TATMADAW IN A NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ROLE PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 223, 10th Waning of Tazaungmon 1383 ME www.gnlm.com.mm Sunday, 28 November 2021

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.

The message sent by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark the 101st Anniversary of National Victory Day

28 November 2021

Esteemed Myanmar nationals

I extend greetings to all national brethren residing in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to enjoy physical and mental wellbeing with auspiciousness on the occasion of the 101st Anniversary of the National Victory Day which falls on 10th Waning of Tazaungmon, 1383 Myanmar Era.

Today is National Victory Day to take pride in Myanmar's prestige in the past. It is a significant day of increasing new strengths wishing to achieve more developments of the nation in the future. National Victory Day is a day portraying the patriotic spirit and nationalistic spirit of the entire Myanmar people.

SEE PAGE-3

Citrus Fair 2021 held

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation organized an opening ceremony: Citrus Fair 2021 yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by State Administration Council Members U Sai Lone Saing and U Shwe Kyein, SAC Advisor Daw Yin Yin Nwe, Union ministers U Aung Naing Oo, U Tin Htut Oo and U Khin Maung Yi, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Maung Maung Naing, the deputy ministers, directors-general of the department concerned, rectors of universities, representatives of regions and states, guests and the farmers.

In his opening speech, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo said although the country has about one million acres of citrus fruits plantations across the nation, it does not meet the country's needs and still faces market competition as they are imported from some neighbouring countries and the Middle East countries. For example, more than 67,000 tonnes of citrus fruits worth about $23 million were imported in 2020-21 while the export volume was only $1.5 million.

SEE PAGE-2

A Great Honour for 101st Anniversary of National Victory Day

State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee continues 2nd-day Ninth Plenary Meeting

THE second-day meeting of the Ninth Plenary Session of the eighth State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar continued at Maha Pasana Cave, Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday morning.

Members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee headed by Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa, Director-General of the Religious Affairs U Myo Nyunt Aung and officials attended the ceremony.

Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa presided over the meeting, while Joint Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja Bhaddanta Silacara Bhivamsa served as the master of ceremonies.

The second-day session of the 47-member eighth State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee's Ninth Plenary Meeting in progress.

At the meeting, the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws discussed and decided on religious matters during the eighth term of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee.

Then, the report of the activities of the eighth 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee (Third Subcommittee) during the third term was presented by Joint-Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja Bhaddanta Silacara Bhivamsa.

The report of the second term of the first subcommittee was also presented by the Joint-Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja Bhaddanta Sethila.

Dr Bhaddanta Candanathara, Joint-Secretary, also reported on the activities during the third term of office of the second subcommittee. After that, Sayadaws recited two verses beginning with Jayantaw Bodhiya Mule and Sadhu three times and concluded the meeting.

After the ceremony, donors donated alms for the 31st time to the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws who attended the meeting yesterday. —MNA

Citrus Fair 2021 held

The SAC members, Union ministers, deputy ministers and officials view around the Citrus Fair 2021 yesterday.

FROM PAGE-1

If there are no specific measures to develop the production and import sector, it would affect the interests of citrus fruit farmers in the long run as well as the state economy to a certain extent.

The Union minister also highlighted the six points of holding the Citrus Fair, 2021.

Then, SAC members and Union ministers cut the ribbons to launch the Citrus Fair, 2021 and viewed the display booths, competing fruits and prize-winning fruits.

The Union minister, deputy minister and departmental heads presented the first prizes, second-place and third-place prizes to the winners of respective fruit competitions.

A total of 118 people participated in eight types of fruits competition like Citrus Aurantium, orange, mandarin orange, pomelo, grapefruit, lime, lemon among others. The candidates were awarded first, second and third prizes respectively and further special prizes were also awarded.

At noon, a discussion regarding the techniques for planting the citrus fruits and the development of the agriculture sector was held and the farmers, experts and entrepreneurs joined the event. — MNA

Press Statement

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has learnt that on 26 November 2021, some countries, including the United States of America, have issued a joint statement regarding the situation in Myanmar. It is observed that the joint statement contained sweeping and groundless accusations against the Tatmadaw such as human rights violations and disproportionate use of force.

The Ministry underscores that facts expressed in the joint statement are totally groundless and merely sweeping allegations emanating from groups who are committing terrorist acts or opposing the Government. The Myanmar security forces exercise utmost restraint and only use minimal and befitting force when performing their main duty of ensuring peace, stability, security and the rule of law of the country.

Failure and negligence to mention, to condemn and to call for the cessation of terrorist activities, including the acts of jeopardizing peace and stability, disrupting the rule of law and administrative mechanisms and killings of innocent civilians increasingly committed by those terrorist groups clearly demonstrate that the joint statement is a one-sided and biased one.

The Ministry strongly objects to the joint statement issued with the political motives as the contents of the statement were not only flawed and biased but also meddled in the internal affairs of a sovereign State.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
Dated, 27 November 2021

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Gather the raw materials at home and produce export-quality products

BASED on a cooperative system, efforts must be made for the development of the rural area. Moreover, it is necessary to gather the raw materials at home and produce export-quality products. The Senior General also stressed the need to improve motor roads and railways for the development of public transport.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister at meeting 2/2021 of the Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 26 October 2021)

The message sent by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark the 101st Anniversary of National Victory Day

FROM PAGE-1

Myanmar has been a country with its own governance in accord with the traditions and customs for many years. Since the country fell under the British colonialists in 1885, own culture, customs and Myanmar's education were degraded. Although those who had patriotic spirit and courage fought against the colonialists, they were far from victory due to weakness in technology, modern weapons and experiences as well as lack of systematically concerted efforts. The colonialists arranged the colonial education system in conformity with their administrative mechanism. As such, Myanmar's education standard went down and the entire Myanmar nationals with sufferings fell under the colonial education system.

The colonialist government forcibly enacted the Yangon University Act in December 1920 against the anticipation of the Myanmar people. National Victory Day emerged to honour that day in opposing the forceful enactment of the act on 5 December 1920 (10th Waning of Tazaungmon, 1282 Myanmar Era).

Today is the 101st Anniversary of National Victory Day when the national education campaign was launched for the enhancement of the national prestige and integrity based on the nationalistic spirit. All citizens need to have a sound foundation for education in order to enhance the patriotic spirit and to cement the Union spirit.

As today is the era of information technology, it is especially to analyze the penetration of alien culture and ideologies from abroad into the country and foster the nationalistic favour, firm nationalistic spirit, genuine Union spirit and correct patriotic spirit.

The government has adopted sound foundations for political, economic and administrative reforms while carrying out reform processes across the nation as much as it can. Education reform plays a crucial role in the reform processes. As the development of a country depends on the improvement of the education sector, efforts are being made to develop the education sector with momentum.

Likewise, the government is preserving the languages, literature, cultures, fine arts, traditions and historical heritage of all ethnic nationals. I would like to urge all to strive for the emergence of an education system as a national duty that can bring development to the State depending on the demand of the era and system while nurturing the human resources endowed with correct critical thinking and good morals. Political stability, peace and tranquillity, unity, economic growth, food sufficiency of the people, preservation of cultural heritage and good traditions are knowledge and techniques based on the education sector.

Arrangements are being made to ensure the basic education, higher education and technical and vocational education to be conformed to Myanmar's nature and to meet international standards. At the same time, emphasis is being placed on the plans for all citizens to enjoy the special education programme as well as the all-inclusive education programme.

Good educational environments are being created at universities to nurture the students to become educated persons with physical and mental capabilities to be able to overcome the difficulties and challenges with the disciplined patriotic spirit. The government is turning out the capable educated youths as a national duty. Those who just win the examination through regularly attending school and regular studies cannot totally be educated persons. Only when they have adequate knowledge to analyze the right and the wrong and the cause and the effect with the capability to do things in the practical arenas with critical thinking, will they be identified as actual educated ones. They all need to serve the ethnic nations and the people for the improvement of social life based on their learnt knowledge. They all need to further study vocational subjects which can be applied in their daily lives for socio-economic improvement of the entire national people and development in multiple sectors. They have to be capable of uplifting the national prestige and integrity through genuine patriotic spirit and nurture themselves to amicably give a helping hand to each other with genuine goodwill.

All Union people need to strive for implementing the 101st Anniversary of National Victory Day Objectives 2021:

(a) to ensure multiple developments of the entire ethnic national people;

(b) to enhance education qualification for socio-economic development of the entire Union;

(c) to perpetually flourish the Union spirit based on the patriotic spirit;

(d) to emphasize perpetually peaceful existence among all ethnic nationals in the entire nation.

All ethnic nationals need to build mutual trust among them in unison with actually loving the mother country and to strive for the development of the nation in the future with goodwill through might and main.

In conclusion, I would like to respectfully urge the entire national people to deeply protect the Union, the legacy of the forefathers with nationalistic spirit and make efforts for its development in accord with the theme of the 101st Anniversary of National Victory Day "Let's unite among all ethnic nationals for initiating the prosperity of the nation, on the noble occasion of the National Victory Day.

505 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 27 November, total figure rises to 521,211

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 521,211 after 505 new cases were reported on 27 November 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 495,408 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,079 after 12 died.—MNA

MoI Union minister calls for working together with government through modernized methods

The MoI Union minister meets the departmental personnel of the ministry in Taunggyi on 27 November 2021.

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn accompanied by Minister for Social Affairs of Shan State U Aung Myint, Chairman of the PaO Self-Administered Zone Administration Body U Khun Ye Htwe, arrived at Kyaukkachar village in Mae Nae Taung region in Hopong Township and inspected the conditions for coordinating information activities for the development of the region.

The Union minister and party visited the Nan Hon Taing 100 monastery which is over 100 years old in the village. Sayadaw of the monastery presented the history of the monastery and the need for renovation. Chairman U Khun Ye Htwe discussed its possibility to attract tourists and the conditions for the socio-economic development of the region.

