HELP DEVELOP FISH RESEARCH FARMS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF FISH SPECIES

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 236, 8th Waxing of Nadaw 1383 ME | www.gnlm.com.mm | Saturday, 11 December 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.

Engineering degrees of DSTA will be recognized soon at Asia-Pacific level through Myanmar Engineering Council, says Senior General

State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing takes the salute of the DSTA cadet companies at the Passing-out Parade of the 23rd Intake of Defence Services Technological Academy in PyinOoLwin on 10 December 2021.

YOU all need to continuously learn the developing military science and technology at the international level, to apply it for our country and Tatmadaw, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing at the Passing-out Parade of the 23rd Intake of Defence Services Technological Academy at the parade ground of DSTA in PyinOoLwin yesterday morning.

First, the cadet companies saluted the Senior General with slow-march past and quick-march past. The Senior General presented Best Cadet Award to Cadet No. 7888 Cadet Tin Myo Oo, Excellent Award in Training to Cadet No. 7964 Cadet Win Moe Thu, Excellent Award in Studies to Cadet No. 7902 Cadet Nay Htet Win.

In his address, the Senior General said comrades who are nurtured by Defence Services Technological Academy in line with the objective of **"Producing qualified capable undergraduate, postgraduate and graduate engineer officers for Army, Navy and Air"** are engineer officers and also young military leaders who will serve for the national defence duty.

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Cementing the Union Spirit

EVERYBODY needs to notice a saying that **"If one does not know the past, one may commit mistakes again. Likewise if one is too eager to embrace the past, one may lose the road to the future"**. The government has decided to further promote the process of cementing the Union Spirit and peace process before the forthcoming Diamond Jubilee Union Day and Independence Day.

(Excerpt from Message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Chairman of the National Unity and Peacemaking Central Committee Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to mark the Sixth Anniversary of signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA on 15 October 2021)

23rd Convocation of Defence Services Technological Academy held

THE 23rd convocation ceremony of Defence Services Technological Academy was held at its Convocation Hall in PyinOoLwin Station yesterday afternoon.

Acting Rector Lt-Col. Myint Win and academic members from the academy attended the ceremony.

First, the acting rector and members of the dean of faculties entered the Convocation Hall and took their seats.

The National Anthem was played and the convocation ceremony was opened.

Then, the acting rector announced the convocation ceremony and urged the graduates to adhere to the code of conduct for them.

The 23rd graduation event of the Defence Services Technological Academy in progress.

Next, he presented certificates to 24 graduates of Master of Engineering, 75 graduates of Postgraduate Diploma in Engineering and 177 graduates of Engineering. He then allowed the graduates to wear the uniforms corresponding to the degrees and signed the Convocation Record Book.

Afterwards, the acting rector delivered a convocation speech. Concluding the ceremony, the acting rector and members of the dean of faculties left the Convocation Hall.

Two honorary doctorates in engineering, 103 PhDs in Engineering, 509 Master of Engineering graduates, five graduates of Master of Philosophy Engineering, 304 postgraduate diplomas in engineering and 94 graduates in diploma in academic engineering and 7,378 engineering graduates were conferred on degrees. — MNA

MoC oversees smooth import of anti-COVID-19 equipment

THE Ministry of Commerce is overseeing the import of essential medical supplies plus anti-COVID devices that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, through trading posts, international airports and seaports.

Anti-COVID-19 equipment was imported by three companies using seven vehicles. A total of 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen carried by one bowser and 29 tonnes of masks were imported via Myawady and Chinshwehaw trade camps, and international seaports yesterday.

One bowser transported liquid oxygen to Yangon via the Myawady trading zone, officials said.

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 and treatment of COVID-19 as well as contact persons for inquires can be reached through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm.— MNA

274 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 10 December, total figure rises to 526,024

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 526,024 after 274 new cases were reported on 10 December 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 502,325 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,170 after 8 died.—MNA

Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Health Order No 530/2021

7th Waxing of Nadaw 1383 ME
10 December 2021

THE Ministry of Health hereby announced the order by exercising the authority stipulated in Sub-Section (b) of Section 21 of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

1. The Ministry of Health has taken preventive measures against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in real-time. Therefore, the orders were issued for the people from some townships of Nay Pyi Taw, regions and states to stay at home in order to more effectively control the infection of the pandemic.
2. However, as the people from these townships exactly abide by the disciplines of preventing the COVID-19, further finding of decreasing confirmed patients within 14 days, declining of group-wise infection among the patients, the emphasis of the relevant governments, organizations and people in raising health awareness during the stay-at-home period, further finding of decreasing confirmed patients and contact persons in laboratory tests within 14 days, and active participation of township administration bodies, health staff, those from relevant departments and organizations and volunteers as well as the people in the prevention and control of the pandemic were seen.
3. Hence, the people residing in the following townships of the respective regions and states were removed from the list of stay-at-home programmes as of 4 am on 11-12-2021.
   (a) Kachin State
      (1) Bhamo Township
      (2) Mohnyin Township
   (b) Chin State
      (1) Falam Township
      (2) Thantlang Township
   (c) Magway Region
      (1) Gangaw Township
      (2) Myaing Township
   (d) Mon State; Bilin Township
   (e) Shan State; Tachilek Township

The people must strictly abide by the disciplines related to the prevention and control of the COVID-19 issued by the Ministry of Health after removing these townships from the list of stay-at-home programmes.

Engineering degrees of DSTA will be recognized soon at Asia-Pacific level through Myanmar Engineering Council, says Senior General

State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing addresses the passing-out cadet companies of the Defence Services Technological Academy in PyinOoLwin on 10 December 2021.

FROM PAGE-1

During the period of peace or military operations, the military engineering corps is one of the armed forces that is taking part in troop movements, combat operations and building shelters of Tatmadaw in the military sector, supporting the aid of engineering skills and construction work.

The best guarantee for the independence and sovereignty of the nation is the ability to build and own a capable defence force that has three capabilities.

A provision of the country's constitution (2008) said: **"The main armed force for the Defence of the Union is the Defence Services, and the Defence Services shall lead in safeguarding the Union against all internal and external dangers."** This provision depended on the reasons: the course of building the Tatmadaw, the objective of the establishment of the Tatmadaw, and persons and organizations that are the hardcore in building the Tatmadaw.

To enable the Tatmadaw to carry out its national defence task, it organized intending to build a **Standard Army** which has combat ability and power for conventional warfare. In the building of the standard army, it is upgrading not only Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) but also the newly formed Coast Guard simultaneously.

The Senior General presents the silver sword to Best Cadet awardee Cadet Tin Myo Oo.

The Senior General inspects the engineering cadet companies of the Defence Services Technological Academy.

Therefore, you all need to continuously learn the developing military science and technology at the international level, to apply it to our country and Tatmadaw. According to the motto of Defence Services Technological Academy goes: **"Honour, Creative, Capable"**, I would like to address you to follow the engineering ethics and try to have the innovative ability for the practical field.

Today is the age of **Information Technology** so information flows and technological developments are very rapid. To catch up with the flow of the improvement, you all have to perform continuous **Research and Development**. I would like to address that the subjects you have learnt are just primary theories so you need to do further research and practice to become proficient in the field of technologies that you have learnt.

Moreover, you all must constantly attempt to keep up with the evolving military science and technology while serving the main duty in the assigned areas. You must perform to improve your ability by using **Continuous Learning** in the subjects that are beneficial for our nation and Tatmadaw. As Science and Technology have been reached the stage of **'Inventing and Utilizing'** from **'Exploration and Applying'**, you all must learn the continuously changing and evolving military science to invent, produce and apply so that you need to learn proficiently.

A study of the development of engineering shows that it started with the invention of the pulley, lever and wheels, that can be seen: Mechanical engineering that is the key to the development of the transport and manufacturing sectors, civil engineering that is fundamental to the construction of roads, bridges, buildings, irrigations and dams, and electrical engineering that is the basis for energy needs and information technology, which are developed firstly and supported to improve the socio-economic life.

Therefore, Outcome-Based Education can be seen in each sector of an educational field which is a basic philosophy of the teaching and learning processes. The Quality Assurance system controls to maintain the quality continuously. In the sector of implementation, a Quality Assurance system is considered not only to emphasize the sector of teaching and learning but also to improve and sustain continuously in a long term.

