TRY TO DEVELOP AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK FARMING FOR FOOD SUFFICIENCY PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

Message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on occasion of opening ceremony of 3rd Myanmar Ethnic Cultural Festival 2021 (11 December 2021)

Esteemed national brethren,

Coming 12 February 2022 is the Diamond Jubilee Union Day of our country. All our ethnic nationals laid the cornerstones for the Union with the common wishes for the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to firmly stand tall in the world till today. As a gesture of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day with full essence, I'd like to pray for all ethnic national people enjoying the opening ceremony of today's third Myanmar Ethnic Cultural Festival 2021 to have physical and mental wellbeing with auspiciousness.

The third Myanmar Ethnic Cultural Festival aimed at cementing the unity and Union spirit among the ethnic national brethren is held with the purpose of discovering the traditions and fine arts of ethnic nationals, further developing the community-based tourism in the ethnic areas, for enabling the travellers to know domestic products, traditional costumes and traditional foods of the respective ethnicities with a view to improving the socio-economic life of the national races. In this regard, the first festival was organized by Kachin ethnic entrepreneurs association in 2019. The second festival was primarily led by Kayah ethnic entrepreneurs association in 2020. The third festival cannot be held as a ground festival due to the restriction of the COVID-19. As such, the virtual festival was jointly organized by the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs, the Ministry of Information and the Myanmar Ethnic Entrepreneurs Association at the Myanma Radio and Television with the cultural entertainments of the ethnic national races.

The State emphasizes peace and unity for the ethnics and strengthening of the genuine Union spirit for long term existence and harmonious development that all the national brethren can enjoy in an equal term. Section 22 of the Constitution (2008) mentions that the Union shall assist to develop languages, literature, fine arts and culture of the national races and promote solidarity, mutual amity and respect and mutual assistance among the National races. In adopting the five-point road map of the State Administration Council and nine objectives, The State has adopted the points in the social objectives such as to ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism and to respect and promote the customs and traditions of all national peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.

SEE PAGE-3

Opening ceremony of third Myanmar Ethnic Cultural Festival 2021 held in Nay Pyi Taw

AS a gesture of hailing Diamond Jubilee Union Day, the ceremony to launch the Myanmar Ethnic Cultural Festival took place at Myanma Radio and Television in Tatkon of Nay Pyi Taw through a virtual system yesterday afternoon, with a video message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs U Saw Tun Aung Myint, Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, Deputy Minister for Ethnic Affairs U Zaw Aye Maung and Chairman of Myanmar Ethnic Entrepreneurs Association U Yaw Set launched the festival.

Next, the video message of the Senior General was presented.

Union Ministers U Saw Tun Aung Myint and U Maung Maung Ohn, Deputy Minister U Zaw Aye Maung and MEEA Chair U Yaw Set virtually cut the ribbon to inaugurate the 3rd Myanmar Ethnic Cultural Festival 2021 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

MoI Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn.

MoEA Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint.

MEEA Chair U Yaw Set.

(The full text of the opening address delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is reported on page-1.)

Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint said the festival aims to address ethnic affairs in accord with the existing laws and develop ethnic affairs. Moreover, the festival will give chance to visitors for knowing cultural customs, show traditional customs and fine arts, uplift community-based tourism, create opportunities for the export of domestic products to the international market, and contribute to peaceful cooperation and the peace process.

He added that today is time for further strengthening the democratic federalism in Rakhine State. Only when ethnic national races build mutual trust, respect, unity and national reconciliation and further strengthen the peace for building the modernity of the country will it be shaped like a modern, developed Union.

Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn said holding the festival will contribute to the enhancement of national unity, friendly relations and mutual trust. Knowing the culture and customs of ethnic nationals will effectively contribute to the peace process and multiple developments, urging the ethnic nationals to build Union based on democracy and federalism through the genuine Union spirit.

Chairman of Ethnic Entrepreneurs Association U Yaw Set said the first festival was led by Kachin ethnic entrepreneurs in 2019 and the second festival by Kayah entrepreneurs in 2020 at Kyaikkasan grounds. This year's festival is virtually held through TV channels instead of Kayin ethnic entrepreneurs.

He prayed that many current events in the country end in a short time as the country is overcoming the various economic and living difficulties.

Then, the video on the natural beauty of ethnic nationals including interesting places. The festivals took place in 2019 and 2020 at Kyaikkasan Grounds in Yangon. This year's festival will not be held in Kyaikkasan Grounds in Yangon. — MNA

Press release on finding of Genome Sequencing as COVID-19 variant surveillance process

THE Public Health Department, Medical Services Department and Medical Research Department cooperate with Military Medical Research Unit to conduct Genome Sequencing as COVID-19 variant surveillance process in line with the guideline of the Ministry of Health. According to its procedure, it has already announced the occurrence of COVID-19 variants in Myanmar such as Alpha, Beta kappa and Delta on 15-6-2021 and 31-8-2021.

Regarding the occurrence of Omicron in the world countries, the Omicron is now present in 63 countries, according to the statement as of the morning of 11-12-2021.

Genome Sequencing is being prioritized to those who are tested positive among the returnees from foreign countries and other patients among the target groups.

On 6-12-2021, a total of 16 samples from Taunggyi, Mandalay, Mawlamyine, Kengtung, Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon were tested at Tatmadaw Medical Research Unit and only 16 were infected with the Delta variant and no one was infected with Omicron as of today. Among the patients with Delta, four returnees were from Thailand, two from Laos and two from Malaysia.

Moreover, the samples are sent to the reference laboratory of WHO of Thailand for laboratory testing and the Medical Research Department of the Ministry of Health and Military Medical Research Unit are also operating the Genome Sequencing promptly as COVID-19 variant surveillance process.

Ministry of Health

Political maturity

POLITICAL maturity and unity of stakeholders and the entire people play a crucial role in building the Union based on democracy and federalism. It is necessary to take lessons that Myanmar could not achieve the deserved development due to requirements in political maturity in successive eras. We must try hard to overcome such challenges. We need to build political maturity and unity with wise mental faculty for ensuring the peace of the nation.

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

Message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on occasion of opening ceremony of 3rd Myanmar Ethnic Cultural Festival 2021 (11 December 2021)

FROM PAGE-1

It is necessary to cement the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy in the country. As such, all will pay mutual respect and recognition to the diversities for the firm implementation of the Union based on democracy and federalism. Realization of the democracy needs to be based on Our Three Main National Causes—non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity and perpetuation of sovereignty. Hence, it is necessary to further strive for building the firm and united strength of the ethnic national brethren.

In hailing the Diamond Jubilee Union Day which will come soon, the government will beef up the work procedures for ensuring the strong and dynamic Union spirit and the peace process. To be further strong and dynamic Union spirit, the government will implement three steps on the adoption of future tasks, formation of tasks forces formed with ethnic nationals and implementation of the work process. To do so, recommendations and suggestions, dissemination of information and educative works will be sought from the groups to be related to the ethnic national people.

In enhancing the peace process, efforts will be made for the creation of chances for respective ethnic nationals and stakeholders to participate in the peace process, negotiation and promotion tasks, directly holding the dialogues with peace negotiation committees at different levels and EAOs, building further strengthening of peace with NCA signatories, minimizing the attacks and seeking the bilateral agreements for non-NCA signatories to sign the NCA.

I always talk about the usage at the dialogues and ceremonies related to peace. It is just "desire". If one desires to restore peace, one must have the genuine desire to restore peace. Likewise, if one desires to develop the nation with prosperity, one must have the desire and endeavours for the development and prosperity of the country. If we make collaborative efforts in unison, no impossibility happens in our country and our nation. It was shown as significant evidence of how we overcame the challenges of the third wave of COVID-19. In the infection climax of COVID-19 in the third wave in July, some 40 per cent of the infection rate hit the country. Thanks to concerted efforts of the government, the people and all organizations, the infection rate of the pandemic plunged into just two per cent within three-four months period. It was a fruitful result based on unity, discipline and keen desire. We have to sustain good efforts and morals. Furthermore, we must march towards the Union, a modern developed nation, based on genuine disciplined multiparty democracy, democracy and federalism.

The country primarily requires the improvement of the peace process and the development of the ethnic areas in multiple sectors. The State Administration Council gives a helping hand to all ethnic national areas for the economic development of the State. Encouragement is being given to restructuring the economy which dipped in the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. I'd like to urge any businesspersons to cooperate with the government for the development of the State. Development tasks of the country cannot be undertaken through single strength and sole organization. It needs the collective strength of all ethnic national people.