The Union minister said the Prime Minister has instructed to preserve the traditional cultural heritage such as religions, literature, music of the ethnic nationalities, and that he will provide media assistants for the long-term sustainability and preservation of the monastery. He also discussed the need to attract tourists and sell local products for the development of the region. The Union minister and party observed the beauty and agriculture of Kyaukkachar village.

Kyaukkachar village is located at 5,720 feet above sea level in the Mae Nae Taung region in Hopong Township. The village is a home for about 3,500 PaO ethnic nationals and there are about 700 households. Nan Hon Taing 100 monastery was built more than 100 years ago with ancient artistic values.

Afterwards, the Union minister inspected the Department of Information and Public Relations in Hopong Township and instructed to upgrade library services and systematically disseminate accurate information to the public.

The Union minister also met the leader of the PaO ethnicity Agga Maha Thiri Thudama Mani Zawtadara Wunna Kyaw Htin U Aung Kham Htee and inquired about his health and social condition. In the evening, the Union minister met staff of the Department of Information and Public Relations and MRTV broadcasting stations, Newspaper Sub-Printing House (Taunggyi). During the meeting, the Union minister urged them to work together with the government for the benefit of the country by modernizing the old methods and carrying out the duties of the ministry in a quality manner.

He also urged to openly present the difficulties encountered in carrying out tasks and to work together.

He also inspected the MRTV broadcasting station and discussed the proper maintenance of equipment and safety precautions. — MNA

Kengtung University on behalf of Myanmar wins two first prizes at ASEAN Festival 2021

THE closing ceremony of the ASEAN Festival 2021 with 19 universities from ASEAN countries including Myanmar was held at Khemraj Hall of Kengtung University with a videoconference system on 26 November.

The festival includes seven arts and cultural competitions, and Kengtung University, representing Myanmar, won the first prize in the ASEAN Cooking Competition and the ASEAN Digital Photo Contest.

First, the contest videos of ASEAN universities are shown by competition category.

Then, the University President of Tarlac Agricultural University, Republic of the Philippines, Dr Max P. Guillermo expressed congratulatory words for the contestants and announced the winners for each category.

Then, the judges of the competition explained the selection of prizes according to the competition.

After that, Assist Director from External Linkages & International Affairs, Tarlac Agricultural University, Dr Sheila R. Lingaya delivered conclusion speeches.

Next, officials and attendees greeted each other and took a video conference video.

The ASEAN FESTIVAL 2021 was organized by Tarlac Agricultural University of the Philippines on 25 August this year.

The festival includes a traditional dish competition, Digital Photo Contest Costume design competition, Dance competition, Storytelling Competition.

Kengtung University, representing Myanmar, competed in six competitions, including an essay competition and a video production competition.

The first prizes for Myanmar were won at the ASEAN Cooking Contest and the ASEAN Digital Photo Contest. — Maung Maung Naing (Kengtung IPRD)/GNLM

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MoHT minister attends human resource development, future tourism workshop (part II)

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung attended the Human Resource Development and Future Tourism Workshop (Part II) held by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism through videoconferencing yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the workshop, the Union minister said the workshop aimed to continue to discuss the systematic and sustainable development of future tourism with four development sectors: the development of strategies, the development of human resources, tourism education development and the hotel and tourism sector as a whole based on the discussions of the workshop (Part I) held last week.

The staff of the ministry must study and implement projects issued at the international level, national level, and the ministry level for the development of the tourism sector, in addition to sharing individual lessons learned and practical skills, he added.

He said the Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister pays special attention to the development of human resources. As COVID-19 is a global crisis and we have to work with it for a long time, we must work to provide safe services to our passengers, he continued.

He also highlighted the need for hotels and hostels to apply for national certification of Enchanting Myanmar Health and Safety Protocol (HSP) and strive to upgrade to international standards, and obtain relevant licenses under the law in implementing systematic and sustainable development of tourism.

Discussions were held on four topics in four groups: development of strategies, human resources development, tourism education and the development of the hotel and tourism sector as a whole. Representatives from the groups conducted panel discussions on the respective topics. The Director-General added suggestions on the presentations of the groups and Director U Zeya Myo Aung briefed on the results of the workshop.

Upon the presentation, the Union minister said it is necessary to study in line with international standards and systematically implement them with appropriate detailed plans, in implementing the four topics. He added the need to be qualified persons, in addition to obtaining certificates, and to make efforts to get the right people in the right place in the implementation of the assignment.

Those who participated in the discussion were awarded certificates, it is reported. — MNA

Daily imports of anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products continue

THE Ministry of Commerce is making efforts to ensure people have access to the essential medical supplies that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, by arranging continuous importation through trading posts, international airports and seaports with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Anti-COVID-19 equipment and medical products, including oxygen plants and concentrators, were imported by two companies and transported by two vehicles.

A total of 20 concentrators for home use and 16 tonnes of masks were imported via Muse and Chinshwehaw trading zones.

From 1 to 27 November, 327 tonnes of liquid oxygen transported by 125 bowsers, 5.5 tonnes of oxygen gas, 9,738 empty oxygen tanks, 45 oxygen plants, 16 oxygen generators, 143 oxygen concentrators, 83,480 PPE suits, 43 tonnes of gloves and 705 tonnes of masks were imported by 66 companies.

In the same period, 13 bowsers transported liquid oxygen to Yangon, two to Mawlamyine and one to Nay Pyi Taw respectively.

Out of 45 oxygen plants, 37 to Yangon, two each to Myitkyina, Yesagyo and Myothit and one each to Danuphyu, and Yenanchaung respectively.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the Standard Operating Procedures, including online registration for the import process.

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

Drugs seized in Kholang, Namsang township

A joint team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force stopped and searched two motorcycles driven by Aitetaung and Aitelut at the inspection gate in Narpwe Village, Narpwe Village-Tract, Kholang, Namsang Township on 26 November.

In searching the motorcycles, a total of 22 kilograms of raw opium, 57 kilograms of raw opium and 8.8 million kyats were confiscated.

The two men are being prosecuted under the Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to the police force. — MNA

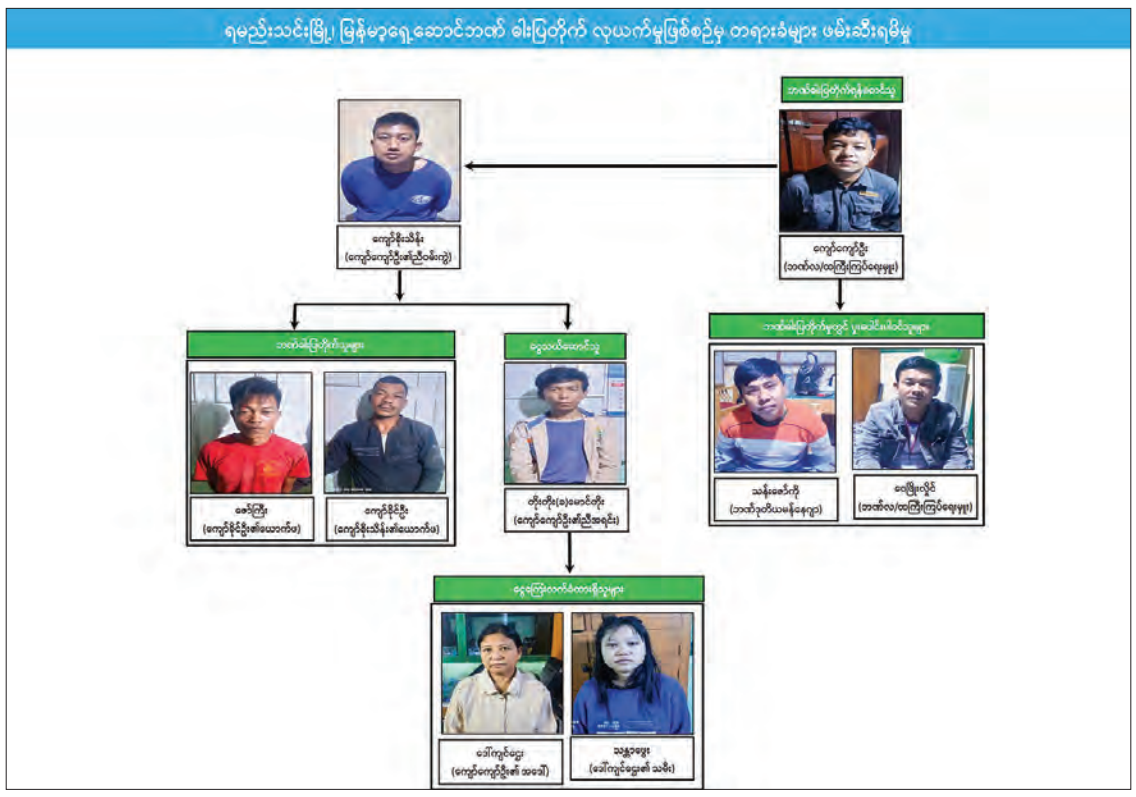
IDPs in Pauktaw township, Rakhine state, vaccinated against COVID-19

THE fourth batch of the COVID-19 vaccination began in the IDPs camps in Pauktaw Township, Rakhine State, yesterday morning.

People aged over 18 in Kyanenipyin IDPs camp, Sintatmaw IDPs camp, Anaukye IDPs camp, Nghatchaung-1 IDPs camp, Nghatchaung-2 IDPs camp, Sintatmaw (Bengali), Anaukye (Bengali), upper Sitkaepyin (Bengali), lower Sitkaepyin (Bengali), Konetan (Bengali) and Taungywa (Bengali) received the first jab of COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccination will be carried out for a total of 1,606 people in these IDPs camps. The Chairman of the Pauktaw Township Administration Body and officials encourage the vaccination which was undertaken by township healthcare professionals under the supervision of the Township Public Health Officer.— Kyaw Than (Township IPRD)/GNLM

Robbery suspects of Myanma Apex Bank in Yamethin Township arrested



TWO armed men robbed more than K100 million of Myanma Apex Bank in Aungmingala Ward of Yamethin Township of Mandalay Region at about 1:25 pm on 26 November.

