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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.

Restoration of peace is crucial for holding a free and fair election: Vice-Senior General



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets departmental officials in Kawthoung on 1 May 2022.

AS Kawthoung region is potential for rapid development, it will have the achievement and progress through the united strength of the people, said Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win in meeting with district and township level officials at the hall in Kawthoung yesterday morning.

Chairman of Kawthoung District Administration Body U Soe Aung reported on administrative, economic and social

affairs of the region. Chief Minister of the region U Myat Ko gave a supplementary report.

In his speech, the Vice-Senior General said due to political, administrative, economic and social progress, Bokpyin was upgraded to the district level. The Prime Minister is striving for building the Union based on democracy and federal system as the political vision in addition to prosperity and food sufficiency of the State as the national aim.

Currently, COVID-19 pandemic is under control based on experiences from the third

wave event with the vaccination. A plan is underway to vaccinate all the people above 18 on 30 April 2022. According to the 30 April statistics, outbreak of COVID-19 scored 19 persons, accounting for 0.22 per cent without any death. Moreover, arrangements are being made to vaccinate the children above five.

Now, relevant ministries are striving for increasing the GDP to some extent. And, preparations are being made to hold the free and fair general election in 2023. It is necessary to issue one citizenship scruti-

ny card each to eligible voters.

The region government needs to arrange cultivation of oil palm and cocoa in addition to other mixed cropping plants, supply of technologies and inputs. Crude palm oil must be produced as the finished oil. Kawthoung region has sound foundations for fishery, tourism and other businesses with fish resources and invaluable coral reefs. Local people should engage in the production of value-added products instead of raw material exportation. All the people need to efficiently use fuel due to instability of

fuel prices across the world based on international issued. With regard to education sector, all school age children need to have KG+9 education. If so, they will have the chance to learn vocational training.

The year 2022 was set as the year of peace. The Prime Minister invited all ethnic armed organizations on 22 April to hold the peace talks in an honest and transparent manner without any restriction. Restoration of peace is crucial for holding a free and fair election.

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State Administration Council Press Release

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

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

Information Team
State Administration Council

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Palm oil wholesale reference rate set at K6,025 per viss in Yangon

Action to be taken against market manipulators

THE Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been issuing the basic wholesale reference price to be traded in the domestic market in line with the changes at international rate.

Palm oil prices in the world's palm oil exporters have risen this week, and based on a week-long FOB price hike, the reference rate for a week from 2 to 8 May in Yangon is set at 6,025 kyats per viss.

In addition, it has been announced that action will be taken against under the Important Goods and Services Act if retailers and wholesalers are found overcharging, storing inventory intentionally and attempting unscrupulous action to manipulate the market.

These basic wholesale quote prices can be found on the Department of Consumer Affairs website: www.doca.gov.mm and on the Facebook page of the Myanmar Oil Dealers Association.—MNA

2,100 pregnant and breastfeeding women receive Covacin vaccines in Kyonpyaw Township



A local receives COVID-19 vaccination in Kyonpyaw Township on 1 May 2022.

OVACIN vaccine is being given to pregnant and breastfeeding women in Kyonpyaw Township, Ayeyawady Region in a timely manner. As of 1 May, a total of 2,100 people have been vaccinated. Township Administration

Body Chairman U Zeya Min and members supervised the vaccination programme and pregnant and breastfeeding women from Aung San, Teza, Panglong, and Myawady Wards and Ahtaung, Myoma, Inye, Yaysakan and Daikpyet stations got the COVID vaccines.

To date, a total of 2,100 women: 393 pregnant and 1,707 breastfeeding mothers have been vaccinated, according to the health officials.

Those who have already been vaccinated will need a second dose from 24 May. The vaccine is still being given to pregnant and lactating women in the township who need to be vaccinated.—La Pyae Oo (IPRD)/GNLM

Vaccines delivered to communities, villages on mobile basis

TO provide full coverage of COVID-19 vaccine to the public in Dagon Myothit (East) Township, officials gave Sinovac COVID-19 vaccines to local people in Laydaunkan Village, Dagon Myothit (East) Township, yesterday morning via mobile system.

A total of 24 people aged

Health staff inoculates COVID-19 vaccine to a local in Dagon Myothit (East) Township on 1 May.

between 15 and 18 received the first dose of Sinovac vaccines, and 49 people aged 18-year-old and above got the first dose of Covishield vaccines.

In the meantime, 138 people received the second dose of Covishield COVID vaccines while 216 people got the Sinopharm vaccines.

The vaccine was administered in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health. The vaccination pro-

gramme was performed after a medical examination.

Under the supervision of Chairman of the township administration body U Myo Thu, township public health department staff, Township Red Cross Brigade members, volunteers and relevant ward administrators arranged the local people who came to receive the vaccine. —Win Ei Mon (Dagon Myothit (East) Township IPRD) /GNLM



We will strive to end the armed conflicts across the country

I have told that 2022 is set as the year of peace, and we will strive to end the armed conflicts across the country. As it is necessary to implement such a process practically, I invite leaders of the ethnic armed organizations to hold the meeting. I myself will meet with all groups.

(Excerpt from the speech on peace delivered by by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing on 22 April 2022)

Servicemen have to cooperate with administrative bodies and local people to protect the water and land resources to be free from losses: Vice-Senior General

ALL Tatmadaw members need to understand the efforts of the Prime Minister to hold the peace talks with invitation to the EAOs, said Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win in separately meetings with servicemen and families from Zadetgyi Island and Kawthoung station yesterday.

At the meeting hall of Zadetgyi Island, officials reported to the Vice-Senior General on progress of four military building tasks.

Speaking on the occasion, the Vice-Senior General said



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets servicemen and families at Kawthoung Station on 1 May.



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win comforts families of Tatmadaw members at military hospital in Kawthoung on 1 May.



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win presents gifts to a serviceman at military hospital in Kawthoung on 1 May.

Tatmadaw members took oaths by touching the State flag since they have joined the Tatmadaw. They have to be loyal to the State and the Tatmadaw. During the one year and three months period in the state of emergency

declared by the State Administration Council, terrorist groups attempted to commit the utter devastation against the State. As their efforts failed, they make more attempts to break up the Tatmadaw and security forces.

Some foreign countries provide them to do so for their geopolitical interests. Hence, servicemen have to cooperate with administrative bodies and local people to protect the water and land resources to be free from losses.

All Tatmadaw members need to understand the efforts of the Prime Minister to hold the peace talks with invitation to the EAOs. Officials must fulfill the needs of servicemen and families. As such, they will serve the

security and operation duties without any worries over their families. All Tatmadaw members need to follow the healthy lifestyle with dos and don'ts for ensuring the health and fitness. The Vice-Senior General then fulfilled the needs of officers, other ranks and families.

The Vice-Senior General presented foodstuffs for servicemen and families through officials. In the afternoon, the Vice-Senior General comforted servicemen, familie and people receiving medical treatment at the military hospital in Kawthoung and presented foodstuffs and cash assistance to them.

The Vice-Senior General and party viewed round the kitchen and mess hall of the hospital and presented cash assistance for health staff from the hospital through the commandant of the hospital.—MNA

17 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 1 May, total figure rises to 612,900

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **612,900** after **17** new cases were reported on 1 May 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **591,826** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at **19,434** without more casualties.

COVID-19 vaccine is being injected to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 30-4-2022, a total of **30,637,522** people have been vaccinated. Of them, **23,476,146** people have been fully vaccinated and **7,161,376** people have yet to get the second shots and 1,452,806 people have received booster closes.—MNA

Restoration of peace is crucial for holding a free and fair election: Vice-Senior General



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets business persons at military station hall in Kawthoung on 1 May.

FROM PAGE-1

All service personnel need to abide by Section 41 of the Constitution 2008. They have to fulfil the needs of the people for serving the interests of the region and the State under the law and work procedures. As Kaw-

thoung region is potential for rapid development, it will have the achievement and progress through the united strength of the people.

At the hall of the military station, the Vice-Senior General met with town elders and

explained efforts of relevant ministries for gaining economic development, correct tax payment, production of value-added products, and preparations for improving the airports and seaports to serve the tourism industry and attended to the



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets Salon ethnics on 1 May.

needs.

In Salonkyun Village on Zadetgyi Island, the Vice-Senior General presented nutritious foods for older Salon persons and rice and foodstuff for Salon families. An official presented the commemorative gift of Salon

ethnic to the Vice-Senior General who cordially greeted Salon older persons and Salon ethnics.