Esteemed national brethren,

In conclusion, I'd like to say that the multiple developments of the State and the ethnic nationals must be shaped through the unity of all ethnic nationals. Hence,

(1) all ethnic national races and stakeholders are requested to participate in the enhancement of the work processes of ensuring a strong and dynamic Union spirit,
(2) all ethnic national races are requested to take part in further strengthening the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy, and the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism democracy the country requires,
(3) all ethnic national races are requested to join the tasks for building a prosperous country and food sufficiency.
(4) Let's sustain the national culture and national characteristics by mutually recognizing and adhering to the diversities of ethnic nationals.

May all national people be physical and mental well-being. Thank you all.

MIFER Union minister tours foreign/domestic/joint-venture investment companies in Mandalay

UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo made tours to foreign/domestic/joint-venture investment companies in Mandalay Region on 10 December and coordinated work requirements.

During the visit to New Hope (Myanmar) Company Limited, a 100 per cent foreign investment company with the permission of the Myanmar Investment Commission, in TadaU Township, the Union minister supported the production and distribution of feedstuffs by the company. The managing director of the company explained the operation, difficulties encountered and further plans. The Union Minister then coordinated business matters to increase productivity.

Afterwards, the Union minister arrived at Europe & Asia Beverages Company Limited owned by a Myanmar national, which manufactures and distributes various soft drinks and water. While the company executive director presented the operation of the factory and matters related to promoting domestic production, market and business expansion, and the Union minister provided necessary advice on the project and toured the factory.

He also visited Aung Kan Bo Motorcycle Industrial Company Limited, a joint-venture foreign investment company, which is engaged in the production and sale of motorcycles and spare parts, and coordinated necessary coordination to address difficulties for the business.—MNA

Myanmar delegation joins High-Level Forum on Ocean Sustainability in ASEAN

Myanmar delegation led by the MoALI Union minister, Secretary-General of ASEAN Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Mr James Alix Michel Founder and Executive Chairman of James Michel Foundation take the documentary photo.

THE High-Level Forum on Ocean Sustainability in ASEAN was organized at Dubai Expo 2020 (Business Concert Centre) of United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 10 December.

During the ceremony, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo talked about the participation of Myanmar in UN Blue Ocean Economy and ASEAN agendas and other GtoG cooperation in addition to developing partner organizations and private entrepreneurs.

Then, the Union minister highlighted the significant facts of the country including biodiversity, different climate, ice mountains, Myeik Archipelago, Lampi Marine National Park, conservation of migratory birds, sea turtles and marine resources.

He also added that the participants to the meeting are the leaders in implementing the sustainability of the Blue Ocean Economy and Myanmar is sharing the experience from the discussion and trying hard to host such events based on good practices. The High-Level Forum was organized jointly by James Michel Foundation, UAE government and ASEAN at Dubai Expo-2020.

The event was attended by ASEAN Ministers on Environment and Marine, UAE's Minister, ASEAN Secretary-General, Chairman of James Michel Foundation and other invited guests. — MNA

MoHT Union minister attends workshop on sustainable tourism development planning in Myanmar

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung attended a workshop on sustainable tourism development planning in Myanmar which was held through video conferencing in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the workshop, the Union minister said that it is very important for long-term sustainability in tourism development in Myanmar, in addition to the emphasis on socio-economic development. The Ministry has been drawing up a roadmap to revive the industry which is affected by the COVID-19 outbreak since late 2019. It is necessary to plan a project in advance with the inclusion of not only the government and private organizations but also professionals and subject experts from universities and colleges in line with the changing circumstances, he said.

The draft project will be reviewed and coordinated with the local level for consultation, and then submitted to the National Tourism Central Committee for approval by the Union Government. He highlighted to include an analysis on each level of monitoring and implementation in the project plan, apart from the basic principles, visions, objectives, analysis, strategy, implementation, duration, and budget.

Deputy Director U Khaing Oo discussed the visions, strategies, short-term and long-term implementation plans, and Senior Consultant Officer of the Myanmar Tourism Federation Daw Kyi Kyi Aye explained the standardization of international organizations and researches.

At the workshop, the discussions were held on the development and systematic management of tourist destinations, promoting public-private partnerships, promoting tourism marketing, including digital systems, enhancing the country's image

and developing human resources and improving the quality of services. The participants of the workshops were awarded certificates of honour.

The workshop was attended by the director-general, deputy permanent secretary and department officials. The chairman of the Myanmar Tourism Federation and representatives of its affiliated associations, professors from the National Management Degree College and Mandalay University, and officials from Nay Pyi Taw Council, Region/State branches attended the workshop online. — MNA

357 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 December, total figure rises to 526,381

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 526,381 after 357 new cases were reported on 11 December 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 502,666 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,177 after 7 died.—MNA

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Officials discuss measures to reduce traffic congestion, setting checkpoints along Mandalay-Muse route

A meeting on the prevention of traffic congestion due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the establishment of checkpoints along the Mandalay-Muse route, which is used for Myanmar-China border trade, was held yesterday morning in Mandalay.

At the meeting, Mandalay Region Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Kyaw Kyaw Min said that although the Chinese border gates have now reopened, Muse, Traffic jams may occur as many export vehicles remain in Chinshwehaw. Therefore, the 16-mile checkpoint in Mandalay will not allow export vehicles to pass through temporarily and checkpoints will be set up at the Myitnge Toll Gate, Mandalay Htonebo Road and 62nd Junction, at the entrance of Ohnchaw, Mandalay-Lashio Road and Htonebo Junction (Yandanar Lin Junction), including Mandalay 16-mile checkpoint, after redesigning the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the second time, he said.

He said it could be a win-win situation for the government in charge of management and the private sector if traders and business owners present at the meeting will cooperate to prevent traffic congestion and avoid the high logistic cost in Muse.

Mandalay Region Commerce Minister U Thein Htay stressed the need to comply with the COVID-19 rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Health in commerce and the need to help the drivers/followers who have accompanied the traders to know the procedures to be carried out at each checkpoint.

Chairman of the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in Commerce Sub-Committee Director-General U Myint Thura discussed ways to prevent traffic congestion and set checkpoints along the Mandalay-Muse route, and officials from the Department of Health and in-charges of 16-mile checkpoint in Mandalay participated in the discussion.

The chairman of the State Administration Subcommittee (northern Shan State), the director in charge of the Muse (105) mile trade centre, and the director in charge of Chinshwehaw trade centre attended the meeting via Zoom Meeting and explained the procedures to be carried out in each checkpoint, parking and parking lot conditions.

Afterwards, Mandalay Region Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Kyaw Kyaw Min concluded the meeting. The regional minister and Director-General U Myint Thura inspected the 16-mile cargo inspection centre on PyinOoLwin Road in Mandalay in the afternoon. — MNA

Yangon mayor inspects drainage system, greening programmes

The Yangon mayor inspects drainage system and greening programmes.

YANGON Mayor U Bo Htay, Chairman of YCDC (Yangon City Development Committee) inspected the excavation work of drainage under old buildings for the construction of retaining wall for Bo Myat Tun river outlet conducted by the Engineering Department at No (351/361) Merchant Road in Botahtaung Township yesterday.

During the visit, the mayor and party instructed necessary things for good flows of water from water tank newly constructed near the Sule Pagoda and City Hall, the strength of water tank and garden greening and construction of 100,000 gallons of RC Ground Tank in Yangon City Hall compound conducted by the Engineering Department.

Then, the mayor joined the workshop on occupational safety held at the Yangon City Hall Room No (4) and discussed disruptive elements and the holding of weekly workshops on occupational safety.

Then, YCDC member U Aung Naing coordinated the discussion. — MNA

MoC oversees daily import of anti-COVID-19 devices

THE Ministry of Commerce (MoC) is facilitating the import process of 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.

Anti-COVID-19 equipment was imported by two companies using five vehicles. A total of 37 tonnes of masks were imported via Chinshwehaw Trading Zone yesterday.

From 1 to 11 December, a total of 185 tonnes of liquid oxygen carried by 77 vehicles, 4,920 empty oxygen tanks, one oxygen plant, 514 oxygen concentrators and 394 tonnes of masks were imported.

In the meantime, seven bowsers transported liquid oxygen to Yangon, two boxers to Mandalay and one to Monywa, and one oxygen plant was also transported to Mandalay.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), 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

Anti-Covid devices are transported by a lorry to where necessary.

Over 292,000 acres of winter oilseed cultivated in Mandalay Region

THAN 292,000 acres of winter oilseed plantation have been earmarked in seven districts in Mandalay Region for the mini-budget period, said Daw Toe Toe Win, staff officer of the Mandalay Region Department of Agriculture.