The officials investigated to arrest robbers and arrested Kyaw Kyaw Oo and Wai Phyo Hlaing who were assistant supervisors of the bank from Yamethin Township and Than Zaw, deputy manager of the branch bank, who participated in the case, in the evening of 26 November.

According to the confession of the suspects, the police arrested Kyaw Soe Thein, phone serviceman, from Wartoe Ward of Yamethin Township, who participated in the robbery case, at his home while Kyaw Khaing Oo from Paukgon Village of Alegon Village-tract and Zaw Gyi from Nyaung Pin Thar Village, who robbed in the bank, together with two motorcycles and two knives used in the robbery, at the house of Zaw Gyi.

The suspect Kyaw Soe Thein admitted that he kept the money at his aunt Daw Kyin Htay in Wartoe (East) Ward of Yamethin Township with his younger brother driver Maung Toe (aka) Toe Toe of Yamethin Township general administration department. Daw Kyin Htay and her daughter Thandar Phway (aka) Phway Phway accepted the money, and so they were arrested at 00:45 am on 26 November together with K101.5 million at their house while Maung Toe (aka) Toe Toe was arrested with K5 million at his house located in Kyitawgon of Myoma Ward at 4:45 am on 27 November.

The suspects also admitted that they committed robbery as they need a lot of money for their gambling. Before 10 days of the robbery, the bank staff Than Zaw Ko, Kyaw Kyaw Oo, Wai Phyo Hlaing, Kyaw Khine Oo who robbed in the bank, and plan maker Kyaw Soe Thein arranged to rob the bank in advance like the three bank staff including Kyaw Kyaw Oo will watch the money packaging, the situation of the bank, timer including giving the sign. Then, Kaw Soe Thein and Kyaw Khine Oo will rob in the bank.

On that day, bank staff Kyaw Kyaw Oo sent a phone message to Kyaw Soe Thein to start the mission and Kyaw Khine Oo entered the bank together with his brother-in-law Zaw Gyi holding pistol and knife respectively. Meanwhile, Kyaw Soe Thein was ready near the clock tower in front of the bank.

Kyaw Khine Oo and Zaw Gyi kept the money at Kyaw Soe Thein. Then, Kyaw Soe Thein transported the money to his aunt Daw Khin Htay with his younger brother Maung Toe (aka) Toe Toe.

Daw Kyin Htay and her daughter Thanda Phway (aka) Phway Phway were found guilty for accepting such money.

Due to the concerted efforts of the combined security team, the robbery suspects were arrested together with the money within 12 hours.

The suspects will face legal action under the law. — MNA

Arrestees are seen from the robbery case of Myanma Apex Bank in Yemethin Township.

Maungtaw residents continue to receive COVID-19 vaccines

VACCINATION against COVID-19 continued for people in priority groups in Maungtaw Township yesterday morning. This is the fourth batch of COVID-19 vaccination in Maungtaw and a total of 789 people received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccines yesterday.

Officials from the General Administration Department recorded the lists of the vaccinated people, and healthcare professionals conducted screening tests to ensure the people are fit for inoculation. Ward and village administrators and officials provided the necessary assistance in the immunization process.

A total of 9,524 people in Maungtaw Township have been jabbed following the guidelines set by the Ministry of Health, and the COVID-19 vaccination will be continued for the rest of the people.— Thet Lwin Soe (IPRD)/GNL

Medical examination is underway before inoculation in Maungtaw.

Shwebo pawsan paddy, rice see stable market

THE Shwebo pawsan paddy and rice trading have been stabled for the past one month, said U Kyaw Ngwe, the head of Shwebo Pawsan Paddy Association (head office) in Shwebo.

"The Shwebo pawsan trading is cool in Shwebo Township these days. There is no demand from the Yangon region. Although the price of paddy is much higher than before, the trading is cool these days. The price of the rice is also cool since last month. The price of rice is dropped every year at this time," said U Kyaw Ngwe.

Some old Shwebo pawsan rice is stockpiled in Shwebo township. The sale of the Shwebo pawsan rice is not the same good as the old rice because it is newly-harvested rice and the taste is not good as the old one. Some traders guessed that the old rice will be demanded when the new rice is started detesting for the market. The price of Shwebo pawsan rice is different depending on the type of paddy.

It is estimated that the opening market price for 100 baskets of newly-harvested paddy will be K1.2 million. The paddy crops will also be highly harvested this year.

There are a total of 200 members in the Shwebo Pawsan Paddy Association, including over 50 rice millers and about 150 farmers. Besides, more members have registered to join the association, said U Kyaw Ngwe. — Lu Lay/GNLM

The Shwebo pawsan trading is cool in Shwebo Township these days. There is no demand from the Yangon region. Although the price of paddy is much higher than before, the trading is cool these days. The price of the rice is also cool since last month. The price of rice is dropped every year at this time.

US dollar against Kyat rises over K1,800 per dollar

The dollar exchange rate against Myanmar Kyat stood at around K1,330 per dollar at the end-January. Then, the dollar's value reached the highest of over K3,000 per dollar in history last September-end.

THE US dollar exchange rate against Myanmar Kyat has risen above K1,800 per dollar in the local currency market, it is learnt.

The exchange rate on the US dollar dropped to K1,783 per dollar because the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) issued the instruction on 9 November that the foreign exchange transitions must be carried out within ± 0.5 per cent of the reference rate established by the CBM.

On 27 November, the exchange rate for US currency has reached K1,802.

The dollar exchange rate against Myanmar Kyat stood at around K1,330 per dollar at the end-January. Then, the dollar's value reached the highest of over K3,000 per dollar in history last September-end.

The CBM has been selling the US dollar in the auction market to control the rise and fall of the exchange rate. The bank reportedly sold $30 million in November in the auction market. Likewise, the bank also sold $110 million in October, $63 million in September and $28 million in August.

Besides, the bank also sold $39 million in July, $12 million in June, $24 million in May, $12 million in April and $6.8 million in February at foreign currency auction system.

In the first six months of 2021, the highest and lowest exchange rate is currently fixed around K1,327-1,345 in January, K1,335-1,465 in February, K1,420-1,550 in March, K1,550-1,610 in April, K1,585-1,730 in May, K1,595-1,620 in June, K1,626-1,670 in July, K1,660-1,682 in August, K1,696-3,200 in September and K1,850-1,990 in October.

In 2020, the exchange rate moved in the range of K1,465-1,493 in January, K1,436-1,465 in February, K1,320-1,445 in March, K1,395-1,440 in April, K1,406-1,426 in May, K1,385-1,412 in June, K1,367-1,410 in July, K1,335-1,390 in August, K1,310-1,355 in September, K1,282-1,315 in October, K1,303-1,330 in November and K1,324-1,403 in December.

In the last six months in 2019, the rates were fixed at K1,508-1,517 in July, K1,510-1,526 in August, K1,527-1,565 in September, K1,528-1,537 in October, K1,510-1,524 in November and K1,485-1,513 in December.

On 20 September 2018, the dollar exchange rate hit a record high of K1,650 in the local exchange market. — NN/GNLM`

Thai-Myanmar bilateral border trade totals $554 mln this mini-budget year

THE Myanmar-Thailand border trade has increased by US$107 million and stands at $554 million as of 19 November in the mini-budget year of 2021 or transition period from October to March according to the Ministry of Commerce.

During this mini-budget period, exports made up $331 million, down $9.29 million with imports worth $222.98 million, up to $116.6 million.

Some border checkpoints are temporarily restricted during the pandemic period.

There are seven land borders between Myanmar and Thailand – Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Hteekhee, Myeik, Mawtaung and Meisei. Except for Myeik and Myawady, the remaining border checkpoints showed an increase in trading this mini-budget year.

Among those trade camps along the Myanmar-Thailand border, the Myawady-Mae Sot route is the most important, carrying about 70 per cent of trade between the two countries.

As of 19 November of this mini-budget year, the Myawady land border topped with $337 million of bilateral trade.

Myanmar primarily exports agriculture and livestock products, natural gas, beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports non-alcoholic beverages, fabric and yarn, motorcycles and related parts, construction materials and food products.

Thailand is Myanmar's second-largest trade partner and third-largest foreign investor. — ACM/GNLM

Thailand is Myanmar's second-largest trade partner and third-largest foreign investor.

28 NOVEMBER 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Tatmadaw in a national political leadership role

THE State Administration Council has adopted nine objectives including three political objectives. One of them, the first political objective states "to build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democracy system that is fair and just".

The Tatmadaw has deeply decided to ensure the emergence of genuine democracy in the country. Only when all public service personnel, civil society organizations and the entire people cooperate with the Tatmadaw in building the Union based on democracy and federalism, will they successfully taste the genuine democracy in a short period.

> All citizens need to forge the Union spirit for restoring perpetual peace in the entire nation. "Union Spirit" is a firm concept to recognize the whole Union as a family or a household. As wish to help each other, solve the problems, mutually cooperate with each other, sympathy and tolerance are nobly basic needs of the Union Spirit, those from the university need to participate in forging the Union Spirit as much as they can.

The Tatmadaw members are born of the people. Hence, they serve the interests of the State and the national people. The Tatmadaw which emerged in the independence struggle has been unavoidably participating in the role of national politics due to historical demand and national favour after the independence was regained.

Voting frauds happened in the previous general election with an attempt to forcibly shape the single-party dictatorship with derailment from the path of genuine democracy. These situations were very dangerous for the country. As such, the Tatmadaw declared the state of emergency in accord with the provisions of the 2008 Constitution for rebuilding the genuine democratic nation.

Peace and stability are of great importance in the development of the nation. Only when all the regions meet development in an equal term, will the trust be more firm. Only when the whole nation is peaceful and stable, will development tasks be undertaken for the country.

