of 277.72 acres, cultivation conditions of farmers in this area and coordination plans with the farmers. The chief minister then gave the necessary instructions.

Afterwards, the state chief minister and party inspected the construction of the production

road and five Pipe culverts, brick walls and paving work at the Agricultural Research Breeding Farm. He gave instructions for the farmers to use peeling machines, drying machines and seed cleaners.

After that, the state chief minister and party arrived at the Ywathaaye farming zone in Hlaingbwe Township. During the meeting with farmers, Hpa-an District Administrator U Aung Lwin explained the layout design of the farming zone and the types of livestock. The chairman of the farming zone committee discussed the vital issues for the farming zone and farmers. The state chief minister coordinated the things needed. — Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)/GNLM

CRIME NEWS

Police seize illegal teak, bicycle tyres, supplements

SUPERVISED by the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, efforts are being made to take effective action under the law.

On 20 April, the inspection and anti-illegal trade task force of Hteetan terminal and Customs Department seized K4,071,850 worth of illegal bicycle tyres not mentioned in ID lists. They took action according to the Customs procedures.

On 22 April, the joint inspection team of the Customs Department also confiscated illegal supplements (country of

origin – not found) which were different from the import document of FDA worth K6,225,000 at the Asia World Port Terminal and charged in line with the Customs procedures.

Similarly, the Ma-yanchaung inspection camp of Mon State also captured K2,025,000 worth of energy drinks from a passenger bus from Myawady to Yangon on the same day and charged following the Customs procedures.

The Bago Region Forest

Department seized K330,060 worth of illegal teak (2.1032 tonnes) in Khapaung forest reserve in Toungoo District yesterday and took action under the Forest Law. Therefore, five arrests (estimated value of K12,651,910) were made on 20, 22 and 23 April. — MNA

Confiscated commodities at the Asia World Port.



OPINION BOOKRACK

ARTICLE Weather Report

Listen to the ring of a beaten bell for peace

A bell for peace has already rung. Someone beat the bell for peace at the opportune time. It was an alarm to speed up the peace process for the nation. Accordingly, everybody needs to hold the greatest opportunity to restore the perpetual peace for all.

The other day, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing beat the bell for peace as part of extending the invitation to

all ethnic armed organizations to hold the peace talks in the near future. It is a great chance for all ethnic national people. They should not miss their chances to join the peace talks. It is a chance for them to express their heartfelt wishes at the peace talks for negotiation. They have to group the common ideas and set aside the different opinions while participating in the peace process. Indeed, the government and the Tatmadaw have firmly

gained for building the Union country based on democracy and a federal system that ethnic armed organizations have been demanding in successive eras. The Diamond Jubilee Independence Day falls on coming 4 January 2023. Current events prove that ethnic people have not thoroughly enjoyed the essence of 75-year independence yet. The root cause depends on the ethnic armed conflicts based on different opinions. Now is the important time for tasting the essence of independence for all ethnic people. Leaders of the ethnic armed organizations are invited to participate in the meeting. The SAC Chairman pledged to meet with all EAOs. And then, the representatives who are in the capacity of the State Administration Council members will hold talks with those EAOs. If necessary, further talks will be held. The leaders themselves and two members from each ethnic armed organization were invited to attend the peace talks. Hence, they have to join the peace talks without failing to represent their organizations and those from their areas. The SAC Chairman urged all EAOs to join hands together in holding the peace talks honestly and transparently to enable all ethnic people to taste the essence of peace and development. As such, all stakeholders need to emphasize the restoration of perpetual peace for all ethnic people, avoiding the armed conflicts in order to nurture the new generations on whom the State and the people rely.

WHO recommends COVID-19 drug and urges transparency around pricing

A highly successful COVID-19 therapy must be made available to more people, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said, calling for wider distribution and greater transparency surrounding its pricing.

WHO ANNOUNCED on Friday in Geneva that it has strongly recommended use of nirmatrelvir and ritonavir, sold under the name Paxlovid, for mild and moderate COVID-19 patients at the highest risk of hospital admission.

The oral antiretroviral drug was developed by Pfizer and is "the best therapeutic choice for high-risk patients to date," the UN agency said.

"However, availability, lack of price transparency in bilateral deals made by the producer, and the need for prompt and accurate testing before administering it, are turning this life-saving medicine into a major challenge for low- and middle-income countries."

Reduced risk of hospitali-

zation Paxlovid is strongly recommended for patients with non-severe COVID-19 who are at the highest risk of developing severe disease and hospitalization, such as unvaccinated, older, or immunosuppressed persons.

The recommendation is based on new data from two randomized controlled trials involving more than 3,000 patients. Risk of hospitalization was reduced by 85 per cent. In a high-risk group, that means 84 fewer hospitalizations per 1,000 patients.

Use for patients at lower risk is not recommended as the benefits were found to be negligible.

Inequity fears

One obstacle for low- and middle-income countries is that

the medicine can only be administered while the disease is at its early stages, making prompt and accurate testing essential for successful outcomes.