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Engineering degrees of DSTA will be recognized soon at Asia-Pacific level through Myanmar Engineering Council, says Senior General

State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing receives the outstanding cadets at the parlour of the DSTA headquarters in PyinOoLwin on 10 December 2021.

FROM PAGE-3

Therefore, DSTA performed the study of **Benchmarks** comparison with the curriculums and educational aids of some international and local technological universities and also implemented the most basic and important processes of **Accreditation** processes according to the Myanmar Engineering Council Law, so engineering degrees of DSTA will be recognized soon at the Asia-Pacific level through the Myanmar Engineering Council.

You must effectively apply your acquired knowledge and skills by studying lifelong learning accordingly to the improving technologies for national defence. In doing so, you will serve assigned tasks dutifully as engineer officers who will be able to fight on the battlefield, qualified engineer officers and disciplined engineer officers.

You have to behave starting from yourself not only to be fit and to get a high immune system but also a role model for your subordinates. Only if you train the subordinates to be fit and strong physically and mentally, you can implement to improve their combat ability and power. You have to know about the ability and behaviour of the subordinates and the tasks of each person.

By doing so, you can perform rightly and put the right people in the right place. I want to address that you should solve any problems you face by using critical thinking in various ways as a junior leader.

All are urged to try hard and learn to have the ability to implement in practice the innovative ideas in everything by following the military code of conduct since the role of engineers is vital, while building and organizing as a **Standard Army** that can fight the conventional warfare to serve dutifully the national defence duties, to support our Tatmadaw by following the motto: **"Technology for Military Might"** as the intelligentsia who was born from the engineering education system which has **Quality Assurance**, to perform and improve your ability with **Continuous Learning** the beneficial technologies for our nation and Tatmadaw, and to try hard to pursue the improving technologies while serving the main duty in each assigned area, to attempt for improving the combat ability and power of Tatmadaw and the regular training activities keeping in line with the motto: **"Learn, Practise, Obey"** to achieve the training objectives of Tatmadaw: **"Be Fit, Be Competent, Be Brave"**.

Then, the Senior General left the parade after taking the salute of the cadet companies.

After the parade, the Senior General received the outstanding cadets at the parlour of the headquarters of DSTA and spoke words of honour.

In his speech, the Senior General said he took pride in the cadets' outstanding awards similar to their parents. These are valuable awards won by hardworking along with the six-year period and self-control. Parents are ordinary public service personnel and farmers. They had nurtured those cadets since their childhoods to date. Those cadets who are growing up well under the advice and teaching of parents and teachers need to continuously culture the good spirit controlling themselves. They have learnt not only literature but also techniques, so they have to continue more efforts for meeting the goal and ambitions. They have to know the gratitude of the parents and repay the debt of gratitude to them and have to be loyal to the Tatmadaw as the second mother. They have to try hard along with their life as a good soldier for achieving their goals and their family's goals. — MNA

Appointment ceremony for graduates of 23rd intake of DSTA as gazetted officers held

THE appointment ceremony for graduate officers of the 23rd intake of Defence Services Technological Academy the 23rd Battalion Recruitment Officers was held at the Convocation Hall of the DSTA yesterday morning.

Military Appointment-General Lieutenant-General Lin Aung from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, Defence Services Technological University Commandant Brigadier-General Kyi Khaing and graduate officers attended the ceremony.

First, the Military Appointment-General, senior military officers and the commandant took their seats on the podium.

After that, Lt-Gen Lin Aung handed over the appointment certificates to each of the graduates.

Then, Lt-Gen Lin Aung gave a keynote speech and the ceremony was concluded. —MNA

The military appointment-general presents the appointment certificate to a DSTA graduate.

Myanmar celebrates 73rd int'l human rights day under COVID-19 regulations

THE Myanmar National Human Rights Commission held a ceremony to commemorate the 73rd International Human Rights Day under the COVID-19 rules and regulations yesterday morning in Yangon.

The ceremony was attended by Chairman of the Commission U Hla Myint, the Vice - Chairman, Commission members and officials. Chairman U Hla Myint read out the message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on the occasion of the 73rd International Human Rights Day. He addressed the ceremony and introduced the new website of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, www.mnhrc.org.mm. Afterwards, the story of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (animation) was displayed.

The 73rd International Human Rights Day is held in Yangon.

Prize winners take the documentary photo at International Human Rights Day event.

Member of the Commission U Paw Lwin Sein clarified the distribution of the 10-year journey history book of the commission and the Chair, the Vice - Chair, and members of the Commission made a plan to distribute the book.

Afterwards, Commission office staff who won prizes in competitions such as poetry competition, essay competition, translation competitions and quizzes were awarded. A total of 50 office staff of the Commission participated in those competitions.

The ceremony was concluded after singing the Commission's original anthem, "Human Rights for All". Just as International Human Rights Day is celebrated around the world on 10 December, Myanmar has been celebrating it annually since 2015 under the auspices of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission. — MNA

Ceremonies in support of State Administration Council held

CEREMONIES were held yesterday in Kyauktada and Kamayut Townships to support the State Administration Council, which is working under the 2008 Constitution.

A group of people took part in the ceremonies. The people raised signboards written as: "We support the State Administration Council and Myanmar Armed Forces, which protects the nationality, language and religion.

They chanted, don't want NUG, CRPH and PDF terrorist, oppose NUG, CRPH and PDF terrorist acts, non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, perpetuation of sovereignty, oppose those relying on external elements, no wish interference in internal affairs, support five-point road map of SAC.

Let the hypocritical communist acts of democracy be failed. Stop Violence Against the People". — MNA

In Kyauktada Township.

In Kamayut Township.

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

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Movement of people across Myanmar despite forced threats to participate in 'silent strike'

AS the State-declared NUG and CRPH terrorist groups proclaimed December 10 a "Silent Strike Day" through various online statements, threatening the public not to go out, there was little movement of people with closing shops and students not attending schools in some cities and townships in Myanmar.

The majority of people said that the movement was not considered to be a silent protest against the current government, as the terrorists wanted, but to consider the movement because of the danger of being forcibly accused of being "Dalan" (traitor) and the danger of aggression of armed terrorists.

However, markets and schools across the country were seen open almost as regularly, and COVID-19 vaccination was continued as follows. (See photos)—MNA

Shoppers are seen purchasing goods in the market in Myeik.

NyaungU.

In PyinOoLwin.

Schoolchildren are seen schooling as usual in Mandalay.

In Thabeikyin.

At one of the Nay Pyi Taw roundabouts.

COVID-19 vaccination continues in different states, regions

DOCTORS and nurses from public hospitals, Tatmadaw medical corps, healthcare workers and volunteers are working hard to administer COVID-19 vaccines in different states and regions as the vaccination programme is one of the most important activities in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 disease.

COVID-19 vaccine is being given daily to target groups regardless of race or religion, including Buddhist monks and nuns, local people aged over 40, students, religious leaders, prisoners, people with disabilities, ethnic armed groups, people with chronic diseases, people in IDP camps and above 12-year-old students respectively.

Local ethnic nationals get inoculated against COVID-19 in Tachilek Township.

Doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical corps from the Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers have already administered COVID-19 vaccines to 277 people in Hsipaw and Namhsam Townships, northern Shan State, 3,091 people in four townships of eastern Shan State, 13,686 people from 13 townships in Mon and Kayin states, 1,720 people from Pulaw and Myeik Townships in Taninthayi Region, 3,335 people from five townships in Yangon Region, 59,968 people from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region, 6,475 people from six townships in Rakhine State and 545 people from Toungoo Township, Bago Region respectively.

Similarly, healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 2,855 students from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region, and 34 students from Hkamti Township, Sagaing Region.

It is reported that officials from the respective regional military headquarters visited the site and coordinated the necessary work. — MNA

Officials welcome back Myanmar returnees via various land borders

Officials receive returnees from Laos at Wampong port.

NATIONALS from abroad are being welcomed at various border crossings this month.

On 9 December, a total of 23 returnees, including 14 males and nine females, came back home through Chinshwehaw, northern Shan State and one male through Laukkai.

Similarly, a total of 17 returnees – eight males and nine females – also returned to Myanmar through Tachilek, eastern Shan State.

Healthcare officials from relevant public hospitals and members of the Tatmadaw Medical Corps conducted COVID-19 tests and provided quarantine entry documents for the returnees.