The State Administration Council, since its establishment, set an aim to restore the perpetual peace across the nation, adopting the political objectives including the point that "to emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). As such, the Union based on democracy and federalism can be built for realizing the aspiration of the ethnic national people.

All citizens need to forge the Union spirit for restoring perpetual peace in the entire nation. "Union Spirit" is a firm concept to recognize the whole Union as a family or a household. As wish to help each other, solve the problems, mutually cooperate with each other, sympathy and tolerance are nobly basic needs of the Union Spirit, those from the university need to participate in forging the Union Spirit as much as they can.

■ ■ ■

National Victory Day

By Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Sithu Dr Khin Maung Nyunt

In 1920, the two colleges began protests against the British Administration's Yangon University Act of 1920. Marble stone slab inscribed with the names of the eleven students leaders of strike committee at the Shwedagon Pagoda. **PHOTO: GNLM**

(1) Myanmar Lunar Calendar with four seasons [Summer, Monsoon Rain and Cold or Winter]
(2) Has many red-letter days for various reasons.
(3) Religious, Cultural, national and international.
(4) Global, regional and such regional. This year Myanmar National Victory Day.
(5) Fall, on 28 November 2021, 101st the original date of National Victory Day.
(6) Was the Tenth waning moon of Myanmar month Tazaungmon which corresponds to December.
timbale.
(7) With the departure of Myanmar king Thibaw to Ratnagiri of the British Indian Empire.
(8) Broke out resistance movements across the country. The British named it the Period of Pacification.
(9) But it was a short time before the heavy storm. As proved by the Rangoon University of Boycott of strong.
(10) There is already up Rangoon College. A wooden complex Building facing General Hospital Rangoon downtown.
(11) Affiliated to Calcutta University of world renown.
(12) Typical British Indian University British, Indian and colonial history literature language and culture. (13) Turning point came in the year 1920 when the British colonial government decided to "pen Rangoon University.
(14) British Universities are for royally Aristocracy and upper Middle class. To serve British Empire faithfully royally and honestly.
(15) Residential University' to teach to train to organize Black English man of Angle piles. Frugality and despising their own origin and culture.
(16) Nothing Burmese history, language, literature and culture. Thoroughly anglicized Anglo pile.
(17) Based upon typical English London, Cambridge and Oxford. Only sons and daughters of least Landed Gentry high-salaried parents could afford.
(18) Residential Hostels Breakfast, Pre-lunch, Tea lunch. Pre-drink dinner tea, Dinner plus supper and laundry and shoe shine.
(19) Young Indian errand boy at your service.
(20) Costing each student Rs 45 [Rupee].
(21) Township officer's salary was Rs 30. Policemen got Rs 7 and 8 annas.
(22) Peon could live with Rs 5 for his decent living no need to fight.
(23) Myanmar middle class requested Day scholars should be accepted.
(24) British Government turned a deaf ear so Rangoon University Boycott broke out in December of the 1920 year.
(25) The list and names of Boycott leaders are inscribed in five languages on stone piles.
(26) At the Saturday corner not far from Banyan Bodhi Tree. On the platform of Shwedagon Phaya Gyi. (27) Council of National Education was set up for Boycotters and all students.
(28). British Colonial Education bred colonial slavish mentality. To serve the British crown and colonial Empire only.
(29) NCE [National Council of Education) set at National Collage. Conforming degrees B.A (Nat) M.A (Nat).
(30) Nat represents National just like B.A. (Lon), B.A. (Oxon), B.A. (Cambridge), B.A. (Harvard), B.A. (Yale).
(31) New movements began to appear National Vectoring of patriots with series freely offered.
(32) National College and later National School appeared.
(33) English modern history, Burma history literature and culture. For a new generation of patriots to nurture.
(34) Soon group up a new generation of Thakhin students meaning we are Thakhin masters of our country. Not slaves of the British colony.
(35) Thakhin Pho Hla Gyi of Yenangyaung Oilfield led labourers protest march to Yangon so far.
(36) Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing who wrote the famous Boycott Dica ဘွိုင်ကောကဒီကာ
(37) Thakhin Aung San, Thakhin Nu, Thakhin Soe, Thakhin Than Htun [white flag communist], Thakhin Soe [Red flag communist].
(38) Thakhin Aung San, Thakhin Shu Maung [General Nay Win], Thakhin Thein Pe [Thein Pe Myint] [Tet Pone Gyi]. To wake up Myanmar people from political lethargy.
(39). U Razak, U Ba Win, U Khant, U Thant of UN Security General and other Myanmar of services National and International.
(40). Thus far, no further to elaborate the reason why we "National Victory Day" [with waning moon of Tazaungmon, 28 November 2021 this year.
With apologies to all English versifiers.

WHO says new Omicron coronavirus variant is "of concern"

THE World Health Organization said Friday a new coronavirus strain detected in South Africa is a highly transmissible "variant of concern" and named it "Omicron."

The emergence of the B.1.1.529 variant, first reported to the WHO from South Africa on Wednesday, has caused authorities around the world to react with alarm and led them to quickly tighten travel restrictions.

An advisory panel of the U.N. health agency has warned the variant has "a large number of mutations, some of which are concerning."

Compared with other variants, preliminary evidence has found an "increased risk of reinfection" with Omicron, the WHO said, adding the new variant can be detected by current PCR diagnostics.

The new variant has already been confirmed outside South Africa, including Hong Kong, Belgium and Israel.

According to Japan's National Institute of Infectious Diseases, the Omicron variant has 32 mutations in the spike protein, which may allow it to more easily enter the body's cells.

With the discovery of the new variant, the World Trade Organization on Friday decided to indefinitely postpone its ministerial meeting set to open next week after Switzerland tightened entry restrictions.

The four-day meeting was scheduled to open Tuesday at the WTO headquarters in Geneva to discuss issues including how to curb export restrictions on medical goods. It would have been the world trade body's first ministerial talks in four years.

From Japan, Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and trade minister Koichi Hagiuda were both planning to attend.

The WTO said its General Council agreed late Friday to postpone the meeting after Switzerland banned direct flights from South Africa and six other southern African countries.

"Given these unfortunate developments and the uncertainty that they cause, we see no alternative but to propose to postpone the ministerial conference and reconvene it as soon as possible when conditions allow," the WTO quoted Dacio Castillo, a Honduran ambassador and chair of the council, as saying.

The WTO, which has 164 members representing 98 per cent of world trade, normally convenes a ministerial conference every two years. The meeting that was originally due to take place in Kazakhstan in June 2020 was put off also due to the coronavirus pandemic.

SOURCE: KYODO

Australia on Saturday (Nov 27) imposed new restrictions on people who have been in nine southern African countries, as the new Omicron variant of Covid-19 raises concerns about a further wave of the pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

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International Day of Persons with Disabilities

"Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 world"

"အားလုံးအကျုံးဝင် လက်လှမ်းမီပြီး ရေရှည်တည်တံ့သည့် ကိုဗစ်-၁၉ အလွန်ကမ္ဘာဖြစ်ပေါ်ရေးမသန်စွမ်းသူများဦးဆောင်ပါဝင်ကြိုးစားပေး"

နေပြည်တော် ၃.၁၂.၂၀၂၁

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 27 November 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the Westcentral 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 28 November 2021: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be fairly widespread in Eastern Shan State, scattered in Ayeyawady Region and Southern Shan State and isolated in Mandalay, Bago, Yangon, and Taninthayi regions and Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (60%). 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 decrease of night temperatures in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan, Chin and Rakhine states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28 November 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28 November 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHB0URING AREA FOR 28 November 2021: Partly cloudy.

EARTHQUAKE NEWS
(Issued at 16:35 hour MST)
A slight earthquake of magnitude (4.3) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (9) miles northeast of Haka), latitude 22.75 °N, longitude 93.67°E, depth (16) kilometers, about (9) miles northeast of Haka seismological observatory was recorded at (16) hr (17) min (18) sec MST on 27 November 2021.

The Global New Light of Myanmar
www.gnlm.com.mm
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Democracy: Looking Beyond Elections

By an observer

Introduction

In principle, elections symbolize the fundamental part of democracy. Elections enable people to exercise their political rights and make choices as to their representatives to take office in state institutions. By casting votes and betting on specific political parties, people make investment for fulfilling their needs and the expectations of their future. From the point of view of society, elections empower people to appoint their representatives or fire those who are unwilling or unable to bring about their interests. There may be times for the people to consent to and accept the government's limitation on individual liberty when the national security or public order is in jeopardy. This is the reason why people seize the opportunity through elections to influence who exercises the state powers and how.

In practice, democracy is a way to organize collectively binding decisions. State constitutions typically prescribe relevant criteria for practising democracy. The criteria relevant to this article are: (i) participatory decision-making, especially the participation of those to be affected by a decision; (ii) majority decides while protecting the legitimate rights and interests of minorities; (iii) individual freedom has its limits in the freedom of all others; (iv) tolerance and non-violence are fundamental to all social relations; and (v) political parties serve to organize, articulate and represent the interests of different social groups.

These criteria show that other than representation, practising democracy requires subtlety and competency in some key aspects including participatory decision-making/policy-making and implementation; negotiation; management of interests and institutions; compromise; nurturing and applying the political capital and manoeuvring political processes and interlinked changes. If the will of the majority is simply viewed and followed as democracy; populism, majority mandate and personality cult can be misleadingly equated with democracy. This has been the case in a fledgling democracy like Myanmar.

Myanmar is a country standing at the geo-strategically and a geo-economically important junction of Asia and the Indian Ocean. After going through the challenging times of domestic and Western pressures vis-à-vis the building up of political, economic and security strengths undertaken hand-in-hand with the drafting of a constitution that values non-disintegration of the Union and the national solidarity and integrity of territory and sovereignty as the main national causes, Myanmar reinitiated democratic transformation in 2011.