During the mini-budget period, more than 292,000 acres of oilseeds and winter crops such as sesame and nuts are being cultivated in townships in seven districts.

To date, a total of over 217,000 acres of winter oil crops have been planted in the region.

"Oilseeds are grown with the main goal of ensuring sufficient cooking oil in the region. There is enough cooking oil in the region. Oil crops are grown annually.

To date, a total of over 217,000 acres of winter oil crops have been planted in the region. **PHOTO : MIN HTET AUNG**

Last year, the region produced 54.92 baskets of winter groundnuts per acre. Yields of winter sesames are 8.64 baskets and sunflowers are about 26 baskets per acre in winter. The yield of mustard is 7.7 baskets per acre and sesame are 6.4 baskets per acre. Most winter oil crops are grown in Pyin Oo Lwin District," Daw Toe Toe Win explained.

Target areas for the winter oil crops are 5,413 acres in Mandalay District, 80,079 acres in Pyin Oo Lwin District, 61,016 acres in Kyaukse District, 15,705 acres in Meiktila District, 62,660 acres in Myingyan District, 10,071 acres in Nyaung Oo District, and 58,000 acres in Yamethin District.

A total of 292,000 acres of the oilseed plantations have been cultivated in the region, a local farmer said. —Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/GNLM

Course conclusion ceremony of tourism awareness training held in Kengtung township

Ethnic Akha people. **PHOTO : AUNG ZIN MYINT**

UNDER the guidance of the Shan State government and the arrangement of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, a course conclusion ceremony of Tourism Awareness Training for Tourism Development was held in Hokyin Akha (Tourism village), Lwemwe village-tract, Kengtung Township in Shan State (East) on 10 December.

The training aimed to increase employment opportunities and income of local ethnic people by local and foreign tourists visiting the area and to identify and preserve the traditional culture of the Akha people.

The training covered subjects related to community-based tourism and nature-based tourism, basic English, first aid training from 22 November to 10 December, with a total of 30 trainees from Hokyin village. At the course conclusion ceremony, the trainees received the course certificates.

Hokyin Village is being implemented as a community-based tourism area under the supervision of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, Kengtung Branch, it is reported. — Aung Zin Myint/GNLM

17 Myanmar migrant workers return from Laos

LAOS officials handed over 17 Myanmar migrant workers – eight males and nine females – to Myanmar officials at Wampong port in Tachilek Township of Shan State (East) on 10 December.

Township Administrator U Tin Oo Kyaw and members conducted health checks on the returnees at Wang Lone Quarantine Centre. They all were tested negative and their swab samples were sent to Taunggyi Township on the third day. If their results show negative, they will be sent to their respective regions. — Yar Say (IPRD)/GNLM

PHOTO : YAR SAY (IPRD)

IDPs receive Sinopharm COVID vaccines in Namtu

Inoculation drive in Namtu. **PHOTO : LU MAW (IPRD)**

HEALTH officials gave the second dose of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines to over 18-year-old IDPs at township hall of Namtu in Pamheit Quarter, Namtu Township, Kyaukme District, northern Shan State yesterday morning.

The vaccination was carried out under the close supervision of the chairman of the COVID-19 disease prevention and control committee and township administrator U Win Min Tun.

Health workers from Township People's Hospital and volunteers from social welfare organizations also participated in the vaccination programme.

On 13 November, the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine was administered at the Kyusaw (IDP) camp in Namtu Township. A second dose of Sinopharm vaccine was also given to 117 people aged 18 and over in Kachin (IDP) and Lisu (IDP) camps, according to an official from the township People's Hospital.

A total of 12,431 people in the township have been vaccinated against COVID-19, according to an official from the township COVID-19 disease prevention and control committee. — Lu Maw (IPRD)/GNLM

Rice price drips by K3,500-K10,000 per bag within one month

THE rice price in the domestic market has dropped by K3,500-K10,000 per bag (containing 108 pounds) during a month, according to the rice market.

Last November, the rice price for Pawsan (80 marks) fetched K44,600 per bag while Pawsan (90 marks) was K46,700 per bag. Pawkywe (80 marks) rice was priced at K36,200 per bag while Pawkywe (90 marks) hit K37,600 per bag. The price of Emahta rice (80 marks) was sold at K28,000 per bag while Emahta rice (90 marks) was priced at K29,600 per bag.

In December, the price of Pawsan (80 marks) rice reached K35,000 per bag while Pawsan (90 marks) is fetched K36,500 per bag.

The Pawkywe (80 marks) is priced at K32,500 per bag while the Pawkywe (90 marks) is selling for K33,800 per bag. The price of Eaimahta rice (80 marks) is priced K24,000 per bag while Eaimahta rice (90 marks) is fetched K25,500 per bag.

This year, the rice price has been rising steadily since last May, and only the price stabilized in October.

As a result, the price of a 108-pound bag of rice dropped from K3,500 to K10,200 during a month.

Rice prices are falling when the rice from the latest harvest has started entering the markets, according to the rice market.

Currently, the monsoon paddies cultivated in May, June, July and August are harvested and started entering the market these days.

This year, the rice price has been rising steadily since last May, and only the price stabilized in October.

Myanmar Rice and Paddy Traders Association, rice wholesale centre (Wahdan), traders and brokers, with a view to offering the rice at a fairer price, sell rice at cheaper prices to the public.

Ayeyawady Pawsan, Shwebo Pawsan, Pawkywel, short-matured rice varieties (90 days) and sticky rice are being sold at a cheaper price between K23,500 and K54,000 per bag.

About one to five 108-pounds bags can be individually purchased. Those who want to buy them can come and buy at the Wahdan rice wholesale centre located at No 100 between Lanthit and Wahdan Street, Port Compound, Lanmadaw Township, Yangon through the contact numbers (09421167474 and 01218266-68) of the centre. — NN/GNLM

Dried tea leaves from Homalin sold for nearly K5,000 per viss

The dried tea leaves from Homalin township are conveyed to Kalay, Tamu, Mawlaik, Monywa and Mandalay markets. **PHOTO : LU LAY**

THE dried tea leaves from the Homalin area in the Khamti District of the Sagaing Region are being sold for nearly K5,000 per viss, said Daw Su Su Htway, township the head of the Agriculture Department from Homalin Township.

"Currently, the price of dried tea leaves is nearly K5,000 per viss in the local market.

The dried tea leaves price is getting high these days. The dried tea leaves from Homalin township is bitter and people are love to consume them," she continued.

Last year, the dried tea leaves prices were fetched K4,500 per viss in Homalin township. But this year, people are selling them for nearly K5,000 per viss.

The dried tea leaves from Homalin township are conveyed to Kalay, Tamu, Mawlaik, Monywa and Mandalay markets.

During the 2021-22 financial year, the tea leaves have been cultivated in the Sagaing region since June 2021. Currently, the agriculture department cultivated 290 acres of tea leaves in Mawlaik, 9,694 acres in Khamti, 911 acres in the Naga region, 487 acres in Katha, 564 acres in Kawlin districts, according to the Sagaing Region Agriculture Department.

The experts from the relevant township Agriculture Department is providing agriculture techniques to farmers for improving high yield. During the COVID-19 period, the staff from Sagaing Region Agriculture Department are being trained online with experts from the head office, according to the Sagaing Region Agriculture Department.

There are some 8,900 hectares of tea planted across Myanmar and most of them were exported to China market. Although local tea is exported to Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea and Singapore, the largest market remains China. — Lu Lay/GNLM

Gangaw township cultivates sunflowers as winter crops

GANGAW township is growing sunflowers, which are oil crops on their farmlands as winter crops. The local farmers are growing the sunflowers on the fields separately and also in a mixture with the butter bean farmlands, according to the sunflower growers from Gangaw township.

Sunflower cultivation in Gangaw township has been introduced for 16 years. The local people are growing mostly Sanpho sunflowers.

"We have been growing the sunflowers for more than 10 years. Earlier, we grew only the butterbean as winter crops. Now, we are growing the sunflowers on the butter bean farmland as a mixed crop. We are growing five butterbean rolls and one sunflower roll system. This system won't drop the bean yield but will get extra sunflowers. Sunflower farmlands are put under cultivation only after paddy cultivation," said a sunflower grower from Gangaw township.

The Gangaw Township grew 4,025 acres of sunflower farmland as winter crops in 2018, 4,484 acres in 2019 and 3,290 acres in 2020. After the cultivation of monsoon paddy, the sunflower is grown continuously on monsoon farmlands.