The Vice-Senior General also paid homage to Zadetgyi Island Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Dhammikasara.—MNA

Agricultural activities inspected in Myitkyina, Waingmaw

UNION Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo discussed matters related to agricultural development during the meeting with farmers and private entrepreneurs in agriculture and farming from Myitkyina and Waingmaw townships on 30 April.

The Union Minister and Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan and party inspected the farms of regiment and units from the Northern Command and provided veterinary medicines. Then, they attended the ceremony of planting green manure in Waingmaw Township. The Union Minister explained to local farmers the benefits of green

manure for soil development and crop nutrition. The Chief Minister and the Director General of the Department of Agriculture provided vegetable seeds.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party inspected the development of drainage canals, construction of two drain bridges to alleviate flooding on 100 acres of model farmland in Tatkon Ward in Myitkyina.

In the afternoon, they inspected the rubber research work being carried out at the perennial research and technology development farm near Nawngnan village in Myitkyina and met with local rubber farmers to discuss expansion



Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo holds talks with officials on prevention of 100 acre farmland from flood in Myitkyina on 30 April.

of rubber sown acreage and market issues in Kachin State. They also inspected the silk-worm breeding and farming ac-

tivities of Myitkyina Silk Farm.

Afterwards, they met with dairy farmers at the Chan Orchid Farm and Dairy Farm and

encouraged them to prevent animal diseases and produce high quality dairy products.—MNA

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MoTC celebrates 145th anniversary of Myanmar Railways

THE 145th Anniversary of Myanmar Railways under the Ministry of Transport and Communications took place at Pobbathiri Mingalar Hall, Nay Pyi Taw Railways Station yesterday morning.

Myanmar started running the first railway line on 1 May 1877 on the 161-mile Yangon-Pyay section. The name was changed to Burma Railway Company, Railways Board, and Railway Corporation over the years, and on 1 April 1989, the name was changed from Railway Corporation to Myanmar Railways.

At the ceremony, Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San said during the 145-year journey of Myanmar Railways, various systems have changed, but the transportation needs of the country is still met due to the perseverance and dedication of the Myanmar



Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San is speaking at 145th Anniversary of Myanmar Railways on 1 May.

Railways staff who carried out diligent work.

He said it is necessary to rehabilitate railway sections and improve the quality and standard of carriages and locomotives for the comfort of rail passengers. He added the need to think ahead to use the

electric train system in the future, to gradually reduce the need to buy materials required for the construction of locomotives and carriages and replace them locally, to establish a Research and Development Centre. He said the aim is to ensure the safe and smooth

transportation of passengers and goods in line with the motto of the Ministry of Transport and Communications “Transport and Communicate for the benefits of the people”.

Afterwards, Union Minister Admiral Tin Aung San presented additional wards

and certificates to eight officers/staff members who were awarded the honorary medals for their outstanding performance during the one year term of the State Administration Council and staff who excelled in various courses.—MNA

Magway Region Chief Minister meets farmers in Taungdwingyi township



Magway Region Chief Minister U Tint Lwin views thriving paddy plantations in Taungdwingyi Township on 29 April.

MAGWAY Region Chief Minister U Tint Lwin met with farmers in Wakkathay village in Taungdwingyi Township on 29 April.

During the meeting, the official of the Taungdwingyi Township Agriculture Department explained preparations for yielding 120 baskets per acre and above in the 100-acre model paddy field planted in the Drum Seeder system. The Chief Minister instructed officials to provide the necessary support for the correct cultivation system to local farmers

and help increase the yield of paddy, and he explained the issues raised by the farmers.

He said irrigation systems will be rehabilitated to provide full access to irrigated water, and upstream and downstream irrigation systems will be provided. The Chief Minister also provided cash assistance to 57 farmers who attended the meeting and observed the 100-acre model summer paddy field.

Afterwards, the Chief Minister and party inspected the Yanpe dam in Taungdwingyi

Township and the supply of agricultural water for summer paddy, and ordered to maintain clean and tidy water supply in the irrigated area so that it can be cultivated meeting the targeted acreage in the irrigated area.

Although a plan is underway to irrigate 900 acres of summer paddy through agricultural water from the Yanpe Dam in Taungdwingyi Township, more than 1,130 acres of summer paddy were cultivated.—Maung Nyi Nyar/GNLM

MoC facilitates daily imports of essential anti-COVID-19 equipment

TWO companies imported 10 tonnes of masks and 28,000 sets of PPE suits carried by three trucks through Chinshwehaw border trade camp thanks to facilities of the Ministry of Commerce for smooth and swift flow of essential medical supplies plus anti-COVID-19 devices that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities through trading posts, international airports and seaports.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures for the import process.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments and treatment of COVID-19 as well as contact persons for inquiries can be reached through the Ministry’s Website—www.commerce.gov.mm.—MNA



A truck is carrying masks and PPE suits from Chinshwehaw border post on 1 May.

Expansion of new districts in Nay Pyi Taw, regions and states according to political, administrative, economic and social development

IN order to make the regional development and administration work be more smoothly as the State's political, administrative, economic and social sectors develop, 75 districts were originally formed under Sections 54 and 248 (b) of the 2008 Constitution. In accord with the notifications No. 319/2022, 320/2022, 321/2022, 322/2022, 323/2022, 324/2022, 325/2022, 326/2022, 327/2022, 328/2022, 329/2022, 330/2022, 331/2022, 332/2022 and 333/2022 issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on 30 April, 46 further districts were expanded as follows:-

Sr	Nay Pyi Taw, Region/State	Originally organized districts	Expansion of districts
1	Nay Pyi Taw	Ottara District, Dekkhina District	Pyinmana District, Zeyathiri District
2	Kachin	Putao District, Bhamo District, Mohnyin District, Myitkyina District	Tanai District, Chipwe District
3	Kayah	Loikaw District, Bawlakhe District	Dimawhso District, Meisei District
4	Kayin	Kawkareik District, Papun District, Hpa-an District, Myawady District	Kya-in-Seikkyi District, Thandaunggyi District
5	Chin	Falam District, Matupi District, Mindat District, Haka District	Tiddim District, Paletwa District
6	Sagaing	Kalay District, Katha District, Kawlin District, Kanbalu District, Khamti District, Sagaing District, Tamu District, Monywa District, Mawlaik District, Yinmabin District, Shwebo District	YeU District, Homalin District
7	Taninthayi	Dawei District, Myeik District, Kawthoung District	Bokpyin District
8	Bago	Bago District, Toungoo District, Pyay District, Thayawady District	Nyaunglebin District, Nattalin District
9	Magway	Magway District, Gangaw District, Pakokku District, Minbu District, Thayet District	Aunglan District, Chauk District
10	Mandalay	Mandalay District, PyinOoLwin District, Kyaukse District, Myingyan District, NyaungU District, Yamethin District, Meiktila District	Thabeikkyin District, TadaU District, Aungmyethazan District, Amarapura District
11	Mon	Mawlamyine District, Thaton District	Kyaikto District, Ye District
12	Rakhine	Sittway District, Maungtaw District, Kyaukpyu District, Thandwe District, MraukU District	An District, Taungup District
13	Yangon	Yangon East District, Yangon West District, Yangon South District, Yangon North District	Botataung District, Dagon Myothit District, Twantay District, Kyauktada District, Mayangon District, Kamayut District, Taikkyi District, Hlegu District, Hmawby District, Mingaladon District
14	Shan	Taunggyi District, Loilem District, Langkho District, Tachilek District, Muse District, Kyaukme District, Mongmit District, Monghsat District, Kengtung District, Lashio District, Hopan District, Metmung District	Kalaw District, Namsang District, Mongshu District, Mongyawng District, Mongla District, Mongyang District, Mongton District, Tangyan District, Kutkai District
15	Ayeyawady	Patheingyi District, Pyaw District, Maubin District, Myaungmya District, Labutta District, Hinthada District	Kyonpyaw District, Myanaung District
Total		75 districts	46 districts

Therefore, as 46 districts were expanded to the original 75 districts, regional development and administrative activities will be carried out in 121 districts in total in a smooth manner.

Illegal teaks, foodstuff, and vehicles seized on 29 April, 1 May

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

Officials from Taunggyi Township Customs Department under the management of Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force inspected two trucks leaving Tachileik for Mandalay near 4th-Mile Forestry Joint Checkpoint, on 29 April.