There had been many structural crises throughout the transformation from colonial rule to the sovereign and democratic national government. Notwithstanding some benefits and advances brought forth by the colonial institutions, negative lingering effects were also embedded into the political, economic, security and social structures of Myanmar. The most obvious being the effect of divide-and-rule policy among the diverse ethnic groups and the transfer of civilians into Myanmar to a degree impairing its demographic composition. These past colonial practices followed the logic of consequences with little or no consideration for the socio-cultural impact upon the native population. The socio-cultural impact conjoined with external provocations over time multiplied and transformed into behavioural, administrative, political, institutional (macro and meso levels) and security problems which are beyond the scope of this article. The lingering impacts of colonial legacy are still visible as identity politics and communal conflicts alongside the processes of democratic transformation. In the light of such structural constraints, democratic transformation or practising democracy entails caution in every phase and step against internal and external exploitations.

This series of articles first tries to shed light on certain deviations of the previous National League for Democracy (NLD) government from democratic practices in conjunction with the country's democratic transformation. It, then, assesses the performance of the NLD party and unlawful and terrorist organizations—Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) and National Unity Government (NUG)—from the same perspective.

Section (1)

2020 General Election, the Principle of Participatory Representation and a Fundamental Flaw

The review of NLD's practices must start with the amendment to the election rules. Much to the displeasure of ethnic political parties, the proposal of the Union Election Commission (UEC) to reduce residency requirement for internal migrants from 180 days to 90 days was approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) dominated by the NLD. This proposal to the election rules was approved despite the objection of fourteen political parties including members of the United Nationalities Alliance (UNA) which comprises around 15 ethnic political parties. The NLD's move at a glance would seem like a measure for out-of-constituency citizens not to lose their voting rights. However, ethnic parties considered it as a blow to their proportion of winning seats in their constituencies. NLD's preoccupation with a landslide victory and majoritarian mandate for amending the constitution, to have Tatmadaw under the control of the civil power and to consolidate democracy might have led the NLD dominated parliament to overlook the inclusive principle of representation.

As the 2020 general election drew near, observers made various speculations. One of the speculations was that the representatives of Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and some ethnic political parties combined might win over 25 per cent (25 per cent plus) of seats in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and if they, together with the 25 per cent Tatmadaw representatives, could come up as a coalition, they could have a chance to form a coalition government. For the NLD, it might have been a (25 per cent plus + 25 per cent) scenario to avoid as much as possible.

Since 16 April 2020, the NLD government had declared COVID-19 as a natural disaster. According to the Carter Center, "a natural disaster is one of the legal grounds upon which elections may be postponed in select(ed) constituencies, along with conditions of insecurity." On 15 September 2020, 24 political parties out of 92 registered parties—including the USDP which won the second largest seats in the 2015 elections and its allies—submitted a request to the UEC to review the election date which was set for 8 November 2020. The People's Pioneer Party (PPP) also requested to review the election date whereas Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS) requested to postpone the elections. The Arakan National Party (ANP) which won the third-largest seats in the 2015 elections suggested that the current situation should be taken seriously as it was impractical for holding free and fair elections nationwide. On the other hand, some political parties voiced their concerns for political and constitutional crises and suggested that if there had to be any postponement it should be temporary.

Meanwhile, the COVID-19 was in its second wave and the rate of infection was taking up pace. By 20 October 2020, there were 38,502 cases of COVID-19 positive and 945 cases of death. Among regions and states, Yangon Region was the top in both COVID-19 positive cases and deaths throughout the country. On 19 October alone, 773 out of 1171 new positive cases or 66 per cent of new positive cases were reported in Yangon. Until then, 44 townships in Yangon Region were still under stay-at-home restriction. Parts of Mandalay Region, Mon State, Bago Region, Ayeyawady Region and elsewhere were also under stay-at-home restrictions. According to the UEC data, 42 village-tracts in two townships of Bago Regions, 53 village-tracts in six townships of Kayin State, one village-tract in a township in Mon State, nine whole townships and 123 village-tracts and 16 wards in four townships of Rakhine State, six whole townships and seven wards and 125 village-tracts in 17 townships of Shan State, 182 village-tracts in 11 townships of Kachin State, 94 village-tracts in Paletwa Township of Chin State were announced not to hold elections as these constituencies were experiencing "a situation where free and fair elections could not be held". Regarding the postponement of voting, former UEC spokesperson U Myint Naing said that the commission did so based on the recommendations of the Ministries of Union Government Office, Home Affairs, Defence and others on COVID-19 and security grounds. However, the Spokesperson of Tatmadaw True News Information Team Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun said that some of the areas excluded from voting by UEC were different from Tatmadaw's proposed areas. Despite complaints against the UEC's unwillingness to postpone the whole election amid rising COVID-19 infections, elections were held in other parts of Myanmar as scheduled following the COVID-19 health guidelines.

Ethnic political parties accused UEC of bias in favour of the ruling NLD party. It was not surprising because the UEC's decision on postponement of voting was largely in ethnic areas. Despite Yangon's recent record of 66 per cent of all new infections nationwide, no township in the region was included in the postponement list. The UEC postponed voting in States such as Rakhine State and Shan State, where only ethnic parties had the strong tendency of winning seats while going ahead with the schedule in every township in Yangon. The postponed constituencies represent the ethnic population of 1.5 million out of Myanmar's 38 million eligible voters. In such a manner, the UEC had tapped lightly but effectively purged the USDP and ethnic parties out of their (25 per cent plus +25 per cent) scenario and eliminated their chance of nominating the head of state and forming a coalition government. Although the postponed constituencies could join state and sub-state power branches through by-elections, their representatives by then would have already lost the chance to participate in electing the president and forming the government. Even if the NLD and UEC manipulated the elections by the rule, the compliance of such election results to the principle of participatory representation was highly questionable.

Other electoral landscapes revealed that fairness for all of those competing was questionable. Compared with the UEC led by U Tin Aye (30 March 2011 – 30 March 2016), the NLD appointed UEC was criticized for not engaging enough with key stakeholders—including political parties, observer groups, civil society and the media. Very limited engagement means that the stakeholders could not adequately discuss their concerns or make their inputs.

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The refusal of UEC led by U Hla Thein to change the code of conduct of political parties to ban the use of Bogyoke Aung San's image turned him from a national independence hero to a party hero, again affecting representation. In broadcasting campaign speeches on state media, the UEC censored what is considered to be inappropriate. For example, the National Democratic Force Party referring to the NLD's huge current majority in parliament as a one-party system and calling for a change from the first-past-the-post system to proportional representation was censored. The NLD government had constantly used the state media to promote its policies and success stories. The UEC's censorship showed that the NLD Party could not tolerate different opinions even in a short campaign speech delivered once every five years. Such measures show that there was no level playing field between NLD and other political parties in their competition for the 2020 general election.

The erroneous tendency of UEC was also evident. According to Frontier Myanmar, the commission was criticized for major errors in the voters' list during the 2018 by-elections. It was a major concern for the 2020 general election. According to the UEC member U Myint Naing, 200,000 people out of 6.6 million who had checked the voters list sought to make corrections whereas another 65,000 people raised their concerns about the names on the list. After the elections, irregularities were reported and some political parties submitted objections to the UEC. After scrutinizing the voters' list of 315 townships, the new UEC appointed by the State Administration Council found 11,305,390 voting irregularities, with 4,869,427 people voting without national registration cards. Such flaw in the 2020 general election, whether it was deliberate or not, was the fundamental flaw for democracy.

In brief, although elections are the tools for complementing and strengthening the essence of democracy, the 2020 general elections demonstrated wrongful conduct which was undertaken in all possible ways to ensure the monopoly of political power by a political party or a group of people instead of ascertaining the whole people's aspirations rightly and fairly.

Section (2)

Evaluating the Two Previous Governments: An Institutional Perspective

From the institutional perspective, there are decision-making/policy-making institutions and decision-implementing/policy-implementing institutions. Basically, many relevant state institutions are involved in upstream and downstream decision-making/policy-making and implementations. Thus, it is not unusual for some institutions to take part in both decision-making/policy-making and implementation. Depending on the issue on the table, state actors have to take into account the opinions and inputs from non-state actors, including political parties and non-governmental organizations, and public opinion. For a country like Myanmar struggling with structural constraints left behind by colonial rule, Tatmadaw represents an important state actor which is almost impossible to be left out of decision-making/policy-making. The structural constraints manifest themselves as challenges in the peace process, constitutional amendment process and other nation-building processes or national community formation processes.

Ex-President U Thein Sein initiated major political, economic and legal reforms, improved human rights records and initiated discussions for a constitutional amendment to the surprise of many. To strengthen his reform dynamics, U Thein Sein extended the invitation to everyone with particular attention to previously uncooperative individuals and groups to participate as positive forces in democratic transformation. Backed by actions, U Thein Sein was able to convince the NLD, the main uncooperative force during the period of State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), 88 Generation Students and ethnic political parties to coalesce around democratic transformation as the national cause. In this sense, U Thein Sein, mainly through a liaison minister, built confidence with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Later she became the Chairperson of Rule of Law and Tranquillity Committee in Pyithu Hluttaw by participating in the 2012 by-elections. The capacity gave her a first-hand chance to learn how a government function. By assigning Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as the Chair of Letpadan Investigation Commission along with two representatives of 88 Generation Students, U Thein Sein allowed her to manage interests while making his upstream and downstream decision-making more inclusive. On the governmental side, various reform measures were coordinated and sustained by six ministries of the President Office, the ministers of which also acted as civil-military interface. U Thein Sein also ensured the support of the military for his reform measures. With Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs), formal and informal meetings were held to lubricate ceasefire, peace process and national reconciliation. In other words, U Thein Sein backed his government with governmental and non-governmental institutions in decision-making and in rallying political capital behind reform measures.