The cultivation of sunflowers cost over K200,000 per acre. Each acre of sunflower yielded over 50 baskets.

The grinding of sunflower can produce 4 visses of oil and the sunflower oil is sold for K 5,000 per viss. — Aye Maung/GNLM

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12 DECEMBER 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Try to develop agriculture and livestock farming for food sufficiency

FOOD sufficiency in respective areas can be dubbed as the prosperity of the country. It is because the prosperity of the country reflects the physical and mental wellbeing of the people.

As such, authorities in regions and states including those of Nay Pyi Taw Territorial Area should make strenuous efforts for ensuring food sufficiency in respective areas in order to meet the food demands of the people.

In this regard, the agriculture and livestock sector play a key role in the implementation of the food sufficiency projects, engaging in the layer, broiler, dairy cow, beef cattle and hog farming works with the encouragement of the authorities. These livestock farming works must be under systematic management for the production of meat and eggs to be supplied to meet the daily public consumption.

Indeed, the livestock and agricultural sector directly affects the food sufficiency for the people. Whenever such a sector is developing, it is sure that the people residing across Myanmar would never face starvation.

However, it can be seen that the per-acre yield of certain strains of crops dips in some regions and states. Local farmers need to systematically use the agricultural inputs so as to resurge the per-acre yields of crops. For the time being, the government is striving for a sufficient supply of fertilizers to the farmers across the nation.

On the other hand, it is necessary to widen the scope of local farmers to use the waste from livestock farms as natural fertilizers in crop plantations. In fact, it is a move not only to save the expenditure on agricultural tasks but also to substitute the import goods as well as to minimize the air pollution for the environmental conservation.

That is why it is necessary to operate systematic livestock breeding farms so as to produce natural fertilizers. Moreover, efforts are being made to resume the operation of the fertilizer plants at home for meeting the local demands.

Only then will fertilizers, quality strains of crops, proper use of pesticides and chemicals, systematic agricultural techniques and sufficient supply of agricultural water result in the high yield of crops in the coming season. The high per-acre yield of crops including paddy will earn incomes from the export of agricultural products to the international markets not only for the State and but also for the local farmers.

Indeed, the livestock and agricultural sector directly affects the food sufficiency for the people. Whenever such a sector is developing, it is sure that the people residing across Myanmar would never face starvation.

■■■

Take practice to shoot questions in collecting data

By Aung Kyaw Thant

MOST of the people in Myanmar society are weak in observing, studying and collecting data on any topics to have comprehensive stories. They do not thoroughly know how to collect and structure a comprehensive story with efforts for picking out the facts and figures as well as general information. It is because they experience lesser practices and knowledge in basic learning techniques as they did not have efficient training since their young age.

In developing and developed countries, not only children but youths start their learning education in a systematic manner under the training of experienced and well-versed teachers and trainers. The systematic training and teaching turn out them to be qualified educated persons in all sectors. Due to the systematic knowledge of how to analyze and approach the topics, they can step their learning for having the modern management and administrative knowledge to be applied in their daily workplaces. Holding the rationality, they can achieve success in all sectors whenever they do every assignment.

Inaccuracies in interrogations

In Myanmar tradition, an ancient story is handed over to new generations in retelling it to the children as a bed story. The parents and adults tell such a story to the younger ones at night. The story features that once, there was a king who appointed two lads in his royal palace. But, one of the lads had got the favour of the king but he was a just civilian. Another one was a brother-in-law of the king but he was severally scolded by the king. So, the second one was dissatisfied with the acts of the king. One day, he complained to his king about how he was scolded by the king servants and royal families many times.

Hence, the king called the two lads in his presence and ordered them to check a dog family under the floor of the royal hall. Both lads went down the hall and check the dog family together. When the king raised the questions, the brother-in-law of the king could not give the complete answers to the king. Whenever the king quested, he went down and checked the dog family again and again due to his inaccuracies.

The civilian lad, in his turn, perfectly replied to the questions of the king. He could express the number of puppies, their different colours and gender to make satisfaction with his answers for the king. The lad did not seek the dog family again. He could reply to the questions of the king at once. As such, the king compared the endeavours of both lads and explained the root cause of his favour given to the civilian lad. Finally, the brother-in-law of the king really understood his weakness and decided to improve himself.

Shoot questions to ourselves

In this regard, the civilian lad needed to quest himself how many puppies there were, what was their colours and what was their gender. He noticed that how the king could shoot questions to him in the event and how he could prepare it. As a result of his preparations, he could reply a complete answer to the king. Likewise, all the people need to seek the answers by raising questions to them based on time and situation. If they have a chance to raise questions to any others, they can ask about the topics they wish to know. Every event is based on what, which, who, where, when, for what and how. If their questions are filled with six Ws and one H, the story they compile may be almost completed. At this juncture, they should try hard not to leave any reasons for the topics while interviewing the experienced persons or those related to the topics.

No matter what various subjects you learn, you have to improve your capacity since your young age for keeping abreast of others in society. But you need to try hard to accumulate newer and newer knowledge in your soul in real-time. You should collect general knowledge in all subjects as much as possible. Based on these various items of knowledge, you should analyze and scrutinize new items of further knowledge whether they are useful or useless and true or false.

Only when they can raise all proper questions will it be easy to compile the topics or reply to the questioner. Hence, they should adopt good plans related to the questions. They should raise the smart questions which must be confined to time and situation. After leaving the scene or the interviewees, it would be difficult to raise the questions again.

Don't be dissatisfied with interviewees

Generally, the interviewees don't have spare time. They are afraid of refusing the interviews although they are busy with daily works or businesses. As they set aside their interests in replying to your questions, you should not harm them inconvenient. Your questions must be accurate and correct. These questions must be clear and simple as well as understandable for them. Moreover, you should take the upper hand in the interviews. Your questions must be combined with your sweet smiles. If so, your process will be smooth.

While in interviews, you should respectfully note down or record the talks of the interviewees. After completion of your questions, you should make your conclusion with goodbye. After that, you should start your more process of compiling the topics with answers to the questions. Good composition and procedure will help you compile the topics. To be able to avoid the process similar to the event of the brother-in-law of the king, answers related to your questions should be displayed as a layout plan to have a good topic based on complete references.

Improve your capacity based on systematic learning

No matter what various subjects you learn, you have to improve your capacity since your young age for keeping abreast of others in society. But you need to try hard to accumulate newer and newer knowledge in your soul in real-time. You should collect general knowledge in all subjects as much as possible. Based on these various items of knowledge, you should analyze and scrutinize new items of further knowledge whether they are useful or useless and true or false.

Whenever you see an item of knowledge, you should raise questions to yourself related to the new item. You can quest yourself: How can I do if I make that item? How can I solve the problem if I face it? What is right or what is wrong? How did it happen in the past or how will it happen in the future? When did it happen? Where it was? If so, what will be for what? As the best way, you should collect the most useful questions to be generally used in any enquiring the events. As a result, you can face a smoother process in the events.

Furthermore, you should prepare to raise the cross-questions to others in real-time. If a person quests you, you don't hurriedly reply to him, and firstly, you should gather many questions for your response to him.

No practice in Myanmar society

Responding to the questioners with cross-questions was not done in Myanmar society. Myanmar's forefathers have been giving advice to the new generations to respectfully accept the questions and honestly reply to them. If those who were quested are younger than the questioners, the younger ones do not have the chance to respond to the questioners with the questions. If the persons who accepted the questions are elder than the questioners, the latter need to respectfully raise the questions under limitation. As a result, the questioners do not dare to raise questions to the elders due to a lack of experience. If the elder persons or high-ranking persons allow three questions, the questioners must raise just three questions. If replies are not completed, the questioners will face problems.

In consequence, no smart questions bring complete answers which cannot be used in constructing good topics. As such, further works referring to the original topics cannot show the comprehensive reasons and topics. Hence, the Myanmar people need to change their mindset to transform the concepts of the society for new generations with the encouragement to raise smart questions to the elder ones or senior officers. On one hand, those elders and senior officers need to help the questioners raise the best questions for the topics. They have to keep patience in replying to the questions through cooperation spirit. Actually, both sides need to pay mutual respect to each other in the works.

Clear instructions for subordinates

Furthermore, senior officers need to give clear and transparent instructions to the subordinates for doing their assignments. Their instructions must be completed without the need to add further points. If so, the subordinates will thoroughly understand the instructions as to their work guidelines. As such, those subordinates do not need to further ask about the assignments. If they have any problems, they have to dare to ask the officers for further information to be able to ensure a smooth process of assignments.