Next, instructions of the Ministry of Health were explained systematically, and departmental officials provided necessary assistance.

The township administration body then escorted them to their respective places in passenger vehicles, and the infected people were kept in separate places to facilitate the necessary medical and administrative matters, officials said. —MNA

Notification of COVID Vaccination Fund Management Subcommittee

FROM 6-12-2021 to 10-12-2021, local/foreign donors contributed K1.420 million to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund Myanmar currency account OA 013733 and foreign currency account EDC 600012 opened at the Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw). The status of the fund account as of 10-12-2021 was as follows:

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund OA-013733 List

	Kyat
Account opening balance on 3-12-2021	169,935,835,142.53
Received amount of money from (+) 6-12-2021 to 10-12-2021	1,420,000.00
Closed balance on 10-12-2021	169,937,255,142.53

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund EDC 600012 List

	USD
Account opening balance on 3-12-2021	25,862,349.53
Received amount of money from (+) 6-12-2021 to 10-12-2021	-
Closed balance on 10-12-2021	25,862,349.53

Eight villagers brutally stabbed, succumbing to stab wounds in Shwebo

EIGHT men, who lived in Kyar village in Shwebo Township, were brutally stabbed to death by so-called PDF terrorists on 9 December.

According to the report of the incident, a joint task force inspected the crime scene. A group of about 30 armed terrorists wearing face masks came into the houses of the 8 villagers, including U Myint, 67 and abducted them to the east of the village. The villagers were reportedly stabbed and beaten to death by accusing them of traitors, spies and informants.

Security forces are working to take effective action against the terrorists who have been committing brutal killings over government officials, innocent civilians and civil servants. They have been forcing ethical civil service personnel who are performing their duties to join the CDM campaign and assassinating those who refuse to do so. — MNA

Help develop fish research farms for improvement of fish species

RESEARCHERS focus on conducting fish research at the research lakes for the development of fish resources in the country.

The Fisheries Department identified 11 lakes as research lakes among over 3,000 lakes across the nation in line with the rules that the research lakes must store water not only in summer but in monsoon. Garbage and weeds must be cleaned at lakes with a proper flow of water. It is necessary to prevent capturing of fingerlings from the research lakes, and the cultivable lands around the lake must be free from an overdose of pesticides.

> In fact, fish is mostly appropriate for public consumption. Government-owned fish research farms and that of local fish farmers need to improve the quality of fish species to be distributed to the people at fair prices for the booming fishery industry with earning the income through the export of fish products.

The department allows the operation of research lakes in a three-year term. If the lakes have better maintenance, the authorities will allow the licensees to continue two more years term for operating the research lakes. The government delivers K10 million without interest rate to the licensees as part of assisting in the research works of the department.

There are 152 lakes in the Yangon Region, 66 of which are located in Taikkyi Township. Of them, Kalawgyi Garat Lake has been identified as the research lake since April 2020. Hence, the lake was engaged in the preservation of fish species and fingerlings and breeding of pedigree fish species left in the capturing from April to July 2020.

Domestic fish species from the research lakes are to be sent to the fish hatching camps in regions and states free of charge. Again, the hatching camps carry out the research works for the improvement of fish quality and pedigree domestic fish species to be distributed to the local fish farmers.

Primarily, fish species in the research process must emphasize the high growth rate of fish and resilience of climatic conditions. The hatching process of fish species contributes to food sufficiency, researching extinction of domestic fish species and sustainable development of freshwater fishery works.

In order to improve the research of fish species, authorities need to disseminate the information about the fishing lakes to the fish farmers and focus on the degradation of the fishing lake process in the nation.

In fact, fish is mostly appropriate for public consumption. Government-owned fish research farms and that of local fish farmers need to improve the quality of fish species to be distributed to the people at fair prices for the booming fishery industry with earning the income through the export of fish products.

■ ■ ■

The Festivals of Nattaw

By Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Sithu Dr Khin Maung Nyunt

NATTAW is the 9th month of the Myanmar calendar and it is the second month of Myanmar cold season called "Hei-man" meaning winter. It is pronounced 'Na-daw'. The name of this month was spelt differently in the old inscriptions of Bagan, but all bore a combination of two words 'nat' and 'taw'. Nat is a derivative from the Pali word 'Na-hta' which means 'a resplendent being worthy of veneration'. 'Taw' means royal or respectable. In the general term, 'nat' applies to all spiritual beings — devas, gods, goddesses, deities or spirits who deserve worship by humans. 'Nat-taw' means the month for worshipping nat-spirits.

The early mornings of Nattaw month are mostly misty and cold with the northerly wind bringing chill. In Myanmar astrology, this month is called 'Dhanu' yathi (Sagittarius) the season of Dhanu. 'Dhanu' means bow and arrow and the zodiacal sign of this month is an archer. Most orchids bloom in Myanmar cold season but 'Thazin' (Bulbophyllum auricomum) a peculiar species with fragrant yellowish small flowers on a single graceful shoot coming out of a delicate bulb is regarded as the flower of Nattaw month. It was included in the list of royal flowers in the time of Myanmar Kings.

Before Buddhism came to Myanmar, animism and ancestor worship were the native religions. Myanmar people believe that natural phenomena were possessed by deities and that the spirits of the ancestors, national heron, and those who died of tragic or violent death live on. Such deities and spirits deserve veneration. They should be worshipped and propitiated for their favour. When Hindu merchants arrived, they brought with them their Hindu Brahmanism and some of their devas: gods and goddesses such as Vishnu, Brahma, Sakka, Ganesha, Sarasvati became deities of popular worship. When Theravada Buddhism was introduced to Bagan by the great Primate Shin Arahan and promoted by King Anawrahta (AD 1044-77), the new religion prospered and spread to the four corners of his kingdom. But the old religions persisted, and Theravada Buddhism being a very tolerant religion came to coexist with the old faiths. King Anawrahta and all Myanmar Kings before and after him did not persecute pre-Buddhist or post-Buddhist religions. They only suppressed the animal and human sacrifices and inhumane practices and customs. Therefore, nat worship has stayed in Myanmar till today. Myanmar people regard Buddhism as the spiritual religion for the benefit and improvement of the life hereafter whereas nat worship is looked upon as the temporal religion which can promote the material welfare of the present life.

Today at the Shwezigon Pagoda, Bagan, we find one of the earliest kinds of evidence of peaceful co-existence between Buddhism and nat worship. In the inner and outer precincts of the said Pagoda are the nat shrines with images of Hindu deities, national and local nats. In the order of the 37 nat spirits of the Myanmar Pantheon, Bodaw Thagya comes first. He is the Myanmar version of Hindu Thundergod "Indra" or "Sakka". Sakka has been Myanmar raised as Thaka or Thagya. Next come two Myanmar national nat spirits called Maha Giri brother and sister nat spirits. Maha Giri means the great mountain which is Mt. Popa near Bagan. This mountain is believed to be their abode. The nat festival of Nattaw originated with these two nat spirits of Mt. Popa. Legend has it that there was a mighty blacksmith named Maung Tint De who was the son of the blacksmith U Tint Taw at Takaung kingdom. Maung Tint De's physical strength was so well-known that the king of Takaung became worried. One day the mighty blacksmith would rebel against him since the blacksmith could make many weapons. Sensing the king's plan to arrest him, Maung Tint De ran away and remained in the hiding. The king made a stratagem by raising Maung Tint De's younger sister his queen and telling her that he intended to appoint her brother Commander as he was a strongman. The sister managed to bring her brother before the king. Whereupon the king tied Maung Tint De to the trunk of a Champac tree and burnt him alive. Cursing the tricky king, the sister jumped into the fire to die with her beloved brother. Because of their violent death, their spirits lived on at the Champac tree, molesting men and animals that came under that tree. The king ordered his men to cut the branches, uproot the tree and float it down the Ayeyawady River. When the tree landed at the harbour of Bagan NyaungU, King Thay-li-gyaung of Bagan (AD 344-387) had a dream in which the brother and sister nat spirits appeared and related their tragic story to the king. The king ordered his ministers to carve two nat idols out of the Champac trunk and house them in a nat shrine built on the summit of Mt. Popa for public worship. For this royal kindness, the two nat spirits offered their service to the king as guardians of the City of Arimaddana (Bagan). We can still see the images of brother and sister nat spirits, each in a separate house at the old city gate "Tharapa" at Bagan. Since then, Bagan kings held the annual nat festival in the month of Nattaw during which the king the chief queen and the whole court went up to the nat shrine on the summit of Mt. Popa to propitiate the Maha Giri brother and sister nat spirits with animal sacrifice and drinks. By the time of King Anawrahta (AD 1044-77) the founder of the first Myanmar Union, when Theravada Buddhism became established and prevalent in his kingdom, animal sacrifice and offering of liquor were prohibited but the nat festival was allowed to be held every year in Nattaw. Anawrahta also forbade keeping nat shrines and nat images at the house. He persuaded his people to keep the Buddha image at the house for daily worship. So, the people kept a green coconut indoor by hanging it on the main post of the house to provide an abode for the Maha Giri nat spirits, since coconut juice has the healing effect on the fire burns of the brother and the sister. King Bayintnaung (AD 1551-81) the founder of the second Myanmar Union also made attempts to stamp out the primitive practices in the nat worship. He issued orders forbidding animal sacrifice and offering and drinking of intoxicants at the nat festivals of Nattaw. His order was so effective that the people since then offer to the Maha Giri nat spirits only rice, sweets, fruits and soft drinks.