National reconciliation/peace process with EAOs and initiatives for the constitutional amendment was among U Thein Sein's pragmatic but cautious nation-building endeavours. U Thein Sein himself nurtured political capital by expressing care and building trust through formal and informal meetings with EAOs and political parties. As a result, eight EAOs signed the NCA during the tenure of U Thein Sein. For constitutional amendment, the 109-membered Constitutional Review Joint Committee formed by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw made a general conclusion for considering a necessary amendment to enable an applicable degree of autonomy by avoiding too weak or too extreme centralization. On the executive side, U Thein Sein formed another constitutional review committee which suggested capacity-building for the state and region governments, decentralizing the management of Union ministries to subsidiary bodies at States and Regions, and amending the Union legislative list and State/Region legislative list with regard to resource and revenue sharing. The committee also suggested a degree of authority for the State/Region government to allow investment. In pursuing mutually agreeable changes together with political parties and EAOs, U Thein Sein was able to maintain security and stability. Matters pertaining to security, stability and defence of the country were thoroughly discussed within the National Defence and Security Council (NDSC) and policies were laid down and implemented accordingly.

In preparation for the 2015 general election, U Thein Sein engaged in 14-party talks, 6-party talks and other multi-stakeholder talks as early as October 2014. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi reportedly sought 4-party talks among the President, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, C-in-C and herself as the representative of the people. Among ethnic parties, Chin Progressive Party considered four-party talks to be inadequate to represent ethnic voices and made a parliamentary motion for more inclusion. U Thein Sein preferred multi-stakeholder talks in order to build confidence and agree on national causes for transformation. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi reportedly considered such multi-stakeholder talks as show-offs with no way out of the impasse. However, these talks agreed on pursuing the peace process, national reconciliation, constitutional amendment, free and fair elections and post-election stability. These moves were indicative of U Thein Sein's scrupulous measures for the peaceful transfer of power to ensure security and stability.

The constitutional amendment was one of the key campaigns promises NLD made for the 2015 general election. Many domestic and foreign observers usually point to the constitutional provisions of 25 per cent Tatmadaw members in the Union Parliament and Tatmadaw's continued role in politics as major barriers to the advancement of democracy. However, none of these can be seen as separated from the lingering structural constraints. In fact, these are institutional checks against the lingering structural constraints. According to the 2008 Constitution, various representative groups—the then ruling NLD Party, the military, the USDP, and ethnic and other parties of minority representation—must come up with a collectivity of more than seventy-five per cent (75-plus per cent barrier) to effect structural changes like constitutional amendment. The majority mandate is of little or no utility if there is no real sense of the institutional infrastructure and implied consensus. Rather than the majority mandate, negotiation, moderation, confidence-building, compromise and competency in nurturing and applying the political capital and manoeuvring political processes and interlinked changes are the real determinants for making meaningful progress in nation-building processes or structural changes.

Manoeuvring nation-building processes and bringing about structural changes are of political and security nature. Political fallouts in these processes can have security implications. In case of political fallout with serious security implication(s), the burden of restoring security and order will fall back upon the Tatmadaw and mature Western democracies are easy to criticize. Putting aside the criticisms, local populations, soldiers and other fighters will have to bear the cost of political fallouts. Against this backdrop, Tatmadaw will have an active role in national politics until a functioning federal union and lasting peace are put in place. Until then, the officials concerned of the Tatmadaw, alongside elected representatives, will have to continue to participate actively in both decision-making/policy-making and implementing issues of political nature. As a political system can only go as far as security conditions can allow, Tatmadaw will ensure a degree of political stability for a democratic transition involving structural changes before it can safely shift its focus more on security matters.

The NLD taking control of the executive and the legislature (March 2016-January 2021) from the USDP after a landslide election victory in November 2015 was a major phase of democratic transformation. The C-in-C pledged to "do what is best in cooperation with the new government". Given the infancy of NLD's administrative and legislative experience apart from opposition politics, the C-in-C was giving a clear message that the NLD government would have Tatmadaw's support as long as they could agree upon a common understanding of what is best. Rather than building common understanding, the NLD might have interpreted its majority position in the parliament as a mandate enough for making decisions and taking actions on behalf of the people. With this majority mandate, perceived or real, the NLD government had not invested enough in political capital or on building common understanding throughout its tenure but continued to rely heavily on the party for infrastructural support. May it be in the executive, the legislature or the party, the NLD government could not escape from the personality cult of the then de facto leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

TO BE CONTINUED

Suspects transporting weapons, ammunition to Sagaing PDF arrested in Myawady, Monywa townships

Arrestees and seized weapons and ammunition in Myawady.

Arrestees and seized weapons and ammunition in Monywa.

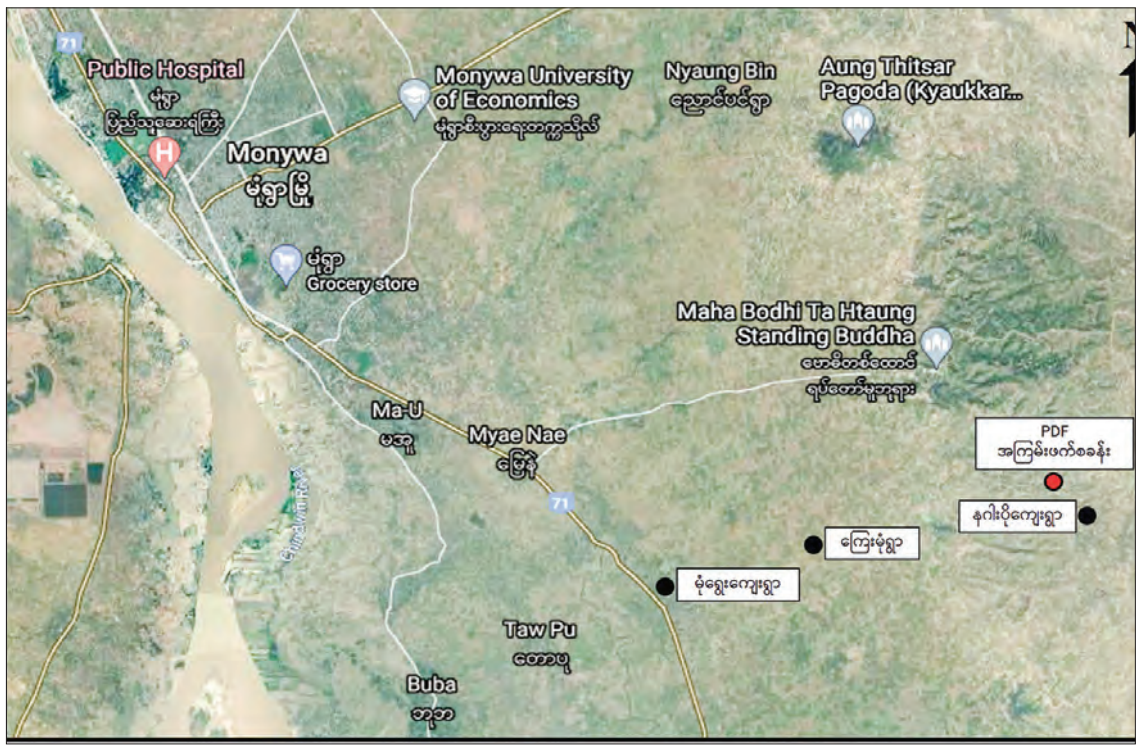
THE terrorist group NUG communicates some ethnic armed groups to transport the needed firearms and magazines to affect the government governance and kill the government employees and innocent civilians. On 26 November, the combined team of security forces received a tip-off that PDF terrorists arrived at Whae Shan Village of Myawady Township and they raided a restaurant in Whae Shan Village and arrested Kyaw Zeyar Lin and Wai Phyo Thant together with one 22-point pistol and 150 bullets.

According to their confession, the police arrested So Min Tun and Thet Maung Maung Soe, who carry the magazines, at Thiri Myawady Hotel and seized six M22s, six AK-47s, one M16, seven pistols, one nine-shooter revolver, five nine-shooter revolver bullets, 300 point-22 bullets, 100 point-38 bullets, 50 7.65mm bullets, 150 9mm bullets and 50 7.62 bullets in their Super Custom car.

Based on the words of Soe Min Tun on 26 November, the security forces arrested Thiha, Tanai Ko Ko and Ei Tone at Daw Nyo's oiled tofu shop in Phone Soe Ward of Monywa Township together with one Beretta USA pistol, one SIG Sauger pistol, one Cold homemade pistol, 2 magazines, 10 9mm bullets, two homemade bombs and four iron pipes used in creating homemade guns.

According to the confession of Tanai Ko Ko and Ei Tone, the PDF bases in the fields near Naghapo Village of Monywa were uncovered in the afternoon of 27 November and the security forces seized 23 homemade guns there.

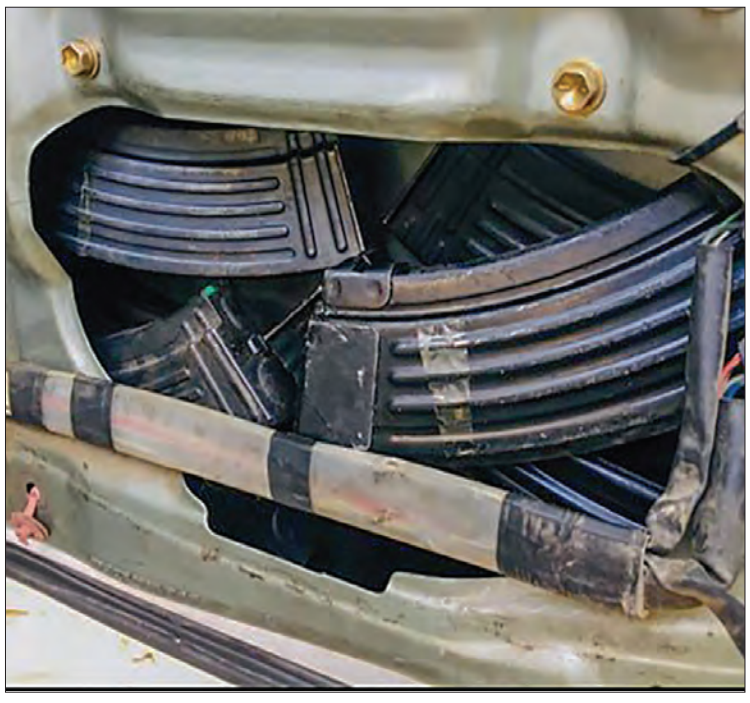
In these cases, the police arrested seven suspects together with 25 rifles, 23 homemade guns, 815 bullets and two homemade bombs.