Furthermore, senior officers need to give clear and transparent instructions to the subordinates for doing their assignments. Their instructions must be completed without the need to add further points. If so, the subordinates will thoroughly understand the instructions as to their work guidelines. As such, those subordinates do not need to further ask about the assignments. If they have any problems, they have to dare to ask the officers for further information to be able to ensure a smooth process of assignments.

All in all, the entire Myanmar people need to dare to raise necessary questions to the officers to seek the best answers. The officers need to cooperate with subordinates in solving the problems of overcoming the challenges at the workplace by giving clear and transparent instructions. Likewise, the elder and the younger in the society need to build mutual trust but it should remove a red tape between them. If they all understand such a process, members of society will have to share the future for their interests.

■■■

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 11 December 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 12 December 2021: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Sagaing and Mandalay regions and Kachin and Northern Shan states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Lower Sagaing, Magway, and Taninthayi regions and (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Chin and Rakhine states and generally fair 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 -6) 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 and Chin states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 December 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 December 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHB0URING AREA FOR 12 December 2021: Partly cloudy.

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Experimental mRNA vaccine for HIV shows promise in animals

A health worker verifies the process of rapid HIV/AIDS tests taken from passersby at Morelos Square in Caracas, Venezuela, on 3 December 2021. **PHOTO: YURI CORTEZ / AFP**

AN experimental HIV vaccine based on mRNA -- the same technology used in two highly successful Covid-19 vaccines -- has shown promise in experiments in mice and monkeys, according to a study published Thursday in Nature Medicine.

The research, which was carried out by scientists at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Moderna and other institutions, demonstrated that the vaccine was safe and prompted desired antibody and cellular immune responses against an HIV-like virus.

Rhesus macaques that received a priming shot followed by multiple boosters had a 79 per cent lower per-exposure risk of infection by simian-human immunodeficiency virus (SHIV) compared to unvaccinated animals.

"Despite nearly four decades of effort by the global research community, an effective vaccine to prevent HIV remains an elusive goal," said NIAID director and co-author Anthony Fauci, in a statement.

"This experimental mRNA vaccine combines several features that may overcome shortcomings of other experimental HIV vaccines and thus represents a promising approach."

Messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) Covid vaccines work by providing cells with genetic instructions to assemble the spike protein of the coronavirus, which trains the immune system to be prepared for the actual virus. Similarly, the experimental HIV vaccine in the new research delivers coded instructions for two HIV proteins: envelope (Env) and another called Gag.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Zealand works to modernize conservation law

THE New Zealand government is stepping up its work to address long-standing problems in conservation law to lay the foundation for future reform, Conservation Minister Kiri Allan said on Friday.

"More than 4,000 native species are threatened or at risk of extinction. We are at a defining moment for nature, yet much of our legislation is decades old and not fit for purpose," Allan said in a statement.

"It is a complex web of 24 acts, developed largely on an ad-hoc basis over a span of nearly 70 years," Allan said, adding the scientific understanding of species and ecosystems has grown considerably over this time, but this is not reflected in the legislation.—Xinhua ■

At UN, a call to recognize climate change causes conflict

Niger called Thursday for a UN resolution formally linking climate change and security issues around the world but Russia, China and India opposed the idea.

President Mohamed Bazoum made the appeal at a meeting of the council, where his country holds the presidency in December.

Niger hopes for a vote on a draft resolution that asks UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "to integrate climate-related security risk as a central component into comprehensive conflict-prevention strategies."

Diplomats say that Russia has threatened to veto the draft.

"For us, a direct link between terrorism and climate change is far from obvious," Russian UN ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told the council.—AFP ■

'Nobody's dump': Lithium mine stirs unrest in Serbia

Access forbidden -- danger! warns a sign in front of a house sold to Rio Tinto, which has been paying top dollar to buy property where it wants to mine. **PHOTO: AFP**

FARMHOUSES and cornfields dot the gentle, rolling plains of Serbia's Jadar Valley, but underneath the bucolic surface lies one of Europe's largest lithium deposits -- the source fuelling the latest round of unrest in the Balkan nation.

The future of the vast mineral deposits near the city of Loznica has become the latest flashpoint in Serbia, pitting festering distrust in the country's increasingly autocratic government against Europe's plans for a greener future.

Billions are at stake with Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto boasting that the project has the potential to add a full percentage point to Serbia's gross domestic product and provide thousands of jobs. In a matter of years, this impoverished corner of Serbia nestled against the Bosnian border could be transformed into one of the industrial engines turbocharging Europe's transition to lower-carbon technology considered vital for a greener future. Lithium is a key ingredient for batteries powering electric vehicles and storing renewable energy, with soaring demand for the mineral setting off a "white gold rush" as automakers scramble to secure sufficient supplies to meet their ambitious goals to roll out new fleets in the coming years.

But environmental activists and locals living near the future mining site have accused Rio Tinto and President Aleksandar Vucic's administration of cloaking the entire project in secrecy and refusing to release environmental assessment reports.—AFP ■

Illegal but essential, migrants recycle Istanbul's waste

Refugees dig up plastic bottles, glass and other waste they then sort and sell in bulk. **PHOTO: AFP**

SHROUDED by acrid smoke, a young Afghan crouches sorting waste he has pulled from the trash bins of Istanbul, anxious that Turkey will soon strip him of even this subsistence.

"I start at eight in the morning and finish at eight at night," said Issam Raffur, who has spent four of his 20 years in Turkey.

"It is very hard and poorly paid, but I have no choice," he shrugged, smoke billowing from a fire barely warming his makeshift sorting centre on a soggy winter day.

Considered the poorest of Turkey's poor, Afghans have joined Kurds, the Laz, Roma and other ethnic minorities and undocumented migrants in doing work others snub. For less than $10 a day, they roam the streets of Istanbul, a megalopolis of nearly 16 million people straining under the weight of a currency crisis and a flood of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and other conflict-riven states. Diving headfirst into dumpsters, they dig up plastic bottles, glass and other waste they then sort and sell in bulk -- a self-organized, unregulated business that keeps the city clean, and men such as Issam fed.

But as public sentiment turns against migrants and other foreigners in Turkey, the state-appointed prefecture of Istanbul has declared this work bad for "the environment and public health".—AFP ■

COVID-19 vaccine hoarding will prolong pandemic, warns WHO amid Omicron spread

AMID the ongoing spread of Omicron variant around the world, a UN health agency panel on Thursday said that early laboratory data on the effectiveness of existing vaccines against the new COVID-19 variant is useful, but it is still unclear how effective these will be in treating severely sick patients.

There comes following reassurance from the World Health Organization (WHO) that available vaccines "hold up very well" in protecting people from the worst forms of coronavirus sickness for six months or more.

"The neutralization data has an underpinning, but it's really the clinical data that are going to be most influential about how to manage an Omicron situation," said Dr Kate O'Brien, Director, Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals at WHO.

Dr O'Brien said that collective immunity remained out of reach, partly because the vaccines in circulation today, for all their efficacy, were "not performing at the level where the concept of herd immunity is likely to be something that can be achieved".

This was at least in part because of the lack of universal vaccine coverage which has seen wealthier countries benefit from immunization campaigns, while poorer nations have suffered a dearth of lifesaving jabs, Dr O'Brien was quoted as saying by UN News.

On so-called "breakout infections" among individuals already vaccinated, it was "not surprising" that these had increased in line with greater vaccination coverage, the WHO official insisted.

"That does not mean the vaccine is not working, it simply means that a greater and greater number of people have actually been vaccinated."—ANI ■

Wealthy countries have received over 16 times more Covid-19 vaccines per person than poorer nations that rely on the Covax programme backed by the World Health Organization. **PHOTO: AFP**

COVID pandemic has fed a frightening rise in inequalities: UN on Human Rights Day

Plasters of Paris (PoP) idols depict the Hindu god Ganesh treating a COVID-19 patient, ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi Festival, in Bangalore on August 1, 2020. **PHOTO: MANJUNATH KIRAN/AFP/FILE**

DESPITE significant progress since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 73 years ago, the COVID pandemic has "fed a frightening rise in inequalities", and laid bare "many of our failures to consolidate the advances made", said UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet, in a message marking Human Rights Day.

Bachelet and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres took the opportunity to take stock of progress made, lessons learned, and put forward a new Agenda for Peace that presents a multidimensional vision of global security.

"This is an agenda of action - and an agenda of rights," Bachelet said.