"Improving access to early testing and diagnosis in primary health care settings will be key for the global rollout of this treatment," WHO said.

The UN agency also feared that when it comes to access, poorer countries "will again be pushed to the end of the queue", as occurred with COVID-19 vaccines.

Generic prospects limited

Furthermore, lack of transparency on the part of the originator is making it difficult for public health organizations to obtain an accurate picture of the medicine's availability, as well as which countries are involved in bilateral deals and what they are paying.

Additionally, a licensing agreement between Pfizer and the UN-backed Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) limits the number of countries that can benefit from generic production of the medicine.

Paxlovid will be included in the WHO prequalification list as of Friday, but generic products are not yet available from quality-assured sources.

Prequalification means that WHO has assessed a medication and it meets international standards, thus making it eligible for procurement by national health authorities.

Make pricing deals transparent

Several companies, many of which are covered by the licensing agreement, are in discussions with WHO Prequalification but may take some time to comply



Employees are at work at the factory of US multinational pharmaceutical company Pfizer in Puurs, Belgium. PHOTO: AFP

with international standards so that they can supply the medicine internationally.

WHO has strongly recommended that Pfizer make its pricing and deals more transparent. The pharmaceutical giant was also urged to enlarge the geographical scope of the licensing agreement so that more generic manufacturers can produce the medicine and make it available faster at affordable prices.

In other developments, WHO has also updated its recommendation on another antiviral medicine, remdesivir, suggesting that it can be used in mild or moderate COVID-19 patients who are at risk of hospitalization.

Recommendation for use in patients with severe or critical COVID-19 is under review.

SOURCE: UN



Book Title - Learning English for Self-Improvement
Writer - Saya Nyunt Wai Moe, Dr Soe Than
Publishing House - City Discovery Publishing
Publishing Date - February 2022
Price - K 3,000

Learning English for Self-Improvement

CITY Discovery Publishing House published a book titled "Learning English for Self-Improvement" for those enthusiastic English learners. The book is about the compilation of topics discussed by Dr Soe Than and Saya Nyunt Wai Moe on the internet. Due to the maximum duration of live streaming, the book also includes topics which have not been discussed in online streaming. Moreover, suggestions to support the English Language learners are also added.

Saya Nyunt Wai Moe discussed life-long learning topics, including English vocabulary building,

ten ways to enrich vocabulary, reading strategies, writing tips, essay writing and tips for accurate translation.

Dr Soe Than discussed topics titled English for self-study, fast and steady learning of English, covering tips for learning English at home, ways to learn English effectively, the importance of English grammar and tips for success in learning English.

In his preamble, Saya Nyunt Wai Moe noted that this book would hopefully render English learners tips for self-improvement.



Book Title - Jewish Girl Eva (A Novel by Meyer Levin)
Author - Linyon Maung Maung
Publishing House - Seikku Cho Cho
Publishing Date - March 2022 (Fourth Edition)
Price - K 4,000

Jewish Girl Eva

THE novel starts with the conversation, "Oh! Dear, you might be the only survivor in the family after the war ends," her mother said. If so, you have to remember to take note of everything that had happened and the incidents you had experienced. Her mother continued, she must reveal everything you encountered and how our families suffered during the war.

The novel was written down based on the Holocaust committed by Germans during World War II. It was inspired by the Jewish girl called Eva, disguised as a Ukrainian village girl named

Katya, and the novel portrayed how she survived tough times.

A well-known translator and writer, Linyon Maung Maung, translated and wrote this novel referring to the Jewish girl's Holocaust survival true story. He expects the book will inspire Myanmar young girls to get through in life.

It's the fourth edition of this blockbusting novel, which is as popular as a novel titled "Incident on Hill 192" of a Vietnamese girl named Mao who died from the atrocities committed by American soldiers.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 4:00 pm Saturday 23 April 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 24 April 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State and isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, and Taninthayi regions and Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight increase of day temperatures in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, and Ayeyawady regions and Shan, Chin and Rakhine states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 April 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 April 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR Mandalay AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 April 2022: Partly cloudy.

ENVIRON WORLD

China axes 15 coal plants abroad after Xi pledge, but loopholes remain: study

MORE than a dozen Chinese coal power projects overseas were cancelled after a ban last year on funding such plants, but loopholes could allow 18 others to still go ahead, according to a study published Friday.

China is the world's biggest emitter of the greenhouse gases driving global warming. It has vowed to peak carbon emissions by 2030 and become carbon-neutral by 2060, but these do not include its fossil-fuel investments abroad.

It is also the largest public funder of overseas coal plants, and was planning to build 67 in

more than a dozen countries when President Xi Jinping announced a ban on financing "new projects" in September.

Since then, Chinese developers have cancelled 15 overseas coal projects as funding dried up and host countries demanded greener alternatives, a study by the Helsinki-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) said.

The cancelled projects would have generated 12.8 gigawatts of electricity -- or the total power generation capacity in Singapore, the think tank added.

But a lack of clear rules has



Photo taken on 21 October 2021 shows coal stored in the depository at Wenergy Hefei Electric Power Co., Ltd. in Hefei, east China's Anhui Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA/LIU JUNXI**

allowed Chinese developers to continue to build new coal power projects, it warned.