Site of PDF camp nearby Naghapo Village.

Suspect Soe Min Tun admitted that he went to Myawady together with Yan Naing (still at large) and driver Maung Maung Soe (aka) Phone Htaung according to the instruction of Mu Mu. Then, they bought six AK-47s from Ko Tauk who lives in KNLA Brigade 7, one M16 (short), one 9-shooter revolver and 5 bullets from Ko Saw, six M22s, seven Glock pistol, 400 point-22 bullets, 150 point-38 bullets, 50 7.65 bullets, 150 9mm bullets and 50 7.62 AK bullets from Maung Thi with the communication of Ko Saw who lives in Lay Kay Kaw Myothit. They then hid the firearms between the door and oil tank of their vehicle and they were arrested while arranging to transport the firearms to Ko Sai, Sagaing PDF in Makyeepoke Village of Sagaing Region.

The people are urged to work together to prevent the killings of good service personnel by the terrorists for ensuring the development, peace and stability of the State, and if they receive information about the terrorist activities, they should secretly contact the nearest security forces and cooperate with them until the terrorists can no longer stand. — MNA



Seized weapons and ammunition in Myawady.

First 'robotaxis' enter service in Beijing

IT looks like a normal car but the white taxi by the kerb has nobody driving it, and communicates with customers digitally to obtain directions and take payment.

Beijing this week approved its first autonomous taxis for commercial use, bringing dozens of the so-called "robotaxis" to the streets of the Chinese capital.

The vehicles can only carry two passengers at a time and are confined to the city's southern Yizhuang area.

An employee of the taxi firm also sits in the front of the car in case any sudden intervention is needed, but the vehicle drives itself.

The roll-out is a significant step forward for the driverless ambitions of Chinese tech giant Baidu and start-up Pony.ai, who were given the green light to deploy the cars on Thursday.

But it is expected to be years before the taxis operate fully without human intervention, due to regulations and safety requirements.

Developers are hoping Chinese consumers — who have embraced e-commerce, online payments and other digital solutions — will quickly get used to the sensation of travelling in a car without a driver.

Pony.ai co-founder Peng Jun said the key to moving the industry forward is "policy, technology and public acceptance".—AFP ■

The Beijing-based company will put 40 Apollo Go Robotaxis onto the capital's roads, according to a Xinhua News Agency report. Users can book through Baidu Maps or Apollo's official website. **PHOTO: BAIDU/XINHUA**

Shoppers return for 'Black Friday', but many have already bought

"Black Friday" shoppers wait in line for a Best Buy store to open on 26 November 2021 in Westminster, Colorado. **PHOTO: AFP**

AMERICANS returned to stores for the "Black Friday" kickoff of the holiday shopping season, but online data shows that consumers have been spending big for weeks amid worries over shortages.

The day after the US Thanksgiving celebration is the traditional start to the holiday shopping season, and normally sees Americans line up outside stores before they open to clinch deals on popular items.

After the pandemic kept crowds away last year, many shoppers were out in force Friday, a sign of how Covid-19 vaccines have returned life in the United States to something closer to normal.

"I just wanted to make sure that this Christmas was a good Christmas for all my friends and family," said a masked Sylvia Gonzalez as she waited in line line outside the jewelry chain Pandora in New York.

But even before retailers opened their doors early Friday morning, e-commerce shoppers in the United States had already spent $76 billion since early November, up more than 20 per cent from the year-ago period, according to data from software company Adobe, which has projected somewhat fewer promotions this year in light of rising costs.

The jump has added to companies' optimism about the season, suggesting some shoppers heeded calls from businesses to purchase items early this year after port backlogs and other logistics problems sparked worries that popular goods would be in short supply.

Toys led the buying spree, with Adobe pointing to actions by "anxious parents increasingly aware of supply chain challenges."

The National Retail Federation projects overall spending could rise as much as 10.5 per cent to $859 billion.

Nonetheless, out-of-stock listings online are up 261 per cent compared with two years ago, according to Adobe.—AFP ■

French fishermen block ferries, Channel Tunnel in post-Brexit row

FRENCH fishermen on Friday disrupted cross-Channel traffic for several hours in protest at the post-Brexit fishing rights granted by Britain, blocking ferries and freight traffic through the Channel Tunnel.

Half a dozen fishing boats blocked access to ferries at the northern port of Calais and the port of Ouistreham in Normandy to the west, AFP correspondents witnessed.

Later in the afternoon, the fishermen blocked access to the Channel Tunnel for freight traffic from the French side using several dozen cars and vans. Long queues of vehicles could be seen waiting for services to resume.

The protests on land and sea lasted several hours and had all but ended by the early evening, although union bosses have not ruled out further such actions in the future if their demands are not met.

"We want our licences back," read an English-language banner brandished on one of the boats, the Marmouset II, in Calais.

In Ouistreham, where fishing boats stopped a ferry from leaving port, the vessels let off flares, filling the air with smoke.

"It's a little bit of pressure on Europe. I am one of the privileged people who got the licence early, but we will not let our colleagues go under," said fisherman Dominique Ramet. "The French government seems to be well aware of the problem, now it's up to Europe to make the British feel it," he added.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V RESOLUTION VOY.NO. (2162N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V RESOLUTION VOY.NO. (2162N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **28-11-2021** 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 SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2117S/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2117S/E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **28-11-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** 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 BLPL SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MCP GRAZ VOY.NO. (21006N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCP GRAZ VOY.NO. (21006N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **28-11-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** 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 X-PRESS FEEDERS LINES

Japan Cabinet OKs record 36 tril. yen extra budget for stimulus steps

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida attends a Cabinet meeting at the premier's office in Tokyo on 26 November 2021, along with Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi (L) and Seiko Noda, minister in charge of regional revitalization. **PHOTO: KYODO**

JAPAN'S Cabinet on Friday approved a record 36.0 trillion yen ($314 billion) supplementary budget for fiscal 2021 to fund the government's latest economic stimulus package to put the coronavirus pandemic-stricken economy on a steady recovery track.

The first extra budget for the current fiscal year from April entails new government bond issuance worth 22.1 trillion yen. It means most of the supplementary budget will be financed by debt, adding a further blow to the country's fiscal health.

The government also plans to use 6.1 trillion yen that was carried over from the fiscal 2020 budget, as it is preparing for the new economic package worth about 78.9 trillion yen when private funds are included and features a record 55.7 trillion yen fiscal spending.

Japan's new debt issuance for the current fiscal year through March 2022 is now estimated at 65.7 trillion yen.

The figure is smaller than the about 108.6 trillion yen in the previous fiscal year when the government compiled three extra budgets totalling about 73 trillion yen to fight the coronavirus pandemic, but fuels fear of a further deterioration in the nation's fiscal soundness, the worst among major developed nations.

The Cabinet gave the nod to the stimulus package a week ago to weather the prolonged fallout from the pandemic.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Furious France scraps UK migrant talks after 'unacceptable' letter

FRANCE on Friday scrapped planned talks with the UK about migrant crossings after an "unacceptable" letter from British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, pushing relations to new lows after 27 people died in the Channel.

The anger in Paris was sparked by Johnson's decision to send a letter to Macron on Thursday evening proposing ways to stop migrants crossing from France to Britain, then publishing it in full on his Twitter account.

"I am surprised by methods when they are not serious. One leader does not communicate with another on these questions on Twitter, by public letter... No, No," Macron told a press conference in Rome.

Relations between the two neighbours were already seen as their most tense in decades following a series of disputes over Brexit, but the personal criticism of Johnson represents a further turn for the worse.

Analysts say the lack of trust and goodwill will make it more difficult to mount a coordinated response to the growing numbers of people seeking to cross the narrow but treacherous waterway separating the countries.

French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin cancelled planned talks with his British counterpart Priti Patel, informing her that she was no longer invited to talks at the weekend with other European ministers.—AFP ■

Calm returns to Solomons capital after deadly riots

A tense calm returned to the Solomon Islands' capital Honiara Saturday, after days of rioting left at least three dead and reduced swathes of the city to smouldering ruins.

A handful of petrol stations, shops and other businesses gingerly began to reopen, with Honiara residents flocking to buy basic provisions as the violent unrest ebbed. "The situation is very tense and anything could happen anytime," said Audrey Awao, a working mother who worried there would soon be no food left in the shops.

What began as a small protest on Wednesday quickly descended into a violent free-for-all, with poor Honiara residents joining anti-government protesters to rampage through the shattered glass and burnt-out remains of businesses for things to eat or sell.

For three straight days, angry mobs cut through the usually sleepy seaside capital, demanding the removal of prime minister Manasseh Sogavare.—AFP ■

After rocky few years, Italy, France cement ties with new treaty

French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi signed the treaty in Rome. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

FRANCE and Italy drew a line under recent tensions and signed a new treaty on Friday to formalize their relations, against the background of a European Union in flux. French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi put pen to paper in a ceremony full of pomp at the Quirinale palace of President Sergio Mattarella.

An aerial acrobatic display by both countries' air forces followed, trailing the colours of the Italian and French flags across a clear Rome autumn sky.

Draghi said the treaty represented a "historic moment" and evoked among others the writer Umberto Eco and actress Claudia Cardinale, two Italians who have become cultural icons in France, as proof of the strength of ties between the two Mediterranean powers. At a joint press conference, Macron said the treaty -- only the second of its type with an EU partner, after a 1963 treaty with Germany -- "seals a deep friendship".—AFP ■

Bruce Lee statue dons shirt in hopes of boosting Hong Kong tourism

A white shirt has been added to a normally bare-chested statue of the late martial arts star Bruce Lee as part of an effort to boost local tourism in Hong Kong, local media reported on Thursday.