> "Two other festivals of Nattaw that were held in the past were the festival of trapping wild elephants and the festival of conferring titles and giving rewards. In Myanmar, classical literature is found to reference these two festivals."

In the latter part of the Toungoo dynasty the Maha Giri nat festival was replaced by the Maha Peinne nat festival. The reason suggested for this change was the influence of Mon culture. King Tabinshwehti (AD 1531-50) and his brother-in-law and successor King Bayintnaung who founded their Capitals Toungoo and Hanthawady respectively in lower Myanmar were admirers of Mon culture. The former adopted a Mon hairstyle and put both Mon and Myanmar htis (crowns) on the Pagoda to indicate that the two nationalities were united. Ceremonies and festivals of Mon court were adopted and faithfully held by these two kings and their successors. Ramanyadesa or the Mon kingdom in Lower Myanmar came into contact with overseas Hindu merchants much earlier than Tampadipa and Thunaparanta territories of the kingdom in Upper Myanmar. So, Mons had more and longer influence on Hindu Brahminic culture. At the Mon courts, Brahman priests were raja gurus who conducted all royal ceremonies and festivals. The worship and the festival of Ganesha, an elephant-headed Hindu deity, was introduced by them. It is believed that Ganesha showers special favours upon his worshippers such as power, might, health, longevity, prosperity, good rain and good harvest, peace, and protection from all dangers – the kind of favours which the ruling class covet most. Therefore, Brahminic god Ganesha was adopted as Myanmar nat and gave him Myanmar name 'Maha Peinne' whose festival was held annually in the month of Nattaw.

ဝက်မစွတ်မြို့စား ဒုတိယ နဝဒေး
(ရွှေနှုန်းလင်းသုံးပုံ ပုရပိုက်မှ)

The "Sasodaw" festival of Nattaw originated in the period of Japanese Occupation during the Second World War. Nawade is a title given by the Burmese kings to the poet laureates of ancient Burma. Whereas there were at least five court poets who were given the title of Nawade only two are frequently discussed in academic circles.

On the 13th waxing moon of Nattaw, a grand entertainment by performing artists was held at the shrine in which the idol of Maha Peinne Nat was housed. On the full moon day of Nattaw, the idol was put on a bejewelled spired coach made like a flying peacock and was taken in procession to the palace. The coach was pulled by the princes and courtiers. At the palace the king, the chief queen and the members of his palace offered milk, butter, sweets, and fruit juice to the Maha Peinne idol and worshipped it. They prayed for peace, prosperity and progress of the country. On the first waning moon of Nattaw, the Maha Peinne idol was taken to the houses of the princes and ministers by turn for worship and offering fruits.

In Lawka Byuha Kyan (Treatise on Court Ceremonies and Festivals) compiled by Thiri Uzana, the Minister of Inyone in the Inwa Period, the Maha Peinne festival of Nattaw was described as follows: -

"In the season of Nattaw, the traditional festival of Maha Peinne takes place. On the 13th waxing moon of Nattaw, the Image of Maha Peinne Nat housed in the Zayat (Pavilion) in the precinct of Shwezigon Pagoda was worshipped. One Myanmar saing (musical ensemble) and one Mon saing (musical ensemble) and dancers performed their talents (to entertain the worshippers). At the palace, milk, butter, sweets and fruits were offered to Maha Peinne Nat. Princes and princesses, royal grandchildren and ministers were instructed to hold the ceremony of 'Puja' for Maha Peinne Nat.

"On the full moon day of Nattaw, the Maha Peinne Image was carried on a coach to the palace to be worshipped by Their Majesties. On the first waning moon, the image made a round of the houses of princes, princesses and ministers to receive their homage and offerings."

SEE PAGE-10

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Confirmed Appointment of Heads of Service Organizations

The State Administration Council has confirmed the appointment of the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations against showing each of their names after a one-year probationary period.

	Name	Appointment
1	Daw Marlar Than Htike	Director-General International Organizations and Economic Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2	U Sai Tun Nyo	Director-General Progress of Border Areas and National Races Department Ministry of Border Affairs

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 10 December 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 11th December, 2021: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay Regions and Kachin, Northern Shan States. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Lower Sagaing, Yangon, Taninthayi Regions and (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Chin, Rakhine States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be 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, Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11 December, 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11 December, 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11 December, 2021: Partly cloudy.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon Region and partly cloudy in Mandalay Region.

The Global New Light of Myanmar
www.gnlm.com.mm
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The Festivals of Nattaw

FROM PAGE-9

Eight Brahman priests each facing a cardinal direction incantated 'Mantras' invoking Maha Peinne Nat and praying for his favours. Then they offered fruits, flowers, perfume, milk, butter, sweets and drinking water. Entertainments followed creating a festive atmosphere for the public.

We learn from Myanmar chronicles that up till the reign of the last Myanmar King Thibaw, the Maha Peinne Nat festival was annually held in the month of Nattaw following the precedent and tradition. Today in Myanmar there are Maha Peinne Temples in cities and towns built and maintained by Hindu communities. During the festival, they are visited by people of other Faiths.

Two other festivals of Nattaw that were held in the past were the festival of trapping wild elephants and the festival of conferring titles and giving rewards. In Myanmar, classical literature is found to reference these two festivals. Trapping wild elephants and taming them for human service was an important skilful profession as well as a princely pastime. Myanmar kings were fond of elephant catching and taming. King Tabinshwehti, King Bayintnaung and Prince Min Ye Kyaw Swa were noted, elephant catchers and tamers. Stockades of thick teak trunks were built near elephant stables. Wild elephants caught by using a tamed female elephant as a decoy were driven into the stockades and trapped into a strongly built keddah where they were trained. Ceremonies were held and festivities followed when such activities took place. At the palace in the month of Nattaw, the king held a special audience to honour those who had literary accomplishments and those who had performed military exploits. It was called 'Hpyin Htat Mingala Pwe' meaning the ceremony of conferring titles and awarding Hpyin clothes and gowns. Men of letters and men of might were honoured by the king by giving them promotion, title, dress, gown, cloths, insignia, gift, land, houses, fief, or special privilege.

The "Sasodaw" festival of Nattaw originated in the period of Japanese Occupation during the Second World War. In the Sakarit year 1306 (1944) a group of literati headed by Dr Ba Han assembled at Kungyangon town to discuss the holding of U Ponnya Day. U Ponnya was a noted playwright of late Konbaung Period, whose literary talent was likened to that of William Shakespeare. With the unanimous agreement of that group, U Ponnya Day was commemorated on the 13th waxing moon of Kason that year. The holding of U Ponnya Day paved the way for the emergence of Sasodaw Day and festival (Writers' Day and literary festival), in the month of Nattaw. On Monday the second waning moon of Kason of the same year, the then Minister for Education, Health, and Municipality U Hla Min convened a meeting at his office to which prominent writers were invited. About eleven literary figures, including Sayagyi U Pe Maung Tin, were present at the meeting. The Minister requested the meeting to choose a day to honour men of letters. Journalist U Chit Maung proposed that as Myanmar kings used to honour every year in Nattaw men of letters and men of might by conferring titles and giving rewards, this good tradition should be maintained by choosing a day in Nattaw and marking it Sasodaw Ney (Writers' Day). The Chairman of Writers' Association Thuriya U Thein Maung seconded that proposal and the meeting agreed. So, the first waxing moon of Nattaw was unanimously chosen as Writers' Day.