"The key concern is that China will continue to fund or build new coal projects to power industrial parks under the Belt and Road Initiative," said Isabella Suarez, a researcher at CREA, referring to Xi's \$1 trillion global infrastructure push. "The loophole is that because the industrial parks have been years in the making, additional coal on these projects would not be considered new, even if... tenders are happening after the pledge to ban coal funding." — AFP

Chile's ongoing drought causes drop in mining production



Chile's ongoing drought has affected mining production in the northern part of the country. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

CHILE'S ongoing drought has affected mining production in the northern part of the country, causing a drop in output at Antofagasta Minerals, one of the world's largest copper producers, the company said Thursday.

Ivan Arriagada, CEO of

Antofagasta Minerals, said the decline in production compared with last year is due to the "prolonged drought" in the northern Coquimbo region and a drop in some production in its subsidiary Minera Centinela.

At the same time, the re-

gion's Minera Los Pelambres, one of the country's primary copper deposits, has completed 73 per cent of an infrastructure project that includes a desalination plant slated for operation in the second half of 2022.

It will enable the major copper mining company to normalize its production capacity, even if drought conditions persist for the rest of the year.

Antofagasta Minerals produced 138,800 tonnes of fine copper in the first quarter of the year and maintained its production target for the year at 660,000 to 690,000 tonnes, according to the company.

Chile, the world's leading copper producer, has been hit by a 13-year drought with below-average rainfall, with water being a crucial element for the mining industry. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

UNICEF seeks 250 mln USD to help children facing drought in Horn of Africa

The United Nations Children's Fund, or UNICEF, said Friday it has revised its emergency appeal from 119 million US dollars to nearly 250 million dollars to help millions of children facing severe drought in the Horn of Africa.

UNICEF warned that the number of children facing severe drought conditions across the Horn of Africa has increased by more than 40 per cent in the space of two months. "If we don't act now we will see an avalanche of child deaths in a matter of weeks. Famine is just around the corner," Mohamed M. Fall, the UNICEF regional director for Eastern and Southern Africa, said in a statement issued in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. — Xinhua



The climate-induced emergency across the Horn of Africa is the worst drought the region has seen in 40 years. **PHOTO: FAO/XINHUA**

More than one million African children protected by first malaria vaccine

MORE THAN a million children in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi have now received at least one dose of the first anti-malaria vaccine, the World Health Organization said Thursday.

The "breakthrough" RTS,S vaccine was pioneered in Malawi in April 2019 and found to be safe and to substantially reduce severe cases of the disease, the WHO said in a statement ahead of World Malaria Day on 25 April. — Xinhua

Ecotourism giving rare iguanas a sweet tooth

ECOTOURISTS feeding grapes to rock iguanas on remote islands in the Bahamas have given them a sweet tooth and high blood sugar, researchers said Thursday, warning of unknown effects on the health of the vulnerable reptiles.

Northern Bahamian rock iguanas living on the Exuma Is-

lands are so hooked on the tasty tourist treats that they rush to the beaches when they hear boats approaching.

"For a tour operator it was a wonderful way to ensure that you would be able to see these animals and people would have these close and personal interactions," said Charles Knapp,

of the John G Shedd Aquarium in the United States. Conservationists had already started to become concerned that the non-native fruit, delivered to the iguanas on the end of skewers, was making the large lizards less wary of humans and potentially vulnerable to smugglers for the pet trade. — AFP

Experts call for narrowing COVID-19 “vaccine gap”

MORE efforts should be made to narrow the “vaccine gap”, or the disparities in COVID-19 vaccination coverage among different countries, according to experts at the ongoing Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) annual conference. Gao Fu, head of the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, said at a sub-forum themed “Narrowing the Vaccine Gap” that wide disparities exist in vaccination coverage between high-income countries and countries of lower incomes.

Efforts should be made to narrow the gap and ensure people’s health, Gao added.

Gordon Brown, World Health Organization (WHO) ambassador for global health financing, said about one-third of the world’s population had not yet received their first vaccine shot, calling on medical workers to make more efforts to change the status quo. The Chinese government has provided a lot of vaccines to other parts of the world, contributing greatly to helping others to improve the imbalanced situation, said Jagan Chapagain, secretary-general of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. —Xinhua



A nurse prepares a dose of the Moderna COVID vaccine at the Oltepesi Dispensary in Kajiado, Kenya. PHOTO: PATRICK MEINHARDT/AFP

Students in Nepal attend secondary level final exam in-person as COVID wave falters

SECONDARY Education Examination (SEE) in Nepal started on Friday with students appearing in person as the COVID-19 wave in the Himalayan Nation continues to falter.

Disrupted for two consecutive years due to two waves of coronavirus infection and passing with the third one, students thronged to examination centers to attend the exam which is final for their secondary level studies.