In a collaboration by Hong Kong clothing brand Lee Kung Man and local fan club, the Bruce Lee Club, the statue's new look was unveiled on the anniversary of Lee's 81st birthday in an homage to iconic movie "The Big Boss". The project was initially planned for 2020 in celebration of Lee's 80th birthday, but was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Bruce Lee Club founder Wong Yiu Keung says that he hopes the move will help to promote tourism in Hong Kong.— Kyodo ■

Photo taken on 25 November 2021, shows a statue of Hong Kong American actor and martial artist Bruce Lee at a promenade in Hong Kong, unveiled to the public the same day. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Kishida says enemy base strike capabilities option to boost defence

PRIME Minister Fumio Kishida said Saturday that Japan will strengthen its necessary defence power and consider all options including the acquisition of enemy base strike capabilities.

In a speech at a Ground Self-Defence Force base, Kishida expressed concern about North Korea's rapid development of missile technology and China's military expansion.

When Japan revises its foreign and security policies, Kishida said all options will be on the table, including the idea of giving the Self-Defence Forces the capability to strike at hostile enemy bases.

The idea of Japan possessing such an attack capability is delicate as the SDF has strict restrictions on its use of force under the war-renouncing Constitution.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida gives address during a troop review at the Ground Self-Defense Force's Camp Asaka in Tokyo on 27 November 2021. **PHOTO: POOL/KYODO**

Kishida said Japan "cannot overlook (North Korea's) recent development and improvement of new technologies such as hypersonic glide weapons and missiles with irregular orbits".

He also said China continues to strengthen its military "without sufficient transparency" and is making "unilateral attempts to change the status quo".

The prime minister, who took office in early October, made the comments when he reviewed the GSDF at the Asaka base straddling Tokyo and Saitama Prefecture, with Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi.

The event was downscaled due to precautions against the risk of coronavirus and there was no parade by GSDF members.—Kyodo ■

Zelensky warns Ukraine 'entirely prepared' if Russia attacks

UKRAINE'S President Volodymyr Zelensky said Friday that Russia was sending "very dangerous" signals with troop movements on the border, warning that his military was ready to push back any offensive.

He also claimed Kiev had uncovered a coup plot involving Russian citizens, but did not give full details.

His warning came as Western governments raise worries over Russian troop movements on Ukraine's border, with Washington saying it has "real concerns" over the troop build-up.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg warned that "if Russia uses force against Ukraine, that will have costs, that will have consequences".

Zelensky, in a wide-ranging press conference in Kiev, said that "very dangerous rhetoric is coming out of Russia".

"It is a signal that there could be escalation," he said.

Zelensky said Ukraine was ready to take on Russia if Moscow decides to move troops across the border.

"There is a threat today that there will be war tomorrow," he said, adding that Kiev's "powerful" army was "entirely prepared", as his forces reported one soldier killed on the frontline with separatists in the east on Friday.

Zelensky called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to deny he was planning an invasion.

Ukrainian soldiers along the country's eastern frontline say they are ready if Russia sends troops across the border. **PHOTO: AFP**

Stoltenberg repeated Western concerns about the build-up and issued his warning of "consequences" should Russia launch a military assault on Ukraine.—AFP ■

Tebboune faces another test as Algerians vote

It will be Algeria's third national vote under President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who has vowed to turn the page on the two-decade rule of late leader Abdelaziz Bouteflika. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ALGERIANS vote on Saturday in local elections seen as key in President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's push to turn the page on the two-decade rule of late president Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

But despite official campaigns urging Algerians to "make their mark", the vote for municipal and provincial councils has sparked little public interest.

Observers are predicting a low turnout, as with a string of poorly-attended votes since the Hirak pro-democracy protest movement that drove Bouteflika from power in April 2019.

The North African country's rulers are trying to "impose their will despite the embarrassing results of previous elections", said analyst Mohamed Hennad.

But he said voters saw the exercise as producing "an electoral mandate stripped of any political content".

Saturday's poll will be the third national vote under Tebboune, who has vowed to reform state institutions inherited from Bouteflika, who died in September at the age of 84.— AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistan to mark peace by cycling event in former terrorism-marred region

A cycle racing is going to be held in Pakistan's erstwhile terrorism-marred tribal region of South Waziristan in northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to celebrate return of peace, and promote tourism in the region, an official with the cycling federation said on Friday.

The "Tour De Waziristan" will start on 28 Nov in Dera Ismail Khan district of the province and conclude on 30 Nov in South Waziristan, Haroon General, general secretary of Islamabad chapter of the Pakistan Cycling Federation, told Xinhua.

The event is being jointly organized by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, Pakistan Cycling Federation, paramilitary troops Frontier Corps, and local district administration. About 100 cyclists from different teams across the country will participate in the race, and the participants will cover a total distance of 189 km in three stages in the former militancy-infested area of the province. The winning participants will get prize money of around 300,000 Pakistani rupees (about 1,715 U.S. dollars), General said.—Xinhua ■

Ethiopia's Abiy vows to 'bury the enemy', UN sounds alarm on hunger

ETHIOPIAN PM Abiy Ahmed vowed Friday to "bury the enemy" in his first message from the battlefront according to state media, as the UN warned the year-long conflict has left millions short of food.

As Tigrayan rebels report major territorial gains, claiming this week to have seized a town just 220 kilometres (135 miles) from Addis Ababa, international alarm over the escalating conflict has deepened, with foreign countries urging their citizens to leave.

State media reported Wednesday that Abiy, a former lieutenant-colonel in the military, had arrived at the front line to lead a counter-offensive against the rebels, handing regular duties to his deputy. In an interview shown Friday on the state-affiliated Oromia Broadcasting Corporation channel, the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner said he was certain of achieving victory against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) rebel group.—AFP ■

Myanmar team to compete in ASEAN U-22 Championship

THE Myanmar U-22 men's national football team will compete in the 2022 ASEAN U-22 Championship to be held in February next year.

The team will compete in preparation for the 31st SEA Games to be held in May 2022, officials said.

The Myanmar squad is scheduled to compete in the tournament, which will be held around three months before the SEA Games, and will benefit almost all Southeast Asian teams, football authorities added.

The Myanmar U-22 team will start training for the international competitions next year at the beginning of 2022 and will be based on the team that competed in the last Asian Cup U-23 Championship.

The team will continue to prepare for the Viet Nam SEA Games after the ASEAN U-22 Championship, officials added.

The ASEAN U-22 Championship will be held from 14 to 26 February 2022 in Cambodia. This is the third time the tournament has been held. The first time was in 2005 and the second time was in 2019 in Indonesia. —Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

CAF backs holding World Cup every two years

The World Cup has been played every four years, apart from cancellations during World War II, since the inaugural edition in 1930. An artisan operator of GDE Bertoni, a trophy and medal manufacturer in Milan, Italy, cleans a replica of the World Cup trophy. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Confederation of African Football on Friday (26 November) gave its support to the "decision of the Fifa Congress to conduct a feasibility study" for a World Cup every two years.

CAF is the first confederation to officially and publicly approve the controversial plan to hold a World Cup every two years, at the same pace as its Africa Cup of Nations tournament.

The 54-strong confederation, at its extraordinary general assembly in Cairo, also voted in favour of establishing a Super League for African clubs.

Fifa will hold a summit in December with president Gianni Infantino still hoping to find consensus on plans to stage the men's tournament more often than the current four-year cycle.

It is an incendiary topic given the various interests at stake, between clubs and national teams, domestic leagues and international competitions. Opposition has been so widespread from leagues, players and supporters groups that the chances of a biennial World Cup actually happening appear remote.

The World Cup has been played every four years, apart from cancellations during World War II, since the inaugural edition in 1930.

The new biennial proposals were put forward by Arsene Wenger, Fifa's head of global development.—AFP ■

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.

Djokovic-led Serbia down Austria in Davis Cup opener

NOVAK Djokovic sped past Austria's Dennis Novak as Serbia thumped Austria 3-0 in their Davis Cup opening match at Innsbruck on Friday.

Djokovic took an hour to beat Novak 6-3, 6-2 after Dusan Lajovic saw off Gerald Melzer 7-6, 3-6, 7-5 behind closed doors due to a resurgence of the coronavirus in Austria.

Nikola Cacic and Filip Krajinovic then beat Oliver Marach and Philipp Oswald 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.—AFP ■

European champions Italy, Portugal in same World Cup play-off bracket

EUROPEAN champions Italy and Portugal could meet for a place at the 2022 World Cup after being drawn in the same play-off path on Friday.

The Azzurri and Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal both finished second in their qualifying groups, behind Switzerland and Serbia respectively.

Italy will host North Macedonia in the play-off first round in March, with Turkey visiting Portugal, before the winners face off for a spot at next year's finals in Qatar.

The draw means that one of the last two European Championship winners will not be at the next World Cup. Portugal won the Euro 2016 title.

The winners of Portugal's match with Turkey will host the final-round game in Path C.

"It's a very difficult draw for us," said Italy coach Roberto Mancini. "North Macedonia is a very good team, and if we win we have to play away."

Italy -- who beat England on penalties in the Euro 2020 final earlier this year -- are hoping to banish the memories of their play-off heartache from four years ago when they lost to Sweden and failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1958.

Portugal have featured at every major championship since missing out on the 1998 World Cup.—AFP ■

This handout photo taken and released by FIFA on 26 November 2021, shows (L-R) FIFA Director of Competitions Manolo Zubiria, Sports journalist and presenter Adriano del Monte, French former football player Christian Karembeu, French former football player Christian Karembeu, Sports journalist and presenter Samantha Johnson, Portuguese former football player Tiago and Argentine fromer football player Pablo Zabaleta posing on the studio set during the draw for the European and Intercontinental play-offs for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 football tourament, in Zurich. **PHOTO: ALEXANDER SCHEUBER / FIFA / AFP**