To hold the 'Writers' Day' for the first time, the leading committee was formed consisting of six members namely Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing, U Pe Maung Tin, Dr Ba Han, U Lin, Deedok U Ba Cho, and Pahtamagyaw U Kyee Pe. The 15-member Executive Committee included U Tin, U Ba Nyunt, Myoma Saya Hein, U Kaung, U Thein Han, U E Maung, Dr Htin Aung, U Than Tint, U Po Chain, U Htun Pe, U Thein Maung, Thakhin Tin Maung Gyi, U Htun Myint, Daw Chit and Daw Yee Kyein. On the first waxing moon of Nattaw of that year 1944, the first Writers' Day was observed with due celebration. The then Myanmar Government headed by Adipadi Dr Ba Maw contributed K10,000 to the Executive Committee for the celebration of Writers' Day. The ceremony was held in the afternoon at the 'Myaing' Theatre at Kandawgyi Lake, Bahan, Yangon. Some veteran writers and schoolmasters by turn spoke about Myanmar literati of historic fame such as Ananta Thuriya, Shin Maha Rahtathaya, Shin Maha Thilawuntha, Natshin Naung, Nawade, Letwei Thondara, U Paw U, Ma Mya Galay, Hlaing Hteik Khaung Tin, U Ponnya and Achoke Tan Saya Pe. Some of them recited their poems. At the gathering of writers from Upper and Lower Myanmar, literary topics were discussed and typical Myanmar refreshments were served with plain tea. Thus originated another festival in the month of Nattaw. Since then, this literary festival has been held every year on the first waxing moon of Nattaw.

After Myanmar gained independence Writers' Day is observed and commemorated without fail. Myanmar Government provides financial support and other facilities. Every year on Writers' Day on the first waxing moon of Nattaw, the Government honours the winners of the National Literary Award and Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award by holding a prize distributing ceremony at which the winners are awarded handsome cash by the Union Minister and Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Information. Veteran writers and poets are paid homage and presented with gifts and cash by young writers who receive words of admonition from them. In the year 1993, Pakokku U Ohn Pe Literary Award Fund was founded by a generous wealthy man U Ohn Pe of Pakokku town to promote Myanmar literature by awarding with cash every year ageing writers of life-long standing, winners of the literary competition, and giving financial aid to students who are brilliant in Myanmar literature.

Today, Nattaw is not only the month of Nat festivals but also the month for literary activities. Cities and towns throughout Myanmar celebrate anniversaries of historic literary figures. Township Literary and Journalist Associations hold seminars and talks at their Town Halls at which writers and poets give talks on literary topics and discuss with the audience on their literary works.

■■■

Poor soil, water putting food security at risk: FAO

PRESSURE on land and water resources has increased and poses a risk to not only feeding the next generation but the environment and security as well, the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization warned Thursday.

It's latest report on the state of the world's limited land and water resources for food production found that many are already stressed, yet face even more intense use to feed a world population that is expected to grow by over a quarter in the coming three decades.

The agency estimates that on current trends the agrifood sector would need 35 per cent more water to produce the additional food needed over the coming decades. "That could create environmental disasters, increase competition for resources, and fuel new social challenges and conflicts," said the FAO.

Water is essential for agricultural production and food security. It is the lifeblood of ecosystems, including forests, lakes and wetlands, on which our present and future food and nutritional security depends.
PHOTO: FAO

The agency's director-general, Qu Dongyu, said current agrifood production is not proving to be sustainable and was putting pressure on land and water use.—AFP ■

Webb telescope aims to answer astronomy's 'biggest questions'

IT'S been three decades in the making: the largest and most powerful telescope ever to be launched into space is finally ready to take up its orbit and beam back new clues to the origins of the Universe and Earth-like planets beyond our solar system.

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope, named for a former director of the American space agency, follows in the footsteps of the legendary Hubble — but intends to show humans what the Universe looked like even closer to its birth nearly 14 billion years ago.

In a recent Tweet chat, cosmologist and astrophysicist John Mather, who co-founded the Webb project, described the telescope's unprecedented sensitivity.

"Jame Webb Space Telescope can see the heat signature of a bumblebee at the distance of the Moon," he tweeted. All that power is needed to detect the weak glow emitted billions of years ago by the very first galaxies to exist and the first stars being formed. Hubble is capable of observing events that happened in space some 500 million years after the Big Bang, and Webb can go back even further to around 200 million years after that event.

"This telescope is designed to answer the biggest questions in astronomy today," NASA astrophysicist Amber Straughn said in a 2017 TED talk.—AFP ■

Shinmataung Thanaka receives higher price on better quality

QUALITY of Shinmataung Thanaka and Thanaka produced from Myaing Township drove up the price, said Thanaka bark sellers at Kadawpalin Pagoda in Bagan city.

The prices of those varieties became higher than products from other townships on account of providing better quality.

Thanaka, a yellowish-white cosmetic paste made of ground bark, is a natural cosmetic in Myanmar.

Shinmataung Thanaka and Thanaka from Myaing Township is famous for their fragrance. There are about 10 Thanaka vendors near Kadawpalin Pagoda, said Daw Hla Hla Tin, Thanaka broker.

Thanaka, a yellowish-white cosmetic paste made of ground bark, is a natural cosmetic in Myanmar. Shinmataung Thanaka and Thanaka from Myaing Township is famous for their fragrance.

A piece of Thanaka is approximately 1.6 feet long and it is worth K8,000-15,000 per graft. Shinmataung Thanaka is distributed across the country, said Daw Cho Pyone.

Shinmataung Thanaka is of better quality so it is priced higher. And it is highly demanded other Thanaka varieties, said U Thein Lwin Oo, a broker.

Thanaka paste has been used to soothe sunburns and cool the skin. Myanmar people love to use Thanaka as a cosmetic. The collapse of the Thanaka market during the COVID-19 resulted in decreasing Thanaka farms. At present, Thanaka growers cultivate them again, said a grower.

Additionally, the value-added Thanaka products such as Thanaka powder are also seen in the domestic market, said a seller.

"The fullmoon day of Tabodwe is designated as Myanmar Thanaka Day. After that, the number of consumers has significantly risen," said a trader. "Thanaka has grasped a market share in the domestic market. The neighbouring country Thailand is eyeing Thanaka powder and so, it has market potential," said a member of Myanmar Thanaka Planters and Producers Association. — KPD, Lu Lay/GNLM

Onion seed price plunges to five-year lowest

Earlier, onions were highly demanded by Bangladesh and India. The trade with Bangladesh and India has been halted to contain the spread of the coronavirus. That is why the price remained low.

THE prices of onion seeds dropped to the lowest in five years in Kyaukpadaung Township, NyaungU District, Mandalay Region, the sellers reported on a rare phenomenon.

The onion seeds are primarily produced in Seikphyu, Yenangyoung and Myingyan townships. It is mostly demanded before the winter growing season. A pyi (equivalent to eight tins) of onions is priced at K60,000-130,000. This year, the price stood at only K20,000-25,000 per pyi. It is recorded the five-year lowest, said U Nay Myo Tun, a seed seller.

The onions are planted from seeds and seedlings. Collecting winter onion seeds starts in March and April. Once the onion bulb produces seeds, they should be harvested as heavy rain can spoil the onion.

The price of onion seeds increases during nursery time. We have not experienced such a rare event that the price drastically dropped, said U Soe Min, a grower.

The growers usually store the onion seeds systematically to maintain the quality if the price is low.

The onion market remains sluggish compared with the previous years as the foreign demand has dried up, onion traders stated.

The price of onions stood at K250-750 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) in the market, said a grower from the Bayintnaung Wholesale Market.

The closure of border posts resulted in the drastic price drop during the COVID-19 pandemic, making the growers suffer loss.

The onion growers have been facing extreme losses on a downward trend due to the lack of foreign demand. They cannot even cover the cultivation cost as well as afford the harvesting cost for now.

In early 2020, the onion fetched K1,200-1,300 per viss. Then, the price drastically fell in the COVID-19 crisis.

Earlier, onions were highly demanded by Bangladesh and India. The trade with Bangladesh and India has been halted to contain the spread of the coronavirus. That is why the price remained low. The onion growers, as well as traders, have been experiencing market fallouts due to the COVID-19 impacts, said the onion wholesale dealer from Mandalay.