Bags of dried chilies without official documents, Full Moon Wine and motorcycles estimated at K40.678 million, one Nissan Diesel 12-wheeler truck and one Isuzu 6-wheeler truck estimated

at K50 million were seized and action is being taken in accordance with customs procedures.

Similarly, a combined inspection team led by Hmawby Township Forest Department conducted the inspection in Yangon Region under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force.

During the inspection 0.6056 tonne of illegal teak furniture pieces estimated at K181,680 and one TOYOTA PROBOX 4 wheeler carrying vehicle estimated at K15 million totally amounting to K15,181,680 were seized near Letpadansu village, Hmawby Township, Yangon North District, and

action is being taken in accordance with the forest law.

Similarly, an investigation team led by the Myanmar Police Force conducted an investigation under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force in Sagaing Region on 1 May.

In Monywa Township, 430 barrels of unlicensed diesel estimated at K135.45 million were seized and action is being taken in accordance with the Oil and Oil Products Law.

In addition, a combined inspection team led by Bago Region Forest Department conducted the inspection under the man-



Motorcycles were seized near 4th-mile forestry joint checkpoint on 29 April.

agement of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force in Bago Region.

A total of 1.9292 tonnes of illegal sawn ironwood timber estimated at K385,840 were seized in the Aingtonkun forest reserve and action is being taken in ac-

cordance with the forest law.

Thus, a total of 15 arrests with seizures worth approximately K241,695,520 were made on 29 April and 1 May according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee.—MNA

LOCAL BUSINESS

Seintalone mango fetches K35,000 per basket in domestic market

THE prices of Seintalone mango variety touch a high of K35,000 per 16-kg basket in the domestic market, said U Kyaw Soe Naing, general secretary of Myanmar Mango Market and Technology Development Association (Mandalay).

The mango started to flow into the market at present. Seintalone mango is priced K30,000-K40,000 per basket depending on the size.

“The prices of mango stand at K35,000 in the market. They’re priced at K40,000 per basket on digital platforms. It is the beginning of mango season and Myanmar people like to give presents to the elders,” said U Kyaw Soe Naing.

Additionally, the strong wind affected the mango yield this year. Low yield is attributed to reduction in the use of input because of high cost and low



Quality Seintalone mangoes are seen in systematic packaging in the market.

irrigation supply.

The mango is soon to be harvested abundantly. The mango is conveyed to the China mar-

ket on a trial run from 27 April, beyond the domestic market.

Myanmar’s mango exports to China are facing a series of

challenges such as China’s restriction in some border areas amid the COVID-19, delays related to the COVID-19 contain-

ment measure (COVID-19 test for food packaging) and transportation cost. As a result of this, mango farmers are keen on delivering to the domestic market only at the present time, traders stressed.

Of about 200 mango varieties originated in Myanmar, Seintalone, Shwehintha, Padamyar Ngamauk, Yinkwe and Machitsu varieties are primarily grown. Foreign market prefers Seintalone varieties.

Ayeyawady Region possesses the largest mango plantation acres, having about 46,000 acres. Bago Region is the second largest producer with 43,000 acres and Mandalay 29,000 acres. There are over 24,000 acres in Kayin State, over 20,400 acres in Shan State and over 20,000 acres in Sagaing Region, according to the association.—NN/GNLM

Green grams cultivated with underground irrigation get good deal in NyaungU Tsp



Green gram plants are thriving in the farm with bearing fruits. PHOTO: KO HTEIN

THE prices of green grams cultivated with underground irrigation facilities jumped to K42,000 per basket in the villages in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, allowing the growers to earn well.

The price this year is higher than that of previous year. The growers achieve the expected price.

The summer green gram cultivation started in February and two months later, they can be harvested. The daily labour wage is K3,000. About 20 workers are required to harvest the green

grams per acre. The grams are sent to Pakokku market, U Nay Win from Ywathit village explained.

Despite the closure of the border posts, Myanmar’s green grams are primarily delivered to China and Singapore through maritime trade. Additionally, it is also shipped to Indonesia, Malaysia and European countries.

With the improvement of foreign market access, the government and the association concerned suggested the growers increase green gram sown acreage starting from the

previous years.

There are approximately 9.9 million acres of various beans and pulses across the country, with the annual production of 4.1 million tonnes. Myanmar shipped about 700,000 tonnes of green grams to 64 foreign trade partners in the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

Between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022 of the mini-budget period, over 380,000 tonnes of green grams, with an estimated value of \$296 million, were delivered to the global market.—Ko Htein-KPD, KK/GNLM

Niger seeds from hill regions fetching handsome prices

PRICES of Niger seeds produced in the hill regions are rocketing in Mandalay market, Mandalay bean traders said.

India is the main buyer of Niger seeds, followed by China. The price of Niger seeds was K85,000 per 45-viss bag in the pre-Thingyan period, whereas it dramatically soared to K1,020,000 per bag. Additionally, the yield is pretty good due to the favourable weather condition.

“The Niger seeds are highly demanded in domestic and foreign markets. The domestic producers mill the Niger seeds and they are used as cooking oil in the food industry. They are utilized in the food processing as well as in the cosmetic industry. The locals in Shan State increased the acreage of Niger seeds as it generated

handsome income. The fields of Niger seeds in Shan State are like a picturesque scene in December,” U Soe Win Myint, an owner of Soe Win Myint depot in Mandalay said.

The Niger seeds are cultivated only in winter. It can be found only in the hill regions. The yellow fields of Niger seeds in the northern and southern Shan State gives an awe-inspiring view as a picture.

The cultivation of Niger seeds commenced in September and they are in full bloom at the end of December. They are primarily grown in Shan, Kayah and Kachin states. The seeds are delivered to the Mandalay market for exports and distribution to other domestic markets.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay sub-printing house)/GNLM



Photo shows Niger seeds. PHOTO: MIN HTEIN AUNG

OPINION

ARTICLE

Weather Report

Beware of dangers in disasters during the pre-monsoon period

SINCE the early 21st Century, climate change has been bringing terrible natural disasters such as heat strokes, severe storms, flash flooding and landslides to the planet Earth. These disasters are more and more violent many times.

Myanmar is involved on the list of global countries facing the impacts of climate change. Hence, the entire people of Myanmar need to take care of possible natural disasters in the seasonal transition period between the summer and the monsoon.

Indeed, the global warming involved in the important points of climate change is triggered by increasing number of greenhouse gas impacts committed by human beings. The meteorological records mentioned that summer temperature had been remarkably increasing in all parts of Myanmar since 1977.

Notably, the people in the disaster-prone areas need to listen to the weather forecast timely announced through media and radio, make arrangements for easily carrying the necessary documents, previous items, medicines and utensils, seek the safer places at the shelters and repair the houses to be strengthened as much as possible in order to reduce the disaster risks.

The high temperature of the climatic conditions may affect the oceans and land areas, causing storms. Hence, all the people should beware of the dangers of storms in the pre-monsoon period on a yearly basis. Regrettably, cyclonic storm Nargis swept the deltaic area and Yangon Region of Myanmar, starting on 28 April 2008.

Some 140,000 people lost their lives in the terrible cyclonic storm, and hundreds of thousands of people were injured in the event, in addition to the unprecedented social suffering. The total loss amounted to K11.7 trillion.

Myanmar is located in geographical conditions that may easily face storms, torrential rains, landslides, rivers overflow and flash flooding annually. Hence, the government is taking preventive measures against natural disasters that may break out in seasons to ensure disaster risk reduction. At the same time, the people residing in disaster-prone areas need to take preventive measures for disasters and conduct rehearsals for disaster-prepared efforts.

Notably, the people in the disaster-prone areas need to listen to the weather forecast timely announced through media and radio, make arrangements for easily carrying the necessary documents, previous items, medicines and utensils, seek the safer places at the shelters and repair the houses to be strengthened as much as possible in order to reduce the disaster risks.

Only when the government and people are to join hands in taking measures of disaster risk reduction for overcoming challenges of various disasters with losing life and property of the people at the minimum will the entire nation be safer in possible dangers of disasters in the pre-monsoon period yearly.

First Person: A plea for the life-saving properties of vaccines

For the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has focused global attention on the impact of vaccines in fighting the virus. During World Immunization Week, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been raising awareness of the crucial role immunization has played in reducing or eliminating a host of deadly diseases.