“Quite fearful as well as excited, as we are now able to attend it in physical presence. If it had been done by earlier methods then it would have lesser value but now attending the exam in person would give better results as it is a means to test

our ability and would be marked on the basis of it. We are quite happy about it,” Aryan Gajmer, one of the students appearing the final year examination of secondary level told ANI.

Earlier for two years (2020 and 2021), the National Examinations Board which has been conducting the final exams annually had recognized schools’ internal assessments of students for SEE results due to the COVID-19 crisis. “English exams will go well because it’s one of my favourite subjects and other exams also would go the same but I have to put on more effort. All of the exams would now go smooth and good,” Anushka Khadka, another SEE appearing student said.— ANI

Delhi govt makes COVID precautionary dose free for beneficiaries aged 18-59

DELHI government on Thursday announced that the precautionary or the booster COVID-19 dose will be available for free to all eligible beneficiaries aged between 18 and 59 years in all government vaccination centres.

This comes after the national capital witnessed a sharp rise in the coronavirus cases.

“In order to give the benefit of precaution dose to all eligible beneficiaries in Delhi, the same will be available for the 18-59 years age group, free of cost in all government CVCs from 21 April, 2022,” Delhi government’s statement read.

Union Health Ministry launched the precautionary third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for the 18-plus population at private vaccination centres on 10 April.

All those who are over 18 years of age and have completed nine months after the administration of the second dose are eligible for the precaution dose.

A day before the administration of the precaution dose, the SII announced that it has revised the price of its COVID vaccine Covishield for private hospitals



The precautionary or the booster COVID-19 dose will be available for free to all eligible beneficiaries aged between 18 and 59 years in all government vaccination centres. PHOTO: ANI

from Rs 600 to Rs 225 per dose.

The Centre has also allowed the private COVID-19 vaccination centres to charge up to a maximum of Rs 150 as a service charge for vaccination over and above the cost of the vaccine.

Meanwhile, Delhi reported 965 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, with active cases nearing 3,000.

As many as 635 COVID recoveries and one death from the virus were also witnessed in the last 24 hours.

The COVID positivity rate in Delhi was recorded to be 4.71

per cent, while the active cases stood at 2,970.

The precaution dose was available free of cost only to those above 60 years of age, healthcare workers and frontline workers earlier.

In view of the rising COVID-19 cases in the national capital over the past few days, the Delhi government on Wednesday made the wearing of masks mandatory at public places, said Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal. Sources said that it also imposed Rs 500 penalty for defying the norm.— ANI

Hong Kong horse racing gallops on through depths of pandemic

FOR more than two years, people in Hong Kong have lived under some of the toughest coronavirus restrictions in the world. But one beloved tradition has persisted: horse racing.

Throughout the pandemic the Chinese city has gone

to great lengths to protect the sport from shutdowns, even as schools closed and infections tore through elderly care homes.

But some at the heart of the racing scene have baulked at the personal costs of complying with restrictions, with at least

two overseas jockeys leaving and others fearing for their mental health.

Since 2020, The Hong Kong Jockey Club, which has a monopoly on the industry in the city, has mostly conducted races behind closed doors and isolated riders from the local community.

Australian jockey Blake Shinn said last week that the “mental stress” meant he would not return for next season.

“I understand that the club’s priority has been to keep racing going during a difficult time... but at a certain point it becomes a mental health issue,” Shinn was quoted saying in the South China Morning Post. Jockeys and trainers have been required to stay home during off-hours and avoid mixing with people outside their household. Shinn compared it to being in jail.—AFP



A rider in a face mask celebrates victory at Shatin race course in December. PHOTO: AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

India, Britain sign MoUs, expected to conclude majority of FTA talks by October

INDIA and Britain signed several memorandums of understanding (MoUs) in the fields such as nuclear energy, education, wind energy, artificial intelligence (AI) on Friday, which is the last day of the two-day visit here of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Johnson's visit saw delegation-level talks and one-to-one discussions between the British prime minister and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

During their meeting, the two prime ministers reiterated the need to focus on sustained economic recovery.

They expressed satisfaction at the progress made in implementation of the roadmap 2030 on bilateral ties launched at their virtual meeting in May last year.

They also highlighted progress in negotiations on a

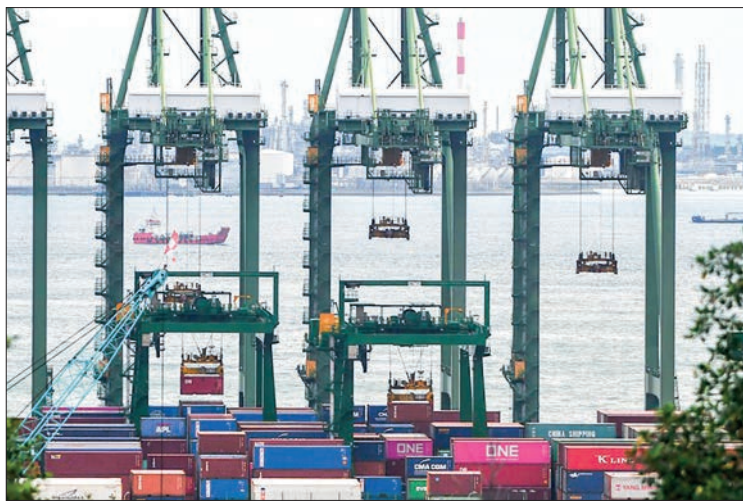


India and Britain signed several memorandums of understanding (MoUs) in the fields such as nuclear energy, education, wind energy, artificial intelligence (AI). A wind turbine blade is manufactured at the Siemens Gamesa blade factory in Hull, northeast England on 28 January 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