'Our Common Agenda', a framework set out by the UN Secretary-General in September 2021, is a new social contract firmly anchored in human rights, calling for renewed solidarity across the world.—AFP ■

Slovakia eases Covid rules despite surge in cases

THE Slovak government allowed shops, ski resorts and churches to reopen Friday to those who are vaccinated or have recovered from Covid, despite having the highest infection rate in the world. The EU member of 5.4 million people, which went into partial lockdown late last month, registered 1,099 cases per 100,000 people over the past seven days, according to an AFP tally. The decision to ease restrictions came after public criticism of the government's policies over not being able to go Christmas shopping or make plans for the holidays. "The Covid situation is still very serious but we have it under control," Health Minister Vladimir Lengvarsky said this week after the decision was announced.—AFP ■

People sit at a terrace cafe in Bratislava, Slovakia, after the government loosened restrictions to contain the coronavirus on 6 May. **VLADIMIR SIMICEK/AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK economic recovery already slowed pre-Omicron: data

BRITAIN'S economic growth recovery slowed in October, official data showed Friday, even before the appearance of the Omicron coronavirus variant that has pushed the UK government to restore restrictions.

Gross domestic product increased 0.1 per cent in October compared with output of 0.6 per cent the previous month, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. In response, finance minister Rishi Sunak said the government had "always acknowledged there could be bumps on our road to recovery". The government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson will from Monday tighten virus restrictions in England as Omicron cases surge, including guidance to work from home and mandatory Covid passports.—AFP ■

Omicron drives the resurgence of COVID-19 cases

SOUTH African Health Minister Joe Phaahla told a digital press briefing on Friday that the new variant Omicron was responsible for the resurgence of COVID-19 cases.

"Recent genomic sequencing results revealed that Omicron was the dominant variant among samples sequenced during November 2021 - 70 per cent (250/358) as of yesterday," he said.

Weekly cases in Gauteng province have increased by 415 per cent for the week ending December 4 compared to the previous week, while hospital admissions rose 204 per cent.—Xinhua ■

No fans in China over Covid fears

THE Chinese Super League will be played behind closed doors because of the pandemic when it resumes after a four-month break.

Matches in China's top flight restart on Sunday after a hiatus so that the national side could concentrate on World Cup qualifiers.

But after fans were permitted at some games earlier this year, they won't be allowed "in order to protect the health of the public", the CSL said in a statement.

It comes with the Beijing Winter Olympics less than two months away.

The CSL will determine at a later date whether games can be opened back up to the public, based on the Covid situation at the time.— AFP ■

Sri Lankan exporters positive on growth outlook: survey

Photo taken on 6 October 2021 shows the world's largest container vessel "Ever Ace" at the Colombo Port in the Sri Lankan capital. **PHOTO: AJITH PERERA/XINHUA**

SRI Lankan exporters are optimistic about growth in exports, despite increases in global freight and shipping costs, local media citing a survey reported here Friday. According to data from the bi-annual Export Barometer Survey by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 48 per cent of respondents expected moderate to high growth in exports, while 45 per cent expected a moderate to high increase in capacity utilization in the next six months.

However, 84 per cent of survey respondents said that they experienced high air freight costs while 87 per cent experienced high container shipping costs. The main reasons given for these were a shortage of vessels and flights, and delays in goods clearance.

About 75 per cent of the respondents said that they had found new export opportunities, and were exploring new markets or products. As many as 11 per cent of the respondents were looking at new markets in the United States while 5 per cent were looking at new markets in China. The survey included 120 respondents, many hailing from Sri Lanka's Western Province where export-oriented industries are concentrated. — Xinhua ■

Britain lifting post-Fukushima restrictions on Japan food imports

THE British government has started the process to lift import restrictions on farm products from Japan, a measure imposed in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, potentially clearing the hurdles for such imports as early as next spring, the farm ministry said Friday.

In its assessment of the possible health risks from Japanese food imports, Britain has concluded that removing the import restrictions would not affect consumers in the country.

As part of the domestic procedure, Britain will solicit public comments on the policy change by February before making a formal decision, said the Japanese ministry of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

A total of 23 farm products such as mushrooms, bamboo shoots and bonito from Fukushima and eight other prefectures are currently subject to the import restrictions, requiring proof of having passed a check for radioactive materials when these products are shipped into Britain. The eight prefectures are Miyagi, Yamagata, Ibaraki, Gunma, Niigata, Yamanashi, Nagano and Shizuoka. If the restrictions are lifted, the certificates of origin now required for these farm products harvested or processed in Japanese prefectures other than the nine will also become unnecessary for exporting to Britain.—Kyodo ■

Photo taken on 9 November 2018, shows rice grown in Fukushima being measured for radioactive substances in Kawauchi village in Fukushima Prefecture. **PHOTO: KYODO**

EU deadline in Franco-British fishing row expires

Relations between France and Britain have soured over a post-Brexit fishing rights dispute. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

AN EU deadline for Britain to grant licences to dozens of French fishing boats appeared to expire Friday without a final breakthrough in talks, despite France's threat to seek European legal action.

France says that 104 of its boats still lack licences to operate in British and Channel Island waters that should have been granted under a Brexit deal Britain signed with the European Union in December last year.

But Britain had not made any announcement about granting more licences by 2200 GMT, while France said it was not planning any statement on the matter either.

Britain earlier denied discriminating against French boats and says many of the vessels are unable to provide the paperwork required to qualify for a licence.

"This is a technical process based on evidence rather than deadlines," a UK government spokesman said.

But France's Europe Minister Clement Beaune held out the possibility of Britain granting "a few dozen more as a gesture of goodwill," which would mean talks could continue, and the European Commission said it was hoping for a breakthrough later Friday.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

China, France to hold high-level economic dialogue

THE eighth China-France High-Level Economic and Financial Dialogue will be held on Dec 13 via video link, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson announced on Friday.

Chinese Vice Premier Hu Chunhua and French Economy and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire will co-chair the dialogue, spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a news briefing.—Xinhua ■

17 mln US workers hit by economic setback in pandemic: report

NEARLY 17 million US workers lost their jobs or saw their wages decline in the course of the pandemic, a US report said on Thursday.

This is the figure as of October this year, said the article published by the Ascent, a website focused on financial services, using data from the Washington-based think tank Economic Policy Institute.

Among those people who had suffered some sort of economic setback resulting from the pandemic, 7.4 million were, at some point, officially unemployed, while 2.9 million were unemployed in practice but were misclassified as employed or not in the labor force, said the article.

In April, 2020, the unemployment rate in the United States reached its highest level on record, it added.—Xinhua ■

SBI completes tender offer for Shinsei Bank, owns nearly 48%

ONLINE financial group SBI Holdings Inc. said Saturday it has succeeded in its tender offer for Shinsei Bank, raising its stake in the midsize lender to 47.77 per cent from the current about 20 per cent for 113.8 billion yen ($1 billion).

The announcement capped off a three-month bid that at one point turned hostile, a rare development in the Japanese financial sector. SBI launched the takeover bid in September, offering 2,000 yen per share and setting the bid's upper limit at 48 per cent.

The tender offer ended Friday. SBI, which also operates real estate and pharmaceutical businesses, now plans to apply for approval to set up a bank holding company by the end of the year at the earliest to take a majority stake in Shinsei through additional share purchases.—Kyodo ■

Airbus wants arbitration with Qatar Airways over A350

AIRBUS said Thursday it was ready to seek independent arbitration to settle a dispute with Qatar Airways, which has grounded some of its A350 planes over degradation of the exterior fuselage surface.

The airline, one of the Gulf region's "big three" carriers, said in August that it was also not accepting further deliveries of the wide-body planes until Airbus had solved the problem and would not accept "anything other than aircraft that continue to offer its customers the highest possible standard of safety". But Airbus said the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) had confirmed its findings that the paint-related issue had "no airworthiness impact on the A350 fleet."—AFP ■

ExxonMobil, Qatar sign Cyprus gas deal despite Turkey opposition

US giant ExxonMobil and Qatar Energy signed a contract Friday for oil and gas exploration and production-sharing off the divided island of Cyprus despite Turkey's opposition to the deal.

Cypriot Energy Minister Natasa Pilides, Varnavas Theodosiou, CEO of ExxonMobil Cyprus, and Ali al-Mana, director of Qatar Energy's International Upstream and Exploration, signed the contract in Nicosia.

It is the second gas exploration contract that the consortium has signed for Block 5 in the island's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

ExxonMobil is one of the world's largest publicly traded international oil and gas companies. **PHOTO: EXXONMOBIL/AFP**

In February 2019, the consortium discovered a huge natural gas reserve off Cyprus in Block 10, the island's largest find to date, holding an estimated five to eight trillion cubic feet.