DR. Kate O'Brien, Immunization Director at the World Health Organization, devoted her life to immunization after working in a paediatric ward in Haiti, where she saw that a third of the children admitted were dying from diseases that could be prevented through vaccines.

She explains how the United Nations, and its partners in the COVAX facility, are ensuring that vaccines reach every low-income country in the world.

"Between four and five million lives are saved each year, as a result of being vaccinated. Immunization is one of the most effective, most impactful health interventions in all of human history.

Hundreds of millions of people died from smallpox. It was

a dreaded disease and in the late 1700s there was an amazing breakthrough. A British physician, Edward Jenner, noticed that milkmaids who had been infected with cowpox – a related disease – were more or less immune from smallpox.

He used that observation to immunize an eight-year-old boy, James Phipps, using the cowpox virus. Weeks later, he exposed James Phipps, with the permission of his parents, to smallpox, and he didn't get sick.

Today smallpox has been eradicated worldwide, because of vaccination.

Another disease that's targeted for eradication is polio.

Polio leads to limb paralysis and disability, and many people die from the disease. In places like Pakistan and India,

and many other countries, huge campaigns have vaccinated tens of millions of children over a short period of time.

We're now at the point where polio has been reduced by over 99 per cent, and we're so close to ending transmission of this virus. **Dying from a lack of vaccines**

I worked in a hospital in Haiti, in the capital city, Port-au-Prince. The paediatric ward in that hospital was full of children with measles, diarrhoea, meningitis and tuberculosis. Some were born with tetanus. Every day, about a third of the children admitted to the ward died.

So many of the illnesses that they came in with, were completely preventable with vaccination.

I decided to devote my career to not only making sure that new vaccines were developed for



A mother watches as a health worker administers a polio vaccine during an anti-polio campaign in Manila. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

diseases, but also, and more importantly, ensuring that the vaccines that we already have are completely accessible, completely available, completely safe, and effective for people in every part of the world, no matter what community they're born in.

The power of COVAX

We've all been living through the COVID-19 pandemic over the last, enormously difficult, couple of years. We've seen the incredible development, in a remarkably short period of time, of vaccines that prevent COVID disease, and work against both infection and transmission.

One of the ways that vaccines have been sent into every country around the world is through the COVAX facility. This enables billions of doses to be shipped to countries that need them but can't

buy them on their own. Eighty per cent of the doses provided to low-income countries are coming through the COVAX facility, and around 92 nations are benefiting.

A social justice issue

We vaccinate against diseases that are transmissible from person-to-person. This means that, unless we protect ourselves through the use of vaccines, each of us presents some level of risk to someone else.

So, I really think of vaccination as a social equity and social justice issue.

There's nothing more overwhelming, or more tragic, than a perfectly healthy child who succumbs to an infection that was completely preventable."

SOURCE: UN

Indonesians flock to their hometowns for Eid



Hundreds of intercity bus passengers wait to board their respective buses at the bus terminal in Bekasi on 28 April, 2022, as they head to their hometowns to celebrate the long Eid al-Fitr holiday marking the end of Ramadan with their families. PHOTO: AFP

MILLIONS of Indonesians were travelling to their hometowns on Thursday in an annual exodus from Jakarta and other major cities before the Eid holidays, a tradition that has been stalled for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With less than a week left before Eid, toll roads, train stations, bus terminals and seaports are brimming with people excited about the yearly homecoming journey – locally known as "mudik".

Indonesia's transportation ministry has predicted that 85 million people will travel for Eid this year as pandemic restrictions ease.

Around 14 million will depart from the Jakarta metropolitan area alone, braving hours of traffic to celebrate the end of Ramadan with their families.

"I am so happy that I can come home and meet my family in my village, I haven't been able to go home before because of the pandemic," said Ika Siti Mariamah, who made the 260-kilometre (160 miles) bus journey from Jakarta to her hometown in West Java with her husband and child.

Gridlock on the way to the main seaport that connects the islands of Java and Sumatra stretched for more than three kilometres on Thursday.

"I feel so happy that I can return home safely and comfortably, this is the first time

I have gone home" since the pandemic, said Husni Rifandi, another traveller.

Transport Boom

The enthusiasm for mudik has revitalised Indonesia's battered transportation industry, which came to a standstill during the worst days of the pandemic.

"We very much welcome the government's decision to allow people to travel for mudik so autobus companies across the country can recover," Lutfi Likardi, who works at a bus company in Jakarta, told AFP.

Indonesia has been hammered by the pandemic, suffering more than six million infections and 156,000 deaths.

The government barred people from partaking in the annual Eid exodus and applied tight travel curbs to prevent the virus from spreading to rural areas.

But despite the restrictions,

millions still exited the big cities to celebrate Eid with their families last year – although the numbers were far lower than normal.

This year, the Indonesian government has used mudik to encourage Indonesians to take a COVID-19 booster shot, allowing those who have received a third jab to travel without taking a coronavirus test.

Double-vaccinated travellers are required to present a negative rapid antigen test while those who have only received the first dose or are unvaccinated must take a PCR test no more than 72 hours before departure.

Around 80 per cent of Indonesia's 208 million target population have received their second vaccine dose, with 36 million getting a booster shot.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 1 May 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 2 May 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Upper Sagaing, and Taninthayi regions and Southern Shan State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region, scattered in Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and isolated in the remaining regions and states. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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 scattered rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, and Yangon regions and Kachin, Shan and Kayah states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 May 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 May 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 May 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Early Warning For Weather Events During Pre Monsoon Season No 5/2022
Issued on 1- 5- 2022

- During the period of Pre Monsoon Season (from May to before the onset of Southwest Monsoon into Myanmar), isolated rain or thundershowers are likely in the afternoon or evening accompanied with strong wind, hails, thunder and lightning, due to the convective cloud by gradually rising day temperatures in the whole country. Surface wind speed in strong wind may reach (35)mph to (40)mph.
- Public is advised to take necessary awareness with the weather events during the Pre Monsoon Season (from May to before the onset of Southwest Monsoon into Myanmar) and domestic airlines and cruises are also advised to take precautionary measures.

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

UAE to send astronaut on six-month ISS mission

THE United Arab Emirates announced Friday it will send an astronaut on a six-month mission to space, as it seeks to become a major player in the industry.

The wealthy Gulf country signed “a new agreement to send the first Arab astronaut on a long 180-day mission to the International Space Station”, tweeted UAE’s vice president, Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

“Proud of the UAE’s youth,” he added.

According to the UAE’s The National newspaper, the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) and



A man takes a picture of an illustration depicting an astronaut with the Emirati national flag outside Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai on 25 September 2019. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Axiom Space signed a deal on Wednesday at the Emirati em-

bassy in Washington. The astronaut will be part

of the SpaceX Crew-6 mission, scheduled for launch in 2023, it added.

The UAE — made up of seven emirates including Abu Dhabi and Dubai — is a newcomer to the world of space exploration but quickly making its mark.

In September 2019, the oil-rich country sent a first Emirati into space as part of a three-member crew that blasted off on a Soyuz rocket from Kazakhstan for an eight-day mission.

Then in July, it launched an unmanned spacecraft from Japan’s Tanegashima Space Center bearing the “Hope”

probe destined for Mars, in the Arab world’s first interplanetary mission.

The Emirates also has its sights on the moon and has said it plans to launch an unmanned rover to the moon by 2024.

Sheikh Mohammed said in September 2020 the lunar mission was part of the country’s space strategy to build new knowledge-based and scientific capabilities.

It will be an integral part of efforts to build the first settlement on Mars in 2117— one of the UAE’s most ambitious plans, said the Dubai Media Office at the time.—AFP

Rare birth of Asiatic cheetah cubs in Iran

AN Asiatic cheetah gave birth to three “healthy” cubs in Iran, the head of the environment department said Sunday, calling it a first in captivity for the endangered species.

“Iran”, one of only a dozen cheetahs found in the Islamic republic, delivered three “healthy” cubs by C-section, Ali Salajegheh told IRNA news agency.

“This is the first birth of an Asiatic cheetah in captivity,” he said.

“By preserving these cubs, we can increase the cheetah population in captivity and then in semi-captivity,” Salajegheh added.