free trade agreement (FTA) launched in January 2022 in the Indian capital New Delhi, agreeing to conclude majority of the talks on a comprehensive and balanced FTA by October this

year. Modi welcomed Britain's commitment to 1 billion U.S. dollars in investment on climate related projects in India over the next five years, according to media reports.—Xinhua

Rosy prospects ahead for economic ties between China, other RCEP members



Containers are seen at the Pasir Panjang container terminal in Singapore on 17 August 2020. **PHOTO: THEN CHIH WEY/XINHUA**

THE Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) that took effect some 100 days ago has strengthened the trade network between China and other member countries, quickening the pace of regional economic integration.

The landmark RCEP is the world's largest free trade deal to date, featuring beneficial cooperation. It has injected strong impetus into the Asia-Pacific region, becoming a new driving force for the world economy, experts said at the Boao Forum for

Asia Annual Conference 2022.

The RCEP deal, covering 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, will eventually subject more than 90 per cent of merchandise trade in the region to zero tariffs.

China's trade with the other 14 members states expanded 6.9 percent year on year to 2.86 trillion yuan (about 442.75 billion US dollars) in the first quarter of 2022, accounting for 30.4 per

cent of the total, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

Zheng Zuguo, manager of a liquid-crystal display manufacturer in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, said the implementation of the RCEP in Malaysia can help the company reduce millions of yuan in tariffs for its products each year.

"Orders from Malaysia have risen about 20 per cent year on year so far this year," Zheng said.

Besides the direct "dividends" such as tariff reduction, the RCEP has also optimized trade rules among signatories, streamlined procedures to facilitate cross-border logistics and promote wider opening-up in the services-trade sector.

With rules covering trade, investment and circulation facilitation, the RCEP will bring positive changes to the Asia-Pacific region and the global economy, said Shamshad Akhtar, under secretary general of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, at the forum.—Xinhua

NEWS IN Brief

German industry calls for tax relief amidst energy price crisis

The Federation of German Industries (BDI) on Friday called for tax policy measures to cushion the economic consequences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict for the German economy. Companies in Germany were in "existential difficulties due to the energy price crisis," said BDI chief executive Joachim Lang in a statement. "They need relief to secure their liquidity." To address the "acute fiscal challenges," the German government would need to reduce the electricity tax in Germany to the minimum tax rate of the European Union (EU) "as quickly as possible," Lang stressed. Germany has among the highest energy taxes in Europe. The share of the tax and levy burden on the industrial electricity price was around 50 per cent in the first half of 2021, significantly higher than the EU average of around 33 per cent, according to a BDI paper.—Xinhua

New high-speed railway line operational in central China

A new high-speed railway section in central China's Hubei Province began operation Friday.

The Huanggang-Huangmei high-speed railway, with five stations along its route, has a designed speed of 350 km per hour and is connected to China's artery of the Beijing-Hong Kong Railway.

The 126.85-km line involves 78 bridges and 15 tunnels, with a combined length of 101 km. A maximum of 12 pairs of trains will ply the railway per day depending on the number of passengers, according to China Railway Wuhan Group Co., Ltd.—Xinhua

Tourist arrivals in Maldives pass 500,000-mark this year

TOURIST arrivals in the Maldives this year passed the 500,000 mark as of 20 April, its Ministry of Tourism said on Friday.

The ministry said that over 531,000 tourists arrived between 1 January and 20 April in the archipelagic country.

Among them, 131,764 visitors were recorded in January,

149,008 in February and 150,739 in March.

Tourist arrivals so far this year are 46.4 per cent more than in the same period of 2021.

Official data also showed that the average length of stay of visitors in the Maldives was eight days, with the daily average of arrivals standing at 4,827.—Xinhua



Tourist arrivals in the Maldives this year passed the 500,000 mark as of 20 April. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Japan to auction 4.8 mln barrels of crude oil amid efforts to stabilize market

JAPAN began procedures toward auctioning off 4.8 million barrels of crude oil from three state reserve bases on Friday in a bid to stabilize the market amid skyrocketing prices.

According to the Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry, an auction will be held on May 10 for the almost 5 million barrels of crude oil, which is part of 9 million barrels of crude Tokyo has decided to release from its national reserves.

The release from the national reserves will be the first since Japan introduced the scheme in 1978.

The oil will be available to the winning bidder on June 20 or later, local media reported Friday.