The consortium plans to drill an appraisal well on Block 10 in late December, with results expected by the end of February.

Oil and gas drilling off Cyprus has been interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Despite the increasingly difficult working environment for the global oil and gas industry, today we are taking a decisive step towards enhancing our mutually beneficial partnership," Pilides said at Friday's signing ceremony.

Asked about Turkey's negative reaction to the licensing of Block 5, Pilides said: "We proceed based on international law and the Law of the Sea; this has always been our principle."

Fieldwork on Block 5 will begin in the second half of 2022, she said. Turkey has threatened to prevent ExxonMobil's search for oil and gas off Cyprus after Nicosia awarded it the rights to Block 5.—AFP ■

Daimler Truck rolls into stock market after Mercedes split

All European Daimler Trucks & Buses plants should produce co2-neutral by the year of 2022. Within Daimler Trucks, FUSO has been a front-runner in the light-duty truck segment, selling its iconic Canter for the past 50 years. **PHOTO: DAIMLER/AFP**

DAIMLER Truck launched on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange on Friday after the heavy-goods operation was spun off from its holding group, soon to be renamed as Mercedes-Benz.

Truck horns accompanied the ringing of the bell to open the market by Daimler Truck chief executive Martin Daum.

Daimler Truck opened the day at 28 euros, valuing the company at 23 billion euros ($26 billion). The share price rose to around 30 euros during trading before falling back during afternoon trading.

The stock market entry was an "historic day", Daum told AFP, adding that the sector was going through "the biggest upheaval in its history" as it leaves combustion engines behind.

Daimler Truck is targeting an entry into the DAX, when the 40-member blue-chip index is next updated in the first quarter of 2022.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCP GRAZ VOY.NO. (21007N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCP GRAZ VOY.NO. (21007N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-12-2021** 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.

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Invitation For Open tender No.(1/2022)

1. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines invites to submit the tender quotation sale open tender of (1608.574) Metric Tons, (11) Lots of Cathode Copper by United States Dollar as follow;
   (a) (108.574) Metric Tons (1) Lot, Yangon, Warehouse
   (b) (100) Metric Tons (5) Lots, Yangon, Warehouse
   (c) (200) Metric Tons (5) Lots, Yangon, Warehouse
2. The base price of the Cathode Copper will be determined based on the Unknown Price of the Copper at the London Metal Exchange on the opening day of the tender, and the bidding price will be (LME + Premium) and the highest bidder will be the winner of the tender.
3. The closing date and time of the tender is 11.1.2022 at (14:00) hours and opening time of tender is at (15 :00) hours that day.
4. For any further detailed information, it is requested to contact the telephone number (+95) 067 3409378 and 067 3409372, Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Tender Committee
Department of Mines
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

NEWS IN BRIEF

Four convicted for Brazil disco fire that killed 242

A Brazilian court convicted four people for their role in a nightclub fire that left 242 people dead nearly a decade ago, handing down sentences of up to 22 years.

The 2013 fire at the nightclub in the southern town of Santa Maria started when members of a musical band playing that night lit flares that set fire to the ceiling. Two owners of the Kiss night club and two members of the Gurizada Fandangueira band were found guilty of murder and attempted murder of the victims, mostly young university students.

Judge Orlando Faccini delivered the verdict on the tenth day of an emotional trial held in Porto Alegre, the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

"The defendants' culpability is high... this much life was not taken away by chance," he said. Club co-owners Elissandro Callegaro Spohr, 38, and Mauro Londero Hoffmann, 56, received 22.5 and 19.5 years respectively.—AFP ■

One year on, Iranian dissident's execution rattles exiles

ONE year after dissident Ruhollah Zam was executed in Iran after apparently being lured from France, his hanging strikes fear into Iranian opposition exiles over the reach of the Islamic Republic. Zam, the founder of a popular Telegram channel despised by the Iranian authorities for its use in November 2019 protests, was executed on 12 December last year just weeks after leaving France, where he had refugee status, on a mysterious trip to Iraq. Colleagues say he was abducted in Iraq by Iranian forces, taken over the border, paraded on TV, forced to take part in a televised "confession", convicted and then hanged with astonishing speed.

Activists argue that his abduction and killing is part of a long history of reprisals carried out by Iran against opponents living outside its borders, dating back to the first months after the Islamic Revolution in 1979.—AFP ■

Iraq announces end of US-led combat mission in Iraq

A US soldier carries a javelin launcher during a military exercise between the Syrian Democratic Forces and the US-led international coalition against the Daesh group, in the countryside of Deir Ezzor in northeastern Syria on 7 December 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

IRAQI National Security Adviser Qasim al-Araji announced on Thursday the end of the combat mission in Iraq and the withdrawal of the US-led coalition forces, the official television reported.

"Today we have finished the last round of dialogue with the international coalition, which started last year, to officially announce the end of combat mission for the coalition forces and their withdrawal from Iraq," the state-run Iraqiya channel quoted al-Araji as saying.

Al-Araji said that the relationship with the international coalition "will continue in the aspects of training, advice", the channel said.

On 24 November, Tahseen al-Khafaji, spokesman of the Iraqi Joint Operations Command, said the foreign combat forces would leave Iraq within 15 days, except for some advisers who will stay to support the Iraqi forces. "Ending the presence of the foreign forces is proceeding according to the plan, and there is no military base for them except for limited presence in Ayn al-Asad Air Base in the western province of Anbar," al-Khafaji said.

On 5 January 2020, the Iraqi parliament passed a resolution requiring the government to end the presence of foreign forces in the country.—Xinhua ■

Internet guardians want to break web's language barriers

WHEN website addresses using writing systems like Chinese and Arabic were introduced back in 2009, it was hailed as a step that would transform the internet.

But 12 years later, the vast majority of the web remains wedded to the Roman alphabet -- and ICANN, the organisation in charge of protecting the internet's infrastructure, is on a mission to change it.

"The truth of the matter is that even if half the world's population uses the internet today, it's the elite of the world -- mainly those living in cities, mainly those with a good income," Goran Marby, head of the US-based non-profit, told AFP in an interview.

"Shouldn't we give people the opportunity to use their own scripts, their own keyboards, their own narratives?"

It's thanks to ICANN -- the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers -- that when you type an address at the top of the screen, your computer can find the web page you're looking for.

These days it's theoretically possible to type an address in more than 150 scripts, including obscure ones like ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, and watch the page load.

ICANN says the internet could be made much more accessible for people whose languages do not use the Latin alphabet. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

But large parts of the internet remain incompatible with writing systems other than the Latin alphabet. —AFP ■

Saudi camel beauty pageant hit by cheating

The King Abdulaziz Camel Festival is an annual bedouin event held in the desert northeast of Riyadh that lures breeders from around the Gulf with prize money of up to $66 million. **PHOTO: AFP**

A high-stakes camel beauty pageant in Saudi Arabia has been hit by a cheating scandal after 43 entrants were disqualified for botox injections and other cosmetic enhancements.

The King Abdulaziz Camel Festival is an annual bedouin event held in the desert northeast of Riyadh that lures breeders from around the Gulf with prize money of up to $66 million.

Organisers have in recent years cracked down on cosmetic enhancements, a malpractice that has thrived amid stiff competition and despite heavy penalties. The enhancements are made in a bid to make the camels' lips droopier and their humps more shapely -- key attributes in the pageant. "Forty-three camels were disqualified after it was discovered they had been tampered with," the official Saudi Press Agency said on Thursday. It was the largest number of disqualifications since the beauty contest was inaugurated six years ago. In 2018, more than a dozen camels were barred.—AFP ■

China slams US after Biden democracy summit

US President Joe Biden speaks to representatives of more than 100 countries during a virtual democracy summit at the White House in Washington, 9 December 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

CHINA branded US democracy a "weapon of mass destruction" on Saturday, following the US-organized Summit for Democracy which aimed to shore up like-minded allies in the face of autocratic regimes.

China was left out of the two-day virtual summit -- along with countries including Russia and Hungary -- and responded by angrily accusing US President Joe Biden of stoking Cold War-era ideological divides.

"'Democracy' has long become a 'weapon of mass destruction' used by the US to interfere in other countries," a foreign ministry spokesperson said in an online statement, which also accused the US of having "instigated 'colour revolutions'" overseas.

The ministry also claimed the summit was organized by the US to "draw lines of ideological prejudice, instrumentalise and weaponise democracy... (and) incite division and confrontation."