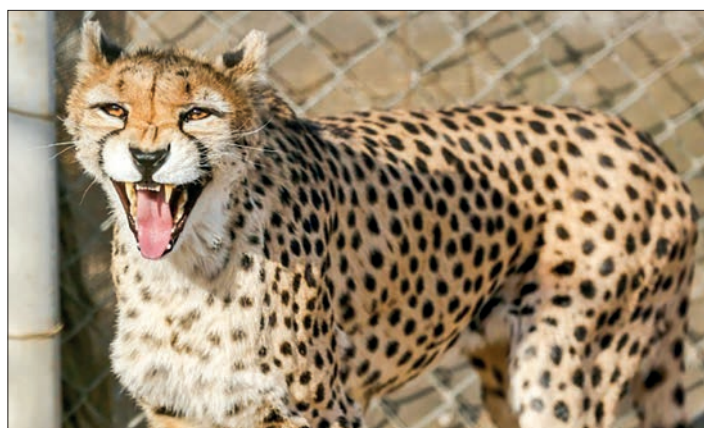
The cubs were born in the Touran Wildlife Refuge in the Semnan province east of Tehran, where the mother and her babies are being monitored in intensive care.

The world’s fastest land

animal, capable of reaching speeds of 120 kilometres (74 miles) per hour, cheetahs once stalked habitats from the eastern reaches of India to the Atlantic coast of Senegal and beyond. They are still found in parts of southern Africa, but have practically disappeared from North Africa and Asia.

Iran is one of the last countries in the world where the Asiatic cheetahs live in the wild and began a United Nations-supported protection programme in 2001.

The subspecies “Acinonyx jubatus venaticus”, commonly known as the Asiatic cheetah, is critically endangered, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. In January deputy environment minister Hassan Akbari said Iran is home to only a dozen Asiatic cheetahs — down from an estimated 100 in 2010.—AFP



In this file picture taken in October 2017 a female Asiatic cheetah named Dalbar snarls at visitors to the Pardisan Park in Tehran. **PHOTO: AFP**

Parisians up in arms over plan to fell trees near Eiffel Tower

PARIS is aiming to redevelop the area around the Eiffel Tower in time for the 2024 Olympic Games, but the city’s residents are beginning to rebel over a plan that would see 22 trees ripped up.

The Paris mayor’s office wants to build tourist facilities and offices at the foot of the world-famous landmark.

Architect’s projections show semi-submerged buildings covered in greenery. But campaigners have launched a petition urging the mayor’s office to ditch the plan, expressing particular concern over the fate of some very old trees.

“We reject the felling and endangerment of dozens of healthy trees, in particular the 200-year-old and 100-year-old trees, which really are the city’s green lungs,” says the petition, launched by four environmental groups.

Around 35,000 signatures



Tourists sunbathe in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. **PHOTO: AFP**

have been gathered so far.

Deputy Mayor Emmanuel Gregoire sought to mollify op-

ponents of the scheme.

“No 100-year-old tree will be cut down,” he said.—AFP

Meteorological department calls April hottest in 122 years in parts of India

THE India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said northwest and central India have recorded the highest temperatures for the month of April in 122 years.

According to the IMD, the average maximum temperature in April was recorded to be the highest-ever at 37.78 degrees

Celsius for central India, while it stood at 35.9 degrees for northwest India, nearly 3.35 degrees above normal. The all-India temperature was the fourth-highest at 35.05 degrees Celsius since 1901.

“If you look at the maximum temperatures recorded in northwest and central India, it was the

highest in 122 years,” IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra told a press conference.

Mohapatra said northwest and west central parts of the country, including Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana, will continue to experience above-normal temperatures in May.— Xinhua

PANDEMIC WORLD

Russian health minister warns about possible rise in COVID-19 infections in June



Russian police and National Guard (Rosgvardia) servicemen wearing face masks walk along Red Square in central Moscow. PHOTO: AFP

THERE is a high threat of a new increase in the number of COVID-19 infections in June, Russian Minister of Health Mikhail Murashko said on Saturday.

“It is very important to get vaccinated because, according to our forecasts, there is a high risk of the increasing number of infections in June, maybe late May, because the collective im-

munity is weakening,” Murashko told reporters. The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic on 11 March 2020. To date, more than 513.07 million people have been infected with the coronavirus worldwide, with over 6.23 million fatalities, according to Johns Hopkins University. Russia has confirmed more than 17.9 million coronavirus cases so far, with over 368,000 fatalities. —ANI

Omicron variant leaves no room for relaxation in epidemic control: expert

IN the face of outbreaks caused by the more infectious Omicron variant of COVID-19, a relaxation of epidemic control and prevention is not an option for China, said top Chinese epidemiologist Liang Wannian on Friday.

Liang noted at a press conference that the country is yet to get its elderly and underage population fully vaccinated. In

the meantime, different parts of the country face discrepancies in medical resources.

“Under such circumstances, the country’s medical resources will be stretched too thin should we adopt a laissez-faire epidemic containment approach,” said Liang. He added that such an approach would also harm the well-being of vul-

nerable groups including minors and the elderly.

Regarding anti-epidemic work in Beijing and Shanghai, Liang said that swift and full implementation of containment policies is needed to effectively contain infections caused by the Omicron variant and stay one step ahead of the virus. —Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mainland medical supplies against COVID-19 arrive in Hong Kong orderly

ANTI-PANDEMIC medical supplies from the Chinese mainland have arrived in Hong Kong in good order and have been distributed to people in need through various channels.

The supplies were transported with a view to stabilizing the fifth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government said on Friday.

A spokesperson for the CEDB said the HKSAR has received over 30 types of medical supplies procured with the coordination of the central government, including over 250 million rapid antigen test (RAT) kits, 390 million masks, 90 million sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) and 1.6 million pulse oximeters.

Over 70 million RAT kits and KN95 masks and over 7 million boxes of anti-COVID-19 traditional Chinese medicines procured with the coordination of the central government have been distributed to households in Hong Kong via over 3 million anti-pandemic service bags, while 10 million RAT kits have also been distributed to schools for financially needy students, the spokesperson said. —Xinhua

Vietnam reports 6,068 new COVID-19 cases

VIETNAM recorded 6,068 new COVID-19 cases on Friday, down by 1,048 from Thursday, according to its Ministry of Health.

The new infections, recorded in 59 provinces and cities, were all domestically transmitted.

The Vietnamese capital Hanoi remained the epidemic hotspot with 843 new cases reported on Friday, followed by the northern Phu Tho province with 386 and the central highlands Gia Lai province with 341.

The newly reported infections brought the total tally to 10,644,700 with 43,038 deaths. Nationwide, as many as 9,245,528 COVID-19 patients, or nearly 87 per cent of the coronavirus infections, have so far recovered. Over 214.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the Southeast Asian country, including approximately 195.8 million shots on people aged 18 and above, said the health ministry. Vietnam has by far gone through four coronavirus waves of increasing scale, complication and infectivity. As of Friday, it has registered more than 10.6 million locally transmitted COVID-19 cases since the start of the current wave in April 2021, said the ministry. —Xinhua

Beijing tightens Covid restrictions as long holiday begins

RESTAURANTS across Beijing will temporarily ban dining-in and residents will need clear Covid tests to visit public spaces, officials said Saturday, in a major ramp up of virus controls at the start of the Labour Day holiday.

The five-day break is typically one of China’s busiest travel periods, but the country’s worst Covid resurgence since early in the pandemic is expected to keep people home.

Faced with the highly transmissible Omicron variant, Chinese officials have doubled down on their zero-Covid policy, quashing virus clusters through mass testing and lockdowns.

Despite mounting economic

costs and public frustration, the capital city announced it would further restrict access to public spaces during and after the holiday period.

From 1 to 4 May, the city’s eateries will halt dining-in, and only allow deliveries, local commerce official Ding Jianhua told a press briefing Saturday.

Authorities also said they have so far prepared 4,000 makeshift hospital beds — typically used for patients with light or no Covid symptoms — and are speeding up set-up of larger quarantine sites.

A negative Covid test taken within the past week will also be needed starting 5 May to enter “all kinds of public areas and to



A staff member delivers daily necessities for residents of a residential compound in Fengtai District of Beijing, capital of China, 23 February 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/LI XIN

take public transport”, according to a notice on the city’s official

WeChat page.

For activities such as sport-

ing events and group travel, participants will also need to show a negative Covid test taken within 48 hours, along with proof of “full vaccination,” according to the new rules.

Frustration in Shanghai

China reported more than 10,700 domestic Covid cases on Saturday, with most in economic engine Shanghai.