An auction will be held on 10 May for the almost 5 million barrels of crude oil. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/SHUTTERSTOCK/XINHUA

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has pledged that Japan will release 15 million barrels

of oil reserves. The move is in coordination with the International Energy Agency (IEA), which

plans a joint release by its 31 members of 120 million barrels, to help stabilize markets.—Xinhua

Eurozone growth speeds up in April despite Ukraine war

ECONOMIC growth in the eurozone accelerated and hit a seven-month high in April, a key survey showed on Friday, despite concerns about inflation and Russia's war in Ukraine.

The closely-watched monthly purchase managers' index (PMI) by S&P Global found that a rebounding services sector, benefiting from loosened Covid-19 restrictions, helped compensate for a near stagnation of manufacturing output.

Meanwhile goods and services prices rose at an unprecedented rate in April amid another near-record rise in firms' costs, hinting at further inflation rises to come, the survey said.

S&P Global's PMI rose from 54.9 in March to 55.8. A figure above 50 indicates growth. "The eurozone has therefore started the second quarter on a stronger-than-anticipated footing, confounding consensus expectations of a slowdown," said S&P Global's chief business economist Chris Williamson. "However, the weakness of the manufacturing sector is a major concern as it points to an economy that is not firing on all cylinders.

"Similarly, the ever-rising cost of living suggests that service sector growth could cool sharply once the initial rebound from the opening up of the economy fades."—AFP

New Pakistan government says willing to curb fuel subsidies



Pakistan's new finance minister has agreed to reduce fuel subsidies. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

PAKISTAN'S new finance minister on Friday agreed with IMF recommendations to reduce fuel sub-

sidies and end a business tax amnesty scheme, pledging to pursue structural reforms to boost a

crisis-racked economy.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2019 approved a \$6 billion loan over three years for Pakistan but disbursement has been slowed by concerns about the pace of reforms. Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, who took office this month after a previous government lost a no-confidence vote, said he had "good discussions" with the IMF on a visit during the Washington-based lender's annual spring meetings. "They've talked about removing the sub-

sidy on fuel. I agree with them," Ismail, himself a former IMF economist, said at the Atlantic Council. "We can't afford to do the subsidies that we're doing. So we're going to have to curtail this," he said. He said that former prime minister Imran Khan, seeking to avoid ouster, set a "trap" for his successors through heavy subsidies on fuel and electricity, as well as a tax amnesty scheme for businesses -- measures that derailed a disbursement from the IMF loan.—AFP

UK retail sales sink on cost-of-living crisis: data

BRITISH retail sales sank in March as shoppers tightened their belts in the face of a growing cost-of-living crisis, official data showed Friday.

Total sales volumes dropped 1.4 per cent last month after a drop of 0.5 per cent in February, the

Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement.

However, overall sales held above their pre-pandemic level.

"Retail sales fell back notably in March with rises in the cost of living hitting consumers' spend-

ing," said ONS economic statistics head Darren Morgan.

"Online sales were hit particularly hard due to lower levels of discretionary spending."

Motor fuel sales fell "substantially" as some people curbed non-essen-

tial journeys in the face of surging prices at the petrol pumps, he added.

Food sales also slid for the fifth consecutive month. Britain's annual inflation rate is at its highest level in three decades, largely on sky-high energy prices.—AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V HANSA BREITENBURG VOY.NO. (215W/216E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HANSA BREITENBURG VOY.NO. (215W/216E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-4-2022 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

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GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Japan, Russia strike deal on salmon, trout fishing despite sanctions



Salmon and trout drift-net fishing boats at the Habomai fishing port in Nemuro, Hokkaido, in April 2016. **PHOTO: KYODO**

JAPAN and Russia have clinched a deal on Tokyo's fishing quota for salmon and trout spawned in Russian rivers, Japan's Fisheries Agency said Saturday, reaching an agreement on the issue despite Japan's economic sanctions against Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine.

The two countries agreed on a quota of 2,050 tonnes within Japan's exclusive economic zone

for 2022, the same level as last year, and a payment to Russia of a "cooperation fee" of between 200 million yen (\$1.5 million) and 300 million yen, depending on the actual catch.

The lower end of the fee — which Tokyo pays to Moscow since salmon and trout, according to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, belong to the country in which they were

spawned — was reduced by 60 million yen from last year due to a decline in catch in recent years.

The two governments will sign the document on Monday. With the agreement, Japanese fishermen are expected to start operating in the EEZ near Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost main island, in early May.

On 11 April, the two governments started negotiations for Japan's fishing quota for salmon and trout even though Tokyo has been stepping up sanctions against Moscow in an effort, along with the United States and European countries, to pressure Russia to stop the war in Ukraine.

In Hokkaido, the ban on net fishing for salmon and trout is normally lifted on 10 April. But this year fishing has not been allowed as the ban remained in effect pending the outcome of negotiations.

"This is part of Japan's cooperation in resource management undertaken by Russia," an agency official said. "I don't see any problem with it." —Kyodo

CNN to close streaming service after one month

CNN will shut down its new streaming service next week, just one month after launching it with much fanfare, the US network announced Thursday.

CNN+ was billed as one of the most significant developments in the television chan-

nel's history but will close on 30 April.