Next, Bangladesh's demand for Myanmar's onions coupled with high demand in the local market hiked up prices, soaring up to K4,000 per viss on 15 November 2019, according to the Mandalay commodity depot.

The high demand by foreign markets and a remarkable price rise prompted the growers to expand the onion cultivation in 2020. Unfortunately, the market is getting worse amidst the COVID-19 negative consequences.

The prices of domestic onions exceeded K3,000 per viss in 2015, 2018, and 2019. The onions are primarily grown in Mandalay, Magway and Yangon regions, Nay Pyi Taw and Shan State. — Ko Htein (KPD)/KK/GNLM

More than 70,000 acres of summer paddy, other crops to be grown in Shwebo

MORE than 70,000 acres of summer paddy and other crops will be grown in Shwebo township, Sagaing region using of Thaphanseik dam water, it is learnt.

"Shwebo township will grow 62,850 acres of summer paddy and 12,500 acres of other crops such as sesame and green gram using Thaphanseik dam water. There is less access to the Thaphanseik dam due to the drought in Shwebo Township. Summer paddy has not been cultivated for two years because of insufficient irrigated water. This year, we have received the dam water and have planned to grow summer paddy and other crops," said Daw Zar Zar Min, the head of Shwebo Township Agriculture Department.

Shwebo township will grow a total of 62,850 acres of summer paddy using of SMC canal and OMC canal and 12,500 acres of other crops using of SMC canal, according to the Shwebo township Agriculture Department.

Due to the insufficient irrigated water from the Thaphanseik dam, Shwebo township has not been able to grow the summer paddy for two years. Now, the dam could supply the irrigated water sufficiently and it will distribute the irrigated water starting from 7 February 2022.

Additionally, Township Agriculture Department is raising awareness of agriculture and distributing the quality crop seeds to the farmers. The farmers can contact the department for enquiry, officials stated. — Lu Lay/GNLM

Shwebo township will grow a total of 62,850 acres of summer paddy using of SMC canal and OMC canal and 12,500 acres of other crops using of SMC canal,

NEWS IN BRIEF

China's FDI inflow expected to top 1 trillion yuan in 2021

FOREIGN direct investment (FDI) into the Chinese mainland, in actual use, is expected to surpass 1 trillion yuan, or 157.49 billion U.S. dollars, in 2021, an official with the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) said Thursday.

During the past two decades since China's accession to the World Trade Organization, the country has achieved marked progress in the use of foreign investment, Gao Feng, an MOC spokesperson, told a virtual press conference.

The FDI inflow totalled 999.98 billion yuan in 2020, skyrocketing 157.7 per cent from 338 billion yuan registered in 2001, said Gao.

China will further shorten the negative list on foreign investment, facilitate services for foreign-funded enterprises and projects, and foster a law-based, international, and convenient business environment to share its market opportunities globally, said Gao. – Xinhua ■

Mexico registers highest inflation in 20 years

MEXICO registered its highest annual inflation since 2001, at 7.37 per cent in November, the Inegi statistics institute said Thursday.

Month-on-month, the increase was 1.14 per cent, it said, pointing to agricultural and energy price rises as the main contributors. The 12-month figure is higher than the 3.33 per cent recorded in November a year ago, and in excess of the central bank target of three per cent per year.

The previous high was 8.11 per cent in January 2001.

Last month, the central bank raised its benchmark interest rate for a fourth consecutive time, to 5.0 per cent, to try to curb inflation as the pandemic-hit economy rebounds from a deep recession.

The monetary tightening followed a series of cuts to boost Latin America's second-largest economy, which shrank 8.5 per cent in 2020, the worst slump in around nine decades.– AFP ■

German exports rebound as supply bottlenecks ease

Europe's largest economy exported 121.3 billion euros' ($137.4 billion) worth of goods in October, 4.1 per cent more than in the previous month. **PHOTO: AFP**

GERMAN exports bounced back in October from a slump caused by global supply chain bottlenecks, official data showed on Thursday, but analysts warned that the emergence of the Omicron coronavirus variant could cast a shadow over recovery prospects.

Europe's largest economy exported 121.3 billion euros' ($137.4 billion) worth of goods in October, 4.1 per cent more than in the previous month, according to seasonally adjusted figures compiled by the federal statistics agency, Destatis.

On a 12-month basis, exports were up 8.1 per cent to back above the pre-coronavirus crisis levels of February 2020, the statisticians calculated

The strong performance made it more likely that Germany would be able to "avoid a mini-recession at the end of this year due to the fourth wave of the coronavirus" which has swept the country, said Sebastian Dullien, director of the IMK economic research institute.

The data suggested that the supply issues that have troubled industry in recent months were "gradually easing", Dullien said.

Shortages of materials and components have put the brakes on German industry, with the auto sector particularly hard hit.

Nevertheless, the spread of the Omicron variant — which is believed to be much more contagious — increased the risk of "factory closures in Asian countries and renewed difficulties in the supply of components", Dullien cautioned.

Exports to China, an important trading partner for Germany, were up by 8.5 per cent year-on-year in October, the Destatis data showed. Exports to EU countries were up 11.6 per cent, while exports to countries outside the bloc climbed by 4.1 per cent.—AFP ■

American workers leaving their jobs in droves, companies struggle to hire

Americans are leaving their jobs in droves, and companies are struggling to fill open positions. People attend a job fair at a Post Office in Los Angeles, California on 30 September 2021. **PHOTO: FREDERIC J. BROWN /AF**

AMERICAN workers are quitting their jobs by the millions every month taking advantage of new opportunities created by the pandemic recovery, and creating an unprecedented labour shortage for companies.

In October, 4.2 million Americans resigned, after 4.4 million in September and 4.3 million in August, according to data from the Labour Department.

Meanwhile, new applications for unemployment benefits last week fell to just 184,000, the lowest level since September 1969, the Labour Department said Thursday.

There are 11 million job openings, and the number of vacancies is peaking as demand picks up in bars, hotels, restaurants and other service industries.

The economy remains about four million jobs short of the pre-pandemic level, and even though job gains have averaged 555,000 a month this year, hiring, especially unskilled staff willing to work in person, has become a headache for many employers.

"We've never had a gap like that where there's just so many more openings and there are unemployed workers," said Curtis Dubay, economist at the US Chamber of Commerce.—AFP ■

British business fears grow over Omicron crackdown

Shoppers wear face masks on Oxford Street in London after face coverings became mandatory in shops and supermarkets in Britain **PHOTO: AFP/TOLGA AKMEN**

BRITAIN'S beleaguered hospitality and finance sectors lamented Thursday the impact of new health measures designed to prevent the spread of the Omicron coronavirus variant over Christmas.

The UK government will from Monday tighten virus restrictions in England as Omicron variant cases surge, including guidance to work from home and mandatory Covid passports.

The news dealt a bitter blow to pubs, restaurants and nightclubs, just as they had begun to recover from lockdowns that ravaged demand. And it sent shudders through London's City finance district, already reeling from Brexit and rendered a ghost town for much of the pandemic.

The curbs sparked renewed fear over the economy heading into the New Year, but analysts remain uncertain over the outlook.

'Christmas has been cancelled'

"These fresh restrictions will be a disappointment to businesses in the Square Mile," said Catherine McGuinness, policy chair of the City of London Corporation.—AFP ■

Volkswagen cranks up electric car investment

GERMAN auto giant Volkswagen said on Thursday that it would bulk up its investment in electric vehicles and digitalization to 89 billion euros ($101 billion) over the next five years.

The 12-brand group will dedicate 56 per cent of its 159 billion euros of investment to developing the cars of the future, up from 50 per cent, and estimates that "one in four cars sold in 2026 will have a battery-electric motor".

"We are in the middle of the biggest transformation in the history of Volkswagen," chief executive Herbert Diess told reporters after a meeting of the group's supervisory board to agree the investment plan. Under pressure to reduce the sector's role in climate change, major automakers around the world have announced targets to gradually phase out fossil fuel-powered vehicles. Germany's newly minted coalition under the leadership of Chancellor Olaf Scholz is aiming to speed up the move towards electric cars with a target to have 15 million on the road in the country by 2030.