The eastern metropolis has been sealed off for around a month after becoming the epicentre of the latest outbreak. Cases are trending downwards, yet frustration and anger is boiling in the city of 25 million where many have been ordered to stay at home for several weeks. —AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

S Korea's industrial output rebounds in March

SOUTH Korea's industrial output marked the first rebound in three months despite a slump in consumption and investment, statistical office data showed Friday.

The seasonally-adjusted production in all industries, which exclude the agriculture, forestry and fishery sector, gained 1.5 per cent in March from a month earlier, according to Statistics Korea.

It was the first turnaround in three months, after reducing 0.3 per cent in January and 0.3 per cent in February each.

Output in the mining and manufacturing industry increased 1.3 per cent in March, keeping an upward trend for the sixth consecutive month.

Food production jumped 7.1 per cent last month, posting the fastest growth in almost 33 years since August 1989.



Pyeongtaek Plant is a high-tech manufacturing facility with advanced quality and environmental management control systems. **PHOTO: AMS/XINHUA/FILE**

Production in the services industry expanded 1.5 per cent in March from a month earlier,

recording the highest gain in nine months.

The easing of social-distanc-

ing guidelines led to increased outside activities.

Output in the finance and in-

urance sector went up 3.8 per cent, and production in the wholesale and retail segment added 1.2 per cent.

Production in the construction industry reduced by 0.3 per cent, but output in the public administration sector climbed by 3.4 per cent.

Retail sale, which reflects private consumption, slumped 0.5 per cent in March on a monthly basis.

The sale of durable goods, including home appliances, went down 7.0 per cent, and the sale of semi-durables such as clothing retreated 2.6 per cent.

Facility investment declined 2.9 per cent, keeping a downward trend for the second straight month on weak demand for machinery and transport equipment.—Xinhua

NEWS IN **Brief**

OPEC Fund to finance Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline

THE OPEC Fund for International Development will finance 14.3 million US dollars for the second phase of the studies in the submarine Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline project.

According to a statement by the Moroccan Ministry of Finance on Friday, the agreement was signed by the Moroccan Finance and Economy Minister Nadia Fettah and the General Director of the OPEC Fund Abdulhamid Alkhalifa.

The Australian company WorleyParsons announced Wednesday in a statement that it has been awarded the second phase of the studies, which is progressing in accordance with the initial project planning.

In January, the Islamic Development Bank has signed an agreement with Morocco to provide 15.45 million dollars to the Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline studies.

This gas pipeline project would cover 7,000 km long through 13 West African countries, and extend to Europe, according to WorleyParsons.

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Portugal registers highest Q1 GDP growth in EU

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Portuguese economy grew by 2.6 per cent in the first quarter (Q1) of 2022 compared to the fourth quarter of 2021, and by 11.9 per cent compared to the same period last year, the country's national institute of statistics (INE) announced on Friday.

This is the best performance among the 11 European Union (EU) countries for which data are available, according to Eurostat, the EU's statistics office.

INE said that private consumption was the main factor in giving an unexpected boost to GDP in Q1.

"Meanwhile, the contribution of net external demand remained slightly positive," said INE, adding that this can be explained by the gradual lifting of pandemic restrictions.

Portuguese Finance Minister Fernando Medina said in parliament Friday that the country is recovering to pre-pandemic levels, with "impressive growth."

SOURCE: Xinhua

India cancels passenger trains to give way for coal transport amid power shortage

AUTHORITIES in India have canceled 42 passenger trains across the country to allow fast and free movement of coal carriages, officials said Saturday.

The move has been taken to replenish coal stocks at thermal power plants that are currently running low, forcing blackouts and outages in many states.

According to officials, 753 trips of these trains have been canceled to free up tracks for the smooth running of coal rakes.

Reports said 713 trips of the South East Central Railway (SECR) have been canceled until 25 May, while 40 trips of the Northern Railways (NR) have been suspended until May 8.

"These trains have been canceled indefinitely with coal stocks depleting rapidly in ther-



India's coal reserves are expected to last 100 years, compared to around 50 years for gas and about 16 years for oil. **PHOTO: AFP**

mal power plants," a railways official said. "The railways are trying to take steps at war-footing to transport coal and also cut down the time it takes to move coal to power plants."

The cancellations will primarily impact passengers traveling from key coal-producing states, including Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.—AFP

Azerbaijan to increase gas supplies to Europe by 30 pct this year

AZERBAIJAN plans to boost its supplies of natural gas to Europe by 30 per cent this year, pumping 10.5 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas, the country's state oil company, SOCAR, said Friday.

"Getting a direct access to the European market has ensured the diversification of Azerbaijan's export capacity. This adds value to Azerbaijan's economy, at the same time cementing the country's standing as Europe's reliable gas supplier,"

SOCAR said in a statement.

Azerbaijan exported 2.6 bcm of natural gas to Europe in the first quarter of 2022.

The country started commercial natural gas deliveries to Europe via the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) in late 2020. The pipeline is the final leg of the 3,500 km-long Southern Gas Corridor, which pumps gas from Azerbaijan's giant Shah Deniz II field in the Caspian Sea. —Xinhua

China factory activity dips to lowest in two years: official data

CHINA'S manufacturing activity slumped to its lowest level since February 2020, official data showed Saturday, the latest sign of economic pain as Beijing doggedly pursues its zero-Covid response.

The official Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a key gauge of manufacturing activity, clocked 47.4 in April — below the 50-point mark separating growth from contraction — as authorities said that a "decline in production and demand" has deepened.

The figures come as Beijing's policy of swiftly stamping out infections with lockdowns and mass testing has been severely challenged by an Omicron-fuelled pandemic resurgence.

Dozens of cities, including economic powerhouses like Shenzhen and Shanghai, have been either fully or partially sealed off in recent



China's manufacturing output has slumped to its lowest level since February 2020. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

months.

The inflexible approach — even as most of the world learns to live with the virus — has inflicted mounting economic pain, with the curbs snarling supply chains and leaving goods piling up at the world's busiest container port.

National Bureau of

Statistics (NBS) senior statistician Zhao Qinghe acknowledged that some enterprises have had to reduce or stop production, while many firms have reported an increase in transportation difficulties.

"The production and operation of... enterprises have been greatly affected," Zhao said, according

to an NBS statement that also noted the price indexes for raw materials remain "relatively high".

The official non-manufacturing PMI plummeted to its lowest level since early 2020 as well, NBS figures showed, as the country braces for a muted Labour Day holiday.—AFP

Majority of US small businesses to raise prices further on higher costs: survey



Up to 68 per cent of small businesses in the United States plan to raise average selling prices in the next three months so as to pass higher costs to consumers. PHOTO: AFP

UP to 68 per cent of small businesses in the United States plan to raise average selling prices in the next three months so as to pass higher costs to consumers, according to a recent survey of small employers by the National Federation of Independ-

ent Business (NFIB).

In particular, 40 per cent of small employers intend to hike prices by 10 per cent or more, showed the survey which was conducted from 14 to 17 April with 540 responses.

As much as 62 per cent of small employers

reported that inflation is having a substantial impact on their business while 31 per cent of them reported a moderate impact.

Inflation overtook labour quality as the top business problems for US small businesses in

March, according to an earlier survey by the NFIB.

The survey indicated that 86 per cent of small businesses are increasing the price of their goods or services while 21 per cent of them absorbed higher costs by reducing the quantity of materials or goods used to produce the final products.

Additionally, 31 per cent of small employers are taking on debt to finance higher costs, according to the survey.

Nearly half of respondents said recent increase in gasoline and fuel prices has a substantial negative impact on their business, 35 per cent a moderate negative impact and 16 per cent a mild negative impact, according to the survey. —Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Digitalization of German SMEs slowed by data protection, security requirements

ALTHOUGH the COVID-19 crisis triggered a digitization surge in German small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), a quarter of the country's 3.8 million SMEs were not pursuing any digitization activities, the German state-owned development bank KfW said on Friday.

Around 950,000 companies in Germany were not even taking "basic steps" such as digitizing customer contact, according to the SME Digitalisation Report 2021 released by KfW Research.—Xinhua

German pharma company Merck to expand manufacturing in China

MERCK, a Germany-based pharmaceutical company, inked a deal on Thursday to significantly expand its manufacturing capabilities in the city of Wuxi in east China's Jiangsu Province, according to a company statement.