The decision was made by new management after CNN's former parent company, WarnerMedia, merged with Discovery to form Warner Bros. Discovery earlier this month,

CNN Business said. "While today's decision is incredibly difficult, it is the right one for the long-term success of CNN," Chris Licht, the incoming president of CNN, wrote in a memo to staff, according to the New York Times. —AFP

Gunman found dead after four shot in Washington neighbourhood

A lone shooter who wounded four people in an upscale Washington neighbourhood killed himself before being apprehended, the city's police chief said Friday evening.

The Connecticut Avenue-Van Ness neighbourhood of the US capital — where multiple schools and embassies are located — was swarmed by law enforcement and locked down after gunfire erupted in the area Friday afternoon.

Assistant police chief Stuart Emerman said three people had been taken to the hos-



Policemen escort pedestrians to safety. **PHOTO: AFP**

pital — two adults who were in critical but stable condition and a 12-year-old girl with a minor gunshot wound.

Another individual with a graze wound to the back was treated at the scene, Emerman added.

"The suspect that we believe is responsible for this is now deceased," Washington Police Chief Robert Contee said at a news conference Friday night.

He said the suspected shooter took his own life as police officers breached the

fifth-floor apartment where he was located and that they found a "sniper-type set up with a tripod."

While no motive was yet known, "obviously his intent was to kill and hurt members of our community," Contee added.

A video shared widely on social media showed lengthy bursts of automatic gunfire toward multiple people who ran for cover, apparently taken from the perspective of the shooter. —AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Florida governor signs law revoking Disney's special status

FLORIDA governor Ron DeSantis on Friday signed a law that eliminates a statute that has for decades allowed entertainment giant Disney to act as a local government in Orlando, where it has its theme park.

The move was the latest episode in a dispute between DeSantis' Republican administration and Disney, after the company criticized the passage in March of a law banning school lessons on sexual orientation. There was no immediate response by Disney to the decision, part of a cultural battle waged by Republican leaders across the United States. —AFP



Mickey and Minnie Mouse in front of the Sleeping Beauty Castle during the 50th anniversary of the opening of Disneyland in Anaheim, California on 17 July 2005. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

At least 25 killed in mosque blast in N. Afghanistan

AT least 25 people were killed and nearly 40 others wounded after a blast rocked a mosque in Afghanistan's northern province of Kunduz on Friday, eyewitnesses said. The explosion occurred in Imam Sahib district shortly after Friday prayers roughly at 2:30 pm local time, a witness told Xinhua anonymously.

"The casualties were transported to the district hospital. The death toll may rise as many of the wounded remained in critical condition," he said.

The Taliban security forces cordoned off the area shortly after the blast, keeping people from gathering at the scene.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

On Thursday, 34 people were killed and over 80 wounded in multiple explosions, including a blast targeting a mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif, capital of northern Balkh province. —Xinhua

Britain and India in new defence and security partnership: Johnson

BRITAIN and India agreed a “new and expanded” defence and security partnership on Friday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in New Delhi.

Johnson is visiting India just as he faces criticism from his own Conservative MPs and the embarrassing prospect of a probe into whether he lied to parliament over the “Partygate” scandal.

New Delhi is part of the

Quad grouping with the United States, Japan and Australia that is seen as a bulwark against an increasingly assertive China.

But India also has a long Cold War history of cooperation with Moscow, still its biggest military supplier, and has refused to condemn Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

“The threats of autocratic coercion have grown even further,” Johnson said alongside

his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

“And it’s therefore vital that we deepen our cooperation including our shared interest in keeping the Indo-Pacific open and free.”

The new partnership was “a decades-long commitment”, he added, hailing the relationship between “one of the oldest democracies, and India, certainly the largest democracy”.—AFP ■



Britain’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson (L) shakes hands with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi before their meeting at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on 22 April 2022. PHOTO: AFP

RUSSIA - UKRAINE CONFLICT HIGHLIGHTS

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Here are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine:

US sets meeting on Ukraine long-term security in Germany

The Pentagon has invited 40 allies to meet in Germany next week to discuss Ukraine’s longer-term security needs even as Kyiv continues to battle Russian forces in the country’s east and south.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said defence ministers and senior generals of 20 countries, NATO and non-NATO members, have already accepted the invitation from US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin for the meeting Tuesday at the US-controlled Ramstein Air Base in western Germany. He called the meeting a consultation that would examine how Ukraine’s partners can contribute to shoring up its military strength after the war ends.

Russia targets east, south

The Russian army will aim to take full control over eastern and southern Ukraine, Russian news agencies quote a top general as saying.

“Since the start of the second phase of the special operation... one of the tasks of the Russian army is to establish full control over the Donbas and southern Ukraine,” Major-General Rustam Minnekaev says. He adds that this would create a “land corridor” to annexed Crimea.

‘Kyiv blocking Mariupol surrender’

Russian President Vladimir Putin accuses Kyiv of refusing to allow Ukrainian troops to surrender in the besieged port city of Mariupol.