Electric cars like the ID.5 are Volkswagen's future as the German carmaker announced it was dedicating even more of its investment into electrifying its models. **PHOTO: VOLKSWAGEN/ AFP**

In 2020, Volkswagen announced 73 billion euros of investment in the vehicles of tomorrow for the period up to 2024.

The need to raise the commitment through 2025 was "mainly due to the accelerated ramp-up of e-mobility as part of the green deal" agreed by the European Union, the group said in a statement.

The heightened investment will go into the opening of six new battery factories through partnerships with other companies over the coming years. The allocation for electric cars increased by 50 percent to 52 billion euros, while the sums set aside for hybrid "transition technology" went down by 30 percent to eight billion euros.—AFP ■

Shell shareholders vote on move to London

Europe's biggest energy firm says the move would simplify its tax and share arrangements, and accelerate its transition to net-zero emissions. Climate campaigners are demanding Shell cut its CO2 emissions by 45% by 2030 and to zero by 2050. **PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/ LOMMER/AFP**

SHAREHOLDERS in oil giant Shell will vote Friday on plans to switch its headquarters from the Netherlands to Britain after a century and drop Royal Dutch from the name.

Europe's biggest energy firm says the move would simplify its tax and share arrangements, and accelerate its transition to net-zero emissions.

But its chairman also admitted the plan was driven by the Dutch government's scrapping of plans to withdraw a tax on dividends. The Dutch government said it was "unpleasantly surprised" by the plan, while Britain has hailed it as a vote of confidence in the British economy post-Brexit.

The meeting of shareholders is due to start at 10 am (0900 GMT) in Rotterdam's Ahoy auditorium, which just months ago hosted the Eurovision Song Contest.—AFP ■

US Starbucks workers score union breakthrough

WORKERS at two Starbucks cafes in Buffalo, New York voted to establish a union, the first at the coffee chain's company-owned shops in the United States.

There were hugs and cries of joy at the union office as the campaign won a decisive majority Thursday at the company's Elmwood Avenue shop in northern New York state, before results were announced on votes at two other cafes.

"It has been an unbelievably long road to get to this count," said Michelle Eisen, who has worked at the shop for more than 11 years. "We've done it in spite of all the company has thrown at us."

The outcome was also cheered by two of the most prominent US progressive politicians. Senator Bernie Sanders saluted the group on Twitter, and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said she was "proud" of the workers for persevering through a difficult campaign.—AFP ■

Workers voted to make a Buffalo Starbucks the first company-owned cafe in the United States with a union. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Global tropical agriproduct trade fair set for Hainan

An international agricultural trade fair for tropical products is scheduled to kick off from Dec 16 to 19 in Haikou, the capital city of South China's resort island Hainan, local authorities said Wednesday.

Covering an area of around 100,000 square metres, the 2021 China (Hainan) International Winter Trade Fair For Tropical Agricultural Products has attracted nearly 2,000 enterprises from 21 provinces in China and participants from 15 countries and regions, said a press conference of the provincial information office.

Exhibits of the four-day event will focus on fruits and vegetables, grain and oil, aquatic products, and cross-border e-commerce.—Xinhua ■

US 'best place' to hide, launder illicit funds: Yellen

WHILE small countries are often perceived as major havens for hiding or laundering money, "enormous amounts of illicit funds" end up in the US financial system, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Thursday.

"There's a good argument that, right now, the best place to hide and launder ill-gotten gains is actually the United States," Yellen said in a speech to the Summit on Democracy.

Switzerland or the Cayman Islands have long been the focuses of regulators looking to find hidden cash.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

TUG; PG 2012 AND BG; IN THYE 2503

Consignees of cargo carried on **TUG; PG 2012 AND BG; IN THYE 2503** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-12-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMIT-1** 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.

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Cassis confirmed as next Swiss president

Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis and Norway's Foreign Minister Ine Marie Eriksen Soreide elbow check during a meeting in Oslo, Norway on Thursday. The two sides are expected to discuss Swiss-Norwegian bilateral relations, human security, peace promotion, and humanitarian policy. **PHOTO: AFP**

SWISS Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis was elected by parliament Wednesday as the country's next president, set to lead in 2022 amid deepening tensions over the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cassis, who will take on the largely symbolic role on 1 January, insisted in his acceptance speech that "we will not allow ourselves to be divided".

The choice of Cassis came as no surprise since it was his turn among the seven members of the Swiss government to take on the rotating one-year presidency.

The 60-year-old member of the conservative Liberal Party, who joined the government in 2017, will continue serving as Switzerland's top diplomat while carrying out his presidential duties.

He will replace Economy Minister Guy Parmelin at the helm.

Cassis was elected with 156 out of 197 possible votes — a relatively poor score for the foreign minister, who has faced significant criticism for gaffes and inconsistent messaging.

Both he and Parmelin have been attacked for the handling of Switzerland's relations with the European Union, after Bern in May abruptly ended years of talks aimed at sealing a cooperation agreement with Brussels.

As president, Parmelin delivered the bad news, but Cassis was widely blamed in the media for the debacle and accused of minimising the fallout from the rift with the country's biggest trading partner.

During Wednesday's rubber-stamp vote, the parliament also elected Health Minister Alain Berset to serve as vice president next year, positioning him to become president in 2023. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Philippines anti-terrorism law 'threatens human rights' despite 'killer caveat' strikedown

THE Philippines' highest court has struck down a "killer caveat" in President Rodrigo Duterte's controversial anti-terrorism law, but critics said Thursday the rest of the legislation still threatened human rights.

The law, which took effect last year, gives the country's security forces sweeping powers to go after suspected terrorists, but opponents say it is being used to stifle dissent and target government critics.

Lawyers, journalists and rights groups had petitioned the Supreme Court to remove sections of the law they argued were unconstitutional.

In a brief statement Thursday, the court said the full bench had voted in favour of declaring two parts of the law unconstitutional.—AFP ■

UK tackles 'largest-ever' bird flu outbreak

BRITAIN has culled around half a million birds this year as the country battles its "largest-ever" avian flu outbreak, the government said on Thursday.

Alongside culling, new rules require bird keepers to ensure all captive birds are indoors and follow strict biosecurity measures to try to stem the spread of the virus.

But officials are increasingly concerned that wild birds migrating from mainland Europe during the winter months are carrying the disease. Geese, ducks and swans are among the wild bird species affected, while a number of birds of prey are also confirmed to have died.

"Each year the UK faces a seasonal risk in incursion of avian influenza associated with migratory wild birds," Environment Secretary George Eustice told parliament.—AFP ■

Indian farmers end year-long mass protests against Modi reforms

Indian farmers have agreed to end year-long mass protests after the government abandoned its push for agricultural reforms. **PHOTO: AFP**

INDIAN farmers formally ended year-long mass protests Thursday after Prime Minister Narendra Modi abandoned his push for agricultural reforms, defusing one of the biggest challenges faced by his government.

Thousands of people have been camped on the outskirts of the capital New Delhi since last year to campaign against laws they said would have led to a corporate takeover of the sector.

Modi's administration rushed through a repeal of the laws last month in a rare backdown, and farmer representatives said they agreed to stand down after the government agreed to other demands.

"Packing up has started," said Darshan Pal of Samyukta Kisan Morcha, a coalition of farmers' unions, in reference to the protest camps.

He added that protesters would wait until after a funeral for India's defence chief General Bipin Rawat, who died in a helicopter crash on Wednesday, before returning to their homes on the weekend.

Protests had carried on in smaller numbers after the repeal of the laws, with farmers seeking additional concessions including compensation for the families of hundreds of farmers they say died during the protests.

The government agreed to that demand and also pledged not to prosecute those using fire to cheaply clear their fields — a practice that regularly shrouds New Delhi in smog each winter.

About two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion population draw their livelihood from farming and the sector has long been a political minefield.—AFP ■

The disaster forced more than 4,000 people to flee to temporary shelters. **PHOTO: JUNI KRISWANTO/ AFP**

Death toll from Indonesia volcano eruption rises to 39

THE death toll from the eruption of Indonesia's Mount Semeru has risen to 39, authorities said Wednesday, as rescuers scrambled to retrieve more bodies under the threat of further volcanic activity.

The highest mountain on the island of Java thundered to life on Saturday, ejecting volcanic ash into the sky and raining hot mud on villages as thousands of panicked people fled their homes. "The search and rescue team found four more bodies today," Indonesia's search and rescue agency said in a statement.