The company will invest nearly 100 million euros (110 million US dollars) over six years by expanding its existing Wuxi production site to increase biopharma single-use assemblies and custom design capabilities, according to the agreement it signed with Wuxi high-tech zone during a video conference.—Xinhua

Ethiopia export revenues hit 2.95 bln USD in first 9 months of current fiscal year

ETHIOPIA generated 2.95 billion US dollars in export revenues during the first nine months of the current fiscal year, the country's Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) disclosed on Friday.

In a press statement, the MoTRI said the export revenues had met 87.6 per cent of the original target set for the first nine months of the current Ethiopian Fiscal Year 2021/2022, which started on 8 July.

However, the MoTRI statement said the 2.95 billion US dollars in revenues marked an increase of 20.33 per cent compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NORBERG VOY.NO. (216N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NORBERG VOY.NO. (216N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-5-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **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

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkish people's Eid trips spoiled over rising fuel prices

CUMALI Karaman, a 45 years-old gas station manager in Istanbul, found the rising fuel prices have made the annual homecoming trip unaffordable for the fast-breaking gathering with his parents in eastern Turkey at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Last year, to spend the Eid al-Fitr holiday with families, he paid 1,500 Turkish Liras (about 101.08 US dollars) in gasoline for a 2,200-km roundtrip between Istanbul and the eastern province of Malatya.

"Having the same trip now costs 3,500 to 4,000 liras, and of course, you should also consider bridge and highway fees," Karaman told Xinhua at the gas station in Kagithane, a district on the European side of Istanbul.

Turks usually return to their hometowns to visit elderly relatives or flock to take a short break in resort towns from the hustle and bustle of big cities. This year, however, many reconsider their plans amid the broad price surge. —Xinhua

14 Ukrainians including pregnant woman freed in prisoner exchange

FOURTEEN Ukrainians including a pregnant soldier have been freed in the latest prisoner exchange with Russian forces, Ukraine said on Saturday, without revealing the number of Russians returned to Moscow.

"Today, we carried out a new exchange of prisoners. Fourteen of ours are coming home, seven military and seven civilians. One of the military women is five months pregnant," Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said on Telegram.

In an interview with the BBC on Friday, Vereshchuk accused Russian forces of deporting large numbers of civilians into Russia and using them as "hostages".

"That's why they captured all these hostages — civilians, women, employees of local councils, to try and use them," she was quoted as saying. —AFP

Moscow bars entry for public figures from Norway, Greenland, Ireland, Faroe Islands

RUSSIA has barred entry to the country for nine individuals from Iceland, three from Greenland, three from the Faroe Islands and 16 from Norway in a retaliatory move, the country's foreign ministry said in a statement Friday.

The countermeasures were taken in response to the decisions made by Iceland, Norway, and the Danish autonomies of Greenland and the Faroe Islands to join the European Union's sanctions against Russia, the ministry said. —Xinhua

Biden, Mexican president discuss 'unprecedented' migration flow



Mexican National Guard soldiers detain Central American migrants trying to cross the Rio Bravo — also known as the Rio Grande — into the United States at Ciudad Juarez. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

US President Joe Biden and his Mexican counterpart Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador met virtually Friday to discuss "unprecedented" flows of migrants and refugees at the countries'

shared border, a major political headache for the White House ahead of November elections.

The call, just under an hour long, highlighted Biden's attempt to steer the complex relationship

onto a more cooperative basis after the tempestuous, at times tense, situation under his predecessor Donald Trump.

"The tone of the call was very constructive. This was not a call where President Biden was threatening the Mexican president in any way," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, referring to Trump's aggressive brinkmanship with Mexico over illegal immigration.

The two nations are inextricably tied through trade, culture and the violent narcotics industry. However, looming over everything is the quandary of how to manage both legal and illegal migration. It's a subject that will feature heavily at the upcoming regional Summit of the Americas in June, being hosted in Los Angeles. —AFP

Brazilian tourism spending abroad jumps 173 pct

BRAZILIANS traveling abroad spent 1.4 billion U.S. dollars in the first two months of 2022, a 173 per cent increase compared to the same period last year, according to data published Friday by the Central Bank of Brazil.

The bank's report said the jump in tourism spending abroad was due to relaxed health restrictions as COVID-19 cases declined.

Since March 2020, such spending dropped because of travel restrictions and a depreciation of the Brazilian currency against the US dollar.

Despite the increase, Brazilian tourism spending abroad



Navy soldiers are seen after carrying out a disinfection operation against the novel coronavirus COVID-19 at Tom Jobim Galeao International Airport in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 24 April 2020. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

remains well below the pre-pandemic period.

In the same period of 2020, Brazilian travelers spent 2.32

billion US dollars abroad, that is 55.7 per cent more than in the first two months of this year. —Xinhua

Nine detained in connection with China building collapse



POLICE in central China announced the detention of nine people on Sunday over a collapsed building, as increasingly desperate rescuers comb the debris for any survivors.

The building, in Changsha city, housed a hotel, apartments and a cinema. It caved in Friday afternoon, leaving a gaping hole

Changsha's mayor vowed to "seize the golden 72 hours for rescue" as first responders comb the site for survivors. **PHOTO: CNS/AFP**

in the dense streetscape.

At least 18 people were trapped and another 39 were incommunicado, according to city mayor Zheng Jianxin.

Five people were rescued from the pancaked structure overnight Friday.

Changsha police said on social media that the building's owner and three others responsible for its design and construction were detained Sunday on suspicion of "major responsibility for an accident". Another five people,

all members of a private building inspection firm, "provided a false safety report after conducting a building safety audit of the hotel", the statement on Twitter-like Weibo said. No cause for the disaster has yet been given by authorities.

Changsha's mayor vowed to "seize the golden 72 hours for rescue and try our best to search for the trapped people" in a news briefing Saturday, adding that over 700 first responders had been dispatched to the scene. —AFP

Japan, Vietnam affirm respect for sovereignty amid Ukraine war

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Vietnamese counterpart Pham Minh Chinh agreed Sunday on the importance of respecting the sovereignty of states while warning against the use of weapons of mass destruction as the war in Ukraine continues.

In a meeting held in Hanoi on the second leg of Kishida's eight-day tour covering Southeast Asia and Europe, the two premiers also confirmed their commitment to closer bilateral cooperation in the fields of security and the economy.

"We confirmed that countries must abide by the principle of respecting the independence and the sovereignty of states," Kishida said in a joint press conference after the talks, adding, "In any region, changing the



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (L) and his Vietnamese counterpart Pham Minh Chinh attend a joint news conference after holding talks in Hanoi on 1 May 2022. PHOTO: KYODO

status quo by force is not permissible."

Kishida said the two sides agreed on the importance of

an immediate cease-fire in Ukraine and the provision of

humanitarian aid, adding they "strongly oppose threats and uses of weapons of mass destruction and attacks on civilians."

Chinh said the two sides discussed global issues including the situations in Ukraine and in the South China Sea.

"We are committed to strengthening ties for maintaining peace and stability in the region," he said.

Kishida also said the two agreed to strongly oppose attempts to change the status quo in the South China Sea at a time when the region faces an increasingly assertive China.

He called Vietnam an "important partner" in realizing Japan's vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific at the outset of the meeting. — Kyodo

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

HERE are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine:

OSCE to close Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has announced that it would take immediate steps to close the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, the Interfax-Ukraine news agency reported Friday.

This decision follows the lack of consensus at the OSCE Permanent Council on 31 March to extend the Mission's mandate, the OSCE said.

"This is not an easy decision to take. We have explored all possible options through political dialogue with participating States to achieve the renewal of the Special Monitoring Mission's mandate, but the position of the Russian Federation left us with no choice but to take steps to close down the Mission," said Zbigniew Rau, the OSCE chairman-in-office, Polish foreign minister.

Missile hits Odessa airport

A Russian missile destroys the runway at Odessa airport in southern Ukraine but there are no victims, the regional governor Maxim Marchenko says on his Telegram account.

Lebanese students in limbo after fleeing Ukraine war

Lebanese university students who fled Ukraine are now struggling to complete their education back home, facing a precarious future as an unprecedented economic crisis crushes their country and their career prospects.

"Even war is better than being here," said 25-year-old Yasser Harb, who left Kyiv just two days before Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February.

Since returning, Harb has been struggling to complete his degree online from his family home in south Lebanon, as power cuts of up to 23 hours a day wreak havoc with his internet connection and his studies.

He and fellow students are now battling to continue their studies remotely, while others face interruptions amid obstacles to transferring their enrolment.