“All servicemen of the Ukrainian armed forces, militants of the national battalions and foreign mercenaries who laid down their arms are guaranteed life, decent treatment in accordance with international law, and the provision of quality medical care,” he says, adding: “But the Kyiv regime is not allowing for this opportunity to be used.”

Russian success ‘hinges’ on Mariupol

The success of Russia’s military operation in Ukraine depends on its ability to capture the strategic port city of Mariupol, the regional governor tells AFP.

“The enemy’s offensive operation in the south hinges on Mariupol. The enemy is trying to focus all its efforts on it,” Donetsk governor Pavlo Kyrylenko says.

SOURCE: AFP/Xinhua

UN chief to visit Russia, Ukraine next week



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on 26 and 28 April respectively. PHOTO: MIL.RU/XINHUA/FILE

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelensky on 26 and 28 April respectively, a UN spokesman said Friday.

Guterres will visit Moscow

on 26 April and have “a working meeting and lunch” with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, said Stéphane Dujarric, spokesman for Guterres.

During his trip to Ukraine, Guterres will also have a working meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and meet with staff of UN agencies to discuss the scaling up of humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian people, Dujarric said.

The UN chief sent separate letters Tuesday afternoon to the permanent missions of Russia and Ukraine to the United Nations, asking Putin to receive him in Moscow and Zelensky to receive him in Kiev, Dujarric said on Wednesday.—Xinhua ■

Russia ‘ready’ for truce

RUSSIA’S defence ministry says it is ready for a humanitarian ceasefire at the Azovstal steel plant if Kyiv’s soldiers surrender.

The ceasefire would start with the “raising of white flags” by Ukraine’s forces “along the entire perimeter or in certain areas of Azovstal”, it says.

“If such signs are found in any part of the Azovstal metallurgical plant, Russia’s Armed Forces... will immediately stop any hostilities and provide a safe exit,” it adds.—AFP ■



8 MARCH 2022: A Russian humanitarian convoy carries food supplies from Crimea to Ukraine. PHOTO BY ALEXEI KONOVALOV/TASS VIA CFP

Britain and India in new defence and security partnership: Johnson

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SPORT

Myanmar face 1-4 loss to Thai All-Stars Team in Women's Futsal Championship

THE Myanmar women's futsal team lost 1-4 to the Thai All-Star Women's team in the second match of the NSDF Women's Futsal Championship 2022 in Thailand on the evening of 23 April.

The Thai All-Star Women's Team scored three goals in the first half and one in the second half.

May Thet Paing scored a single goal in the second half for Team Myanmar.

Also, Indonesia beat Indonesian South Park Team 4-2 in an earlier match.

The Myanmar team will play the third group match against the Indonesian Team at 1:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time on 24 April. — GNLM

Myanmar player (Red) vies for the ball against Thai All-Stars player (blue) during the second group match of the NSDF Women's Futsal Championship 2022 in Thailand on 23 April 2022. **PHOTO:MFF**



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.

Lampard would take draw at Liverpool as Everton battle to survive



Everton manager Frank Lampard is locked in a relegation battle. **PHOTO: AFP**

EVERTON manager Frank Lampard said Friday he would happily take a draw against "incredible" Liverpool even though his side desperately need points to survive. The Toffees, who have registered just six points on the road all season, could be in the bottom three by the time Sunday's game kicks off at Anfield.

Everton are currently one place outside the relegation zone, a single point clear of 18th-placed Burnley, who have played a game extra. But Lampard, who was appointed in late January, said he would be satisfied with a point at the home of Jurgen Klopp's quadruple chasers despite the pressure to avoid slipping into the second tier for the first time since 1954. "It is a tough game we are going into, make no bones about that," he said.—AFP

Four-goal Jesus stretches Man City lead, Arsenal inflict more misery on Man Utd

GABRIEL Jesus scored four goals as Manchester City thrashed Watford 5-1 to open up a four-point lead in the Premier League title race, while Arsenal beat Manchester United 3-1 to take control of the race for fourth.

City are five games away from defending their title, but manager Pep Guardiola has warned they will need to win every one to hold off Liverpool's storming end to the season.

Guardiola could afford the luxury of making six changes for the visit of the Hornets, who are headed back to the Championship.

Jesus, who was strongly linked with a summer move to Arsenal this week, was one of those recalled to the starting line-up and gave Guardiola a tough call to make in his selection for Real Madrid's visit to the Etihad on Tuesday in the first leg of the Champions League semi-finals.

The Brazilian took just four minutes to open the scoring with a tap-in from Oleksandr Zinchenko's cross and doubled City's lead by heading home Kevin De Bruyne's wicked ball

into the box.

Hassane Kamara's fine strike briefly gave Watford hope, but Rodri's stunning volley quickly restored City's two-goal cushion.—AFP



Arsenal's Spanish manager Mikel Arteta (C) celebrates with Arsenal's English goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale (L), Arsenal's Japanese defender Takehiro Tomiyasu (2nd L) and Arsenal's English defender Rob Holding (R) on the pitch after the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium in London on 23 April 2022. **PHOTO: IAN KINGTON / IKIMAGES / AFP**