Instead, Beijing vowed to "resolutely resist and oppose all kinds of pseudo-democracies".

Ahead of the summit, China ramped up a propaganda blitz criticizing US democracy as corrupt and a failure.— AFP ■

Hungary court avoids EU conflict after Orban challenge

HUNGARY'S constitutional court on Friday rejected a bid by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government to challenge an EU court ruling against its harsh asylum policy.

The court's decision meant it avoided a ruling on the primacy of European Union over Hungarian law, averting open conflict with Brussels.

The court however did rule that Budapest can act to protect Hungary's sovereignty.

Budapest had asked the court earlier this year to review a ruling from the European Court of Justice (ECJ) that it broke EU law by allowing police to deport or physically "push back" asylum-seekers across the Serbian border. The ruling is the latest chapter in a string of tussles that Hungary, like ally Poland, has had with Brussels over legislation that has also targeted LGBTQ people, independent media and civil society. In December 2020 the ECJ ruled that Hungary must suspend its practice of pushing back asylum-seekers to the Serbian side of its border fence erected in 2015 without launching any formal procedure.

The ruling is the latest chapter in a string of tussles that Orban's government has had with Brussels over legislation on issues such as LGBTQ people, independent media and civil society. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

According to the court, the petition by Justice Minister Judit Varga could "not be the subject of a review of the ECJ judgement", nor can it lead to an "examination of the primacy of EU law" although it said .

But in a nuanced statement it said that in areas of joint legal jurisdiction between Brussels and Hungary, Budapest has the right "to ensure the effectiveness of the joint exercise of competences".—AFP ■

New Caledonia to hold tense final vote on independence from France

THE Pacific territory of New Caledonia goes to the polls at the weekend for a third and final referendum on independence from France with campaigning marked by angry demands to call off the vote because of the Covid pandemic.

The territory, some 2,000 kilometres (1,250 miles) east of Australia, was allowed three independence referendums under a 1988 deal aimed at easing tensions on the island group.

Having rejected a breakaway from their French former colonial masters in 2018 and then again last year, the territory's 185,000 voters will be asked one last time: "Do you want New Caledonia to accede to full sovereignty and become independent?"

The vote comes against the backdrop of increasingly strained ties between Paris and its allies in the region. France regards itself as a major Indo-Pacific power thanks to overseas territories like New Caledonia. President Emmanuel Macron has insisted that the French state takes no side in the referendum and only has the job of ensuring it proceeds fairly and smoothly. "The day after (the vote), whatever the result is, there will be a shared life" between New Caledonia and France, he said on Thursday.

Polls open on Sunday at 8:00 am local time (2100 GMT Saturday) and close at 6:00 pm local time (0500 GMT Sunday) with the results expected a few hours later.—AFP ■

New Caledonia has elected Louis Mapou as its first pro-independence president since a 1998 deal with Paris to grant more political power to the French Pacific territory. Member of the Uni party Louis Mapou attends the election of the 17th government of New Caledonia, in Noumea, on 17 February 2021. **PHOTO: THEO ROUBY / AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistani militant group not to extend truce with Pakistan gov't

PAKISTANI militant group Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan has said that it will not extend a truce with the Pakistan government, claiming the ceasefire agreement concluded last month has not been fulfilled.

Muhammad Khorasani, a spokesman of the TTP group, said in a statement Thursday that it is difficult to continue the ceasefire as the government has not released 102 fighters of the group that Islamabad had agreed to set free.

He also said the government failed to constitute a negotiating team for peace talks and continued military action against the group during the ceasefire. The statement came as the monthlong truce announced by the two sides on 8 November expired on Thursday. The government has not commented on the group's statement.—Kyodo ■

Mexico urges US migration rethink after horror crash kills 55

MEXICO on Friday urged Washington to rethink its migration policy after a horror road accident killed 55 undocumented migrants in a truck on a major transit route to the United States.

Bodies draped in white sheets lined the roadside near Tuxtla Gutierrez in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, where a truck transporting some 160 migrants – most from Central America – overturned Thursday.

Passengers, bleeding and with broken bones, lay in the road crying out in pain after the latest disaster to befall desperate people travelling through Mexico in search of a better life in the United States.

More than 100 people were injured.

Thousands attempt the long, often dangerous, and expensive journey every year to escape violence and poverty in their home nations in South and Central America.—AFP ■

Myanmar's playoff hopes dashed in 0-4 loss to Thailand

A semifinal dream of Myanmar men's national football team has been decimated after a big 0-4 defeat to Thailand at the third group match of the Suzuki Cup at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore yesterday.

Myanmar's head coach Antoine Hey made a line-up with his favourite boys, including Myo Min Latt (GK), David Htan, Win Moe Kyaw, Hein Phyo Win, Hlaing Bobo, Maung Maung Lwin, Lwin Moe Aung and Than Paing.

Thailand invaded the game from the start. After 20 minutes, the Thai made more shinning tactics, bringing with a goal up to lead in the 23rd minute. Teerasil touched the ball into the net beautifully.

At the end of the first half, Thailand led Myanmar 1-0 with 11-3 shots on target and 4-0 on target.

Thailand came to get a penalty in the early minute of the second half. Teerasil was responsible for the kick and Thailand led 2-0 in the 53rd minute.

In 76 minutes, substituted Worachit Kanitsribamphen received an open ball from Supachok Sarachat, a single stroke of tungsten net, leaving Thailand 3-0 away.

Again, Supachok Sarachat shot close for Thailand to defeat Myanmar 4-0 at 90+2 minutes, collecting six full points from 2 matches, but Myanmar is out of the tourney with just three points earned. — GNLM

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.

Haaland's agent lists Man City, Bayern, Barca, Real as options

MINO Raiola, the agent of Erling Haaland, has named Manchester City, Real Madrid, Barcelona and Bayern Munich as clubs the Norwegian star striker could join in 2022.

The 21-year-old has a contract with Dortmund until 2024, but his tally of 23 goals in 20 Champions League games for Dortmund and ex-club Salzburg has attracted Europe's top teams. There is a release clause, reportedly for 80 million euros ($90 million), in Haaland's contract which becomes active in 2022.

Raiola has told broadcaster Sport1 there is "a great chance that Erling will leave" at the end of this season.

"Maybe this summer, maybe the summer after," Raiola added. "He can - and will - take the next step. Bayern, Real, Barcelona, (Man) City - these are the big clubs he can go to.—AFP ■

Watford not fit for 'battle', says Ranieri afer Brentford defeat

WATFORD manager Claudio Ranieri said his side have to learn to battle for their place in the Premier League after conceding twice in the final six minutes to lose 2-1 at Brentford on Friday.

Ranieri's men were heading six points clear of the relegation zone thanks to an Emmanuel Dennis header midway through the first half.

But they failed to hold out as Watford slipped to a sixth defeat in seven league games.

"It is a missed opportunity," said Ranieri. "We knew it was an important game.

"The Brentford team were ready for the battle and some of my players weren't. Every situation is a fight and we have to be smarter."

Brentford produced a late fightback to beat Watford 2-1. **PHOTO: AFP**

Brentford were still missing talismanic striker Ivan Toney due to a positive test for coronavirus, but the Bees turned the game around in a dramatic finale.

Captain Pontus Jansson powered home a header for his first goal for the club from Marcus Forss' flick on.Substitute Saman Ghoddos then lured William Troost-Ekong into a rash challenge inside the box four minutes into stoppage time.

Bryan Mbuemo took responsibility from the spot in the absence of Toney and coolly sent Daniel Bachmann the wrong way to secure just Brentford's second win in nine league games.

"It's crazy. This is what football is all about. These are the moments we are working so hard to try and achieve," said Brentford boss Thomas Frank.—AFP ■

Norway's Magnus Carlsen retains world chess title

NORWEGIAN grandmaster Magnus Carlsen retained his world chess title on Friday as he recorded a fourth win over Russian challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi.

Carlsen sealed victory by winning the 11th game of the 14-game series in their two-million-euro ($2.3 million) match in Dubai.

Nepomniachtchi resigned with a brief handshake and the two players exchanged a few words. Carlsen, who turned 31 during the competition, has now won five world titles in a row, taking the first in 2013.

The contest in Dubai started with five draws before the Norwegian won the longest game ever played at a world championships at nearly eight hours to unlock the contest.

Carlsen exploited mis-steps by his opponent to win games eight and nine. Then, as black in Friday's game 11, pounced on more inaccuracies by the Russian to retain the title 7.5-3.5 with three games still to play.—AFP ■