SOURCE: AFP/Xinhua

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT : ROLLING UPDATES

Twenty civilians evacuated from besieged Mariupol plant: reports

AT least 20 civilians including several children were able to leave a badly battered steel plant in the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol on Saturday in what could be the start of a long-awaited, larger evacuation of the last holdout in the Russian-held city.

Earlier efforts at evacuations from the Azovstal steel plant — where local fighters say they and hundreds of civilians are still sheltering in brutal conditions — had been futile.

Ukrainian fighters of the Azov regiment, which has been

defending the site, said 20 civilians had left, possibly for the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, about 225 kilometres to the northwest. Russia's Tass news agency carried a similar report, though putting the number of evacuees at 25. — AFP

Ukraine FM asks China to be security guarantor: interview

UKRAINE'S foreign minister has asked China to provide security guarantees for Kyiv, in a lengthy interview containing some of the most direct criticisms of Moscow recently published by Beijing's state media.

"Ukraine is currently studying the possibility of acquiring security guarantees from permanent members of the UN Security Council, including China, and other major powers," Dmytro Kuleba was quoted as saying by official news agency Xinhua Saturday. "We propose that China becomes one of the guarantors of Ukraine's security, this is a sign of our respect and trust in the People's Republic of China."

China in 2013 pledged to provide Ukraine with "security guarantees" if it is ever invaded

or threatened with nuclear attack, but appeared evasive on the same issue in the wake of Russia's attack. Chinese officials have often blamed US-led NATO for provoking Moscow's invasion and accused Western countries of escalating the conflict by sending

weapons to Ukraine.

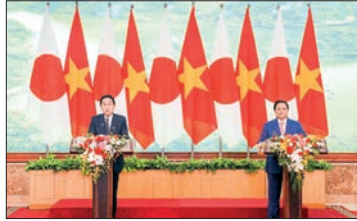
Beijing's state media has also repeatedly amplified Russian propaganda surrounding the war and largely avoided attributing Ukrainian civilian deaths to Moscow's military aggression. — AFP



Ukrainian soldiers on an armoured personnel carrier in Sloviansk, eastern Ukraine, on 29 April 2022. PHOTO: AFP

Japan, Vietnam affirm respect for sovereignty amid Ukraine war

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SPORT

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Man City thrash Leeds to leapfrog Liverpool into top spot

MANCHESTER City retook top spot in the Premier League from Liverpool after weathering a Leeds storm to win 4-0 at Elland Road on Saturday.

Rodri and Nathan Ake got the vital goals from set pieces on a day City needed to match the aggression of the home side before Gabriel Jesus and Fernandinho sealed victory late on.

Pep Guardiola's men edge one point ahead of the Reds once more with four games remaining for both sides.

The defeat leaves Leeds looking over their shoulder at the relegation zone.

Burnley's dramatic come-from-behind win at Watford earlier on Saturday pushed Jesse Marsch's men down to 17th.

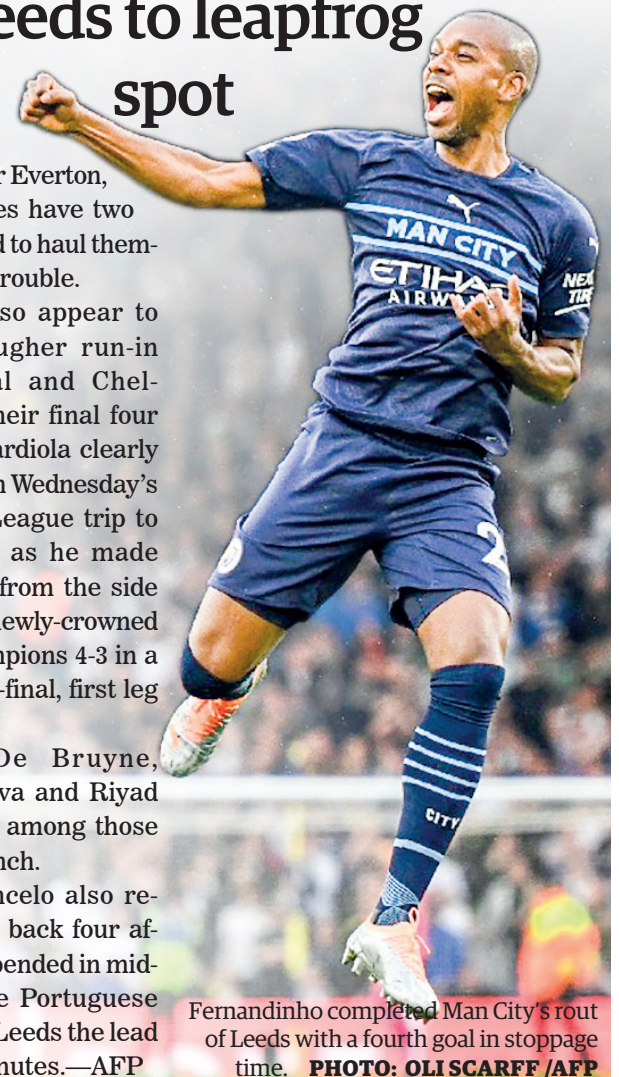
They still enjoy a five-

point lead over Everton, but the Toffees have two games in hand to haul themselves out of trouble.

Leeds also appear to have the tougher run-in with Arsenal and Chelsea among their final four matches. Guardiola clearly had one eye on Wednesday's Champions League trip to Real Madrid as he made five changes from the side that beat the newly-crowned Spanish champions 4-3 in a thrilling semi-final, first leg on Tuesday.

Kevin De Bruyne, Bernardo Silva and Riyad Mahrez were among those left on the bench.

Joao Cancelo also returned to the back four after being suspended in mid-week, but the Portuguese nearly gifted Leeds the lead inside five minutes.—AFP



Fernandinho completed Man City's rout of Leeds with a fourth goal in stoppage time. PHOTO: OLI SCARFF /AFP

Myanmar Team held a 1-1 draw with Seoul City in South Korea

THE Myanmar women's team, which is taking training in the Republic of Korea as part of preparations for the SEA Games, drew 1-1 with South Korean women's club Seoul City in their second friendly match on 1 May.

The Myanmar women's team made changes to the starting line-up for the second friendly match. Team Myanmar lined up with Goalkeeper Zu Latt Nadi, Khin Than Wai, Zun Yuya Oo, Aye Aye Moe, Khine Thazin, Khin Mo Mo Tun, Naw Htet Htet Wai, Khin Malar Tun, San Thaw Thaw, Lin Myint Mo and July Kyaw. San Thaw Thaw scored the leading goal for Myanmar in the 15th minute through Khin Mo Mo Tun's creation. Cho Hanu scored an equalizer for Seoul City from the penalty spot in the 42nd minute. In the second half, Myanmar team made changes and replaced the old players with the new ones. In the second half, both teams could not score again and the match ended in a draw.

The Myanmar women's national football team will play against South Korea's U-20 team on 3 May as the final tune-up match.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM



Myanmar team player (red) vies for the ball against Seoul City FC (blue) during their friendly match played on 1 May 2022. PHOTO: MFF

Olympics chief praises Brisbane 2032 after 'honeymoon' meeting

BRISBANE is making impressive early preparations to host the 2032 Games, International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach said Sunday after a "honeymoon" first meeting with organisers.

But Bach warned that like any marriage there would likely be surprises causing problems in the relationship.

"We are not only satisfied. I have said it before, we are impressed and happy," Bach said during a visit to Sydney to meet members of the Brisbane 2032 organising committee.

Bach also bid farewell to powerbroker John Coates, who stepped down on Saturday after 32 years as president of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC).

"It was like a honeymoon meeting," Bach said after meeting Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games organisers, including Queensland Pre-

mier Anastacia Palaszczuk.

"This honeymoon will not last forever. As we know by experience, like every marriage it will have its ups and downs," he added. "But the mutual respect and the enthusiasm, I think, will make sure that we will also overcome maybe some unexpected obstacles."

Asked whether cricket or surf lifesaving might be included in the 2032 Games, which were awarded to the Australian east coast city last July, Bach said only that the IOC sought to include sports that inspired younger generations. Kirsty Coventry, chair of the IOC's athletes commission, said it was probably too early to be deciding on sports for 2032.

Coventry, a former Olympic swimmer and world record holder from Zimbabwe, pointed out that she was from a cricket-playing nation.—AFP