Another injured victim died in hospital on Tuesday, it added, pushing the death toll up from 34 to 39. A spokesperson for the agency said 12 people were still missing.

The disaster blanketed villages in grey ash and forced more than 4,000 people to flee to temporary shelters.

Evacuees had been complaining of coughing, chest infections and diarrhoea, according to medics at shelters in Lumajang district.

Others expressed relief at making it out alive and being reunited safely with loved ones.—AFP ■

Japan PM calls on nuclear weapons states to boost transparency

A deactivated Titan II nuclear missile sitting in a silo in an Arizona museum devoted to educating visitors about the Cold War. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Thursday called on all nuclear weapons states to increase transparency in their capability as he pledged his utmost for the adoption of a final document at a UN conference on nuclear nonproliferation.

Born into a family from the western Japanese prefecture of Hiroshima whose capital was devastated by a 1945 US atomic bombing, Kishida told a nuclear disarmament meeting Japan will take the lead in bringing nations with differing positions on nuclear arms together to focus on promoting coordination in efforts towards a world free of such weapons. "Unfortunately, the reality facing the world is that discussion has not progressed over reducing the number of nuclear weapons, let alone nuclear abolishment. Rather, there are fears that the number of nuclear weapons will increase," Kishida told the virtual meeting of government officials and experts from Japan and abroad organized by the Japanese Foreign Ministry. "The upcoming review conference is an opportunity to make the NPT foundation more solid and to rebuild a relationship of trust between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states, and its outcome should lead to an exit, or a world free of nuclear weapons," Kishida said. Kishida unveiled a plan to dispatch Minoru Terada, his special adviser on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, to relevant countries in a bid to lay the groundwork for the UN conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in January.

The UN review conference is held every five years to check its operation. It was initially due to take place in 2020 but was postponed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. —Kyodo ■

Pandemic, diplomacy: Germany's new govt takes charge

Olaf Scholz waves to supporters during a rally in Munich, 18 Sept 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

WITH a pandemic crisis meeting and debut appearances in Paris and Brussels, Germany's new Chancellor Olaf Scholz and his team hit the ground running on their first day in office Thursday.

After a ceremony-laden handover from Angela Merkel on Wednesday, Scholz sat down with regional leaders of Germany's 16 states to discuss the coronavirus pandemic.

"We want to act quickly and decisively when it is necessary," Scholz said after the meeting, stressing that he wanted "ensure that as many citizens as possible are vaccinated", including with third booster doses.

With intensive care beds filling up and new variant Omicron adding to fears, Scholz's coalition of his Social Democrats, the ecologist Greens and the liberal FDP was already dragged into fighting the pandemic before being sworn in. Underlining the "deadly serious" situation, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier had during Wednesday's investiture ceremony pointedly urged Scholz to "ensure that the pandemic does not keep us firmly in its grip for another year".

Scholz, 63, has already called for Germany to follow Austria's example and introduce mandatory jabs, pushed by Germany's stagnating inoculation rate.

But he may have many more tough decisions to make.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Putin says conflict in eastern Ukraine 'looks like genocide'

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin on Thursday said that the conflict in eastern Ukraine between Kiev's army and pro-Russian separatists "looks like genocide", at a time of heightened tensions with the West.

Putin's comments came as US President Joe Biden was scheduled to speak with Ukraine leader Volodymyr Zelensky and the heads of other countries on Russia's borders concerned over Kremlin military aggression.

They came in response to a question during a meeting of the presidential rights council, during which Putin fielded a query on discrimination against Russian speakers beyond Russia's borders.

"I have to say that Russophobia is a first step towards genocide," the Russian leader said.—AFP ■

G-7 split over diplomatic boycott of Beijing Olympics

FRANCE broke with other Group of Seven industrialized nations Thursday, saying it will send high-level officials to this winter's Beijing Olympics after the United States, Britain and Canada announced they would diplomatically boycott the event.

The split came when France's education minister Jean-Michel Blanquer said France "will not do it", a day after Australia, Britain and Canada said they would engage in a diplomatic boycott following the United States' lead, citing China's human rights record.

Blanquer, the minister of national education, youth and sport, told BFM TV, "Sports is a world in itself, which must be protected from political interference," according to Reuters news agency.—Kyodo ■

The US government is challenging a London court ruling not to extradite Julian Assange to face charges relating to WikiLeaks' 2010 publication of classified US military documents about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. **PHOTO: AFP**

London court ruling due in US govt appeal on Assange extradition

TWO judges in London will on Friday rule on a US government appeal against a decision not to extradite WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange from Britain.

Washington wants to put the 50-year-old Australian national on trial for publishing classified military documents relating to the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But a judge at a lower court blocked the extradition in January, assessing that he was at risk of suicide in the US justice system.

Lawyers for the US government, however, argued in October that the judge had not given sufficient weight to other expert testimony about Assange's mental state. They also sought to assure the court that he would not be held in punishing isolation at a federal supermax prison, and would receive appropriate treatment. Two appeal judges will give their judgment in the long-running case at 1015 GMT.—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.

Myanmar to play Thailand in AFF Suzuki Cup tourney today

Myanmar team players show respect in goal celebration over Timor-Leste team in their 2nd group match of Suzuki Cup at Singapore Indoor Stadium on 8 December 2021. **PHOTO: MFF**

MYANMAR men's national football team will play against Thailand national team in the third group match of the ASEAN Football Federation Suzuki Cup at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore today.

Head coaches of the two teams have expressed their feelings about the upcoming match.

Myanmar head coach Antoine Hey said, "I know that we need to win this game for us to have a realistic chance of making the semifinals.

"But I think the pressure is on Thailand considering that the Thai media are already talking about them playing in the final against Viet Nam.

"Thailand has a group of individuals but we have been together for quite some time. We are all about teamwork and playing football and not about parking the bus.

"We cannot afford to lose tomorrow and we will approach the game like we are playing in the final," Hey added.

In the meantime, Thailand head coach Alexandre Polking admitted that they are going towards the next level.

"The addition of Chanathip and Teerathon has certainly given us more depth for sure. It has been a good week with Chanathip giving a positive atmosphere to the squad," Alexandre Polking said.

"Now we will need to find the system and different formations to fully utilize the quality of the two players.

"Myanmar are a good team. They are not defensive-minded. They play hard and they control the game well with good midfield players.

"We need to win where the six points will keep us in touch of a place to the next round," the Thai coach added.

The match will start at 7 pm Myanmar Standard Time. — GNLM ■

Lille's Champions League run gives French football a lift

Lille players celebrate during their win over Wolfsburg on Wednesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

WITH French football reeling this season due to repeated incidents of crowd violence, Lille's achievement in reaching the Champions League last 16 comes as a much-needed bright spot.While an all-star Paris Saint-Germain dominate the headlines, Lille have followed up their remarkable Ligue 1 title triumph last season by making it through to the knockout stages of Europe's elite club competition for the first time since 2006/07. That they did it by winning their group, while PSG only came second behind Manchester City in their section, is all the more notable.A Champions League group also containing Red Bull Salzburg, Sevilla and Wolfsburg may not have been the toughest in the competition, but it was the most competitive. Lille did not win any of their first three games but bounced back to win all of their final three matches, including beating Wolfsburg 3-1 in Germany on Wednesday, to top their group. Now they will be seeded in Monday's last-16 draw, ensuring they will avoid many of the biggest names, although holders Chelsea are among the potential opponents.—AFP ■

Real Madrid aim to tighten grasp on La Liga in derby against Atletico

CARLO Ancelotti was adamant Real Madrid have not sewn up the La Liga title already but beat Atletico Madrid on Sunday and they might not be far away.

Madrid are 10 points clear of Atletico heading into the derby at the Santiago Bernabeu, with the chance to extend the gap to 13 points, two weeks before Christmas.

Real Madrid hope to have Karim Benzema available for Sunday's derby in La Liga at home to Atletico Madrid. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Atletico will play a game in hand away at Granada on December 22, which could allow them to reduce the deficit, although a trip to Sevilla in between means the gap might also widen.

Sevilla and Real Betis are closer, with Sevilla eight points behind Madrid, also with a game in hand, to be played at home to Barcelona on December 21.

But most believe Atletico have the best chance of reeling Real Madrid in, the reigning champions who showed last season they have the resilience, particularly in the big games, that Sevilla have lacked.—AFP ■