TAKE SPECIAL CARE OF FIRES, NOT AT FORESTS BUT RESIDENCES PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 256, 13th Waning of Nadaw 1383 ME www.gnlm.com.mm Friday, 31 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.

Smooth peace processes much depend on the cooperation of the people and international community, says Senior General

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the meeting 4/2021 of the Union government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw on 30 December 2021.

IT is expected that peace talks will be held in the future to boost the benefits related to the peace, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 4/2021 of the Union government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the office of SAC Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said some restrictions of prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 will be eased in some regions and states after coordinating with officials as the infection rate of the pandemic remarkably declines. But it is necessary to take care of the COVID-19 variant Omicron. Hence, hospitals have been prepared for the prevention, control and treatment of the disease with oxygen and drugs.

Prioritizing agriculture and livestock much supports the State economy. Except for some factories, most of the factories resume operation. The declining disease infection rate helps the tourism sector to resume.

The government always invites peace talks. As such, it is expected that peace talks will be held in the future to boost the benefits related to peace. Having all tasks concerning the last point of the five-point road map of the State Administration Council been accomplished, a new election will be held and the State power will be handed over to the winning party. Smooth peace processes depend on the cooperation of the people and the international community. The first four

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The government always invites peace talks. As such, it is expected that peace talks will be held in the future to boost the benefits related to peace. Having all tasks concerning the last point of the five-point road map of the State Administration Council been accomplished, a new election will be held and the State power will be handed over to the winning party.

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Health

Order No 538/2021
12th Waning of Nadaw 1383 ME
30 December 2021

THE Ministry of Health has issued this order by exercising its authority under Section 21 (b) of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

1. The Ministry of Health issued Order No 479/2021 on 29 October 2021 not to gather more than 100 people except for exceptional cases to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
2. At present, for religious ceremonies and social events, it is announced that up to 200 people will be allowed to gather from 1-1-2022.
3. Those who fail to comply with the orders and instructions issued by the Ministry of Health and the Department of Public Health regarding the COVID-19 disease will be taken action under the existing laws.

Dr Thet Khaing Win
Union Minister

MoH to reopen final year courses of medical, dental, nursing, traditional medicine universities

THE final year MBBS Semester II (6/2019) of the universities of medicine under the Ministry of Health and final year (1/2020) courses of all universities of dental medicine, pharmacy, medical technology, nursing, community health and traditional medicines will be reopened on 6 January 2022.

Detailed information can be found on the Facebook page or websites of the respective universities or via direct contact, according to the Ministry of Health. — MNA

Four national objectives of 74th Anniversary of Independence Day 2022

1. All ethnic nationals to safeguard non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, and perpetuation of sovereignty;
2. To ensure the emergence of a good and clean government and administrative system by implementing a genuine disciplined democracy;
3. All ethnic nationals to amicably and unitedly cooperate in the country development based on the genuine Union spirit;
4. To strive for restoring perpetual peace the entire people aspire.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Education
Department of Higher Education
Announcement
Opening of University Day Classes

ALL the universities, degree colleges and colleges under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, will open the following bachelor and master day classes for the Academic Year 2019-2020 and the Academic Year 2021-2022 on 6 January 2022.

(a) Fourth Year (Law) Semester II
(b) Fourth Year (Education) Semester II
(c) Third Year (Honours) Semester I
(d) Master (Qualifying) Semester I
(e) Master (1st Year) Semester I
(f) Master (2nd Year) Semester I

Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Education

Talk show on 74th Independence Day held in community centre in Htantabin

THE Community Centre of the Department of Information and Public Relations in Htantabin Township held a Talk Show to commemorate the 74th Independence Day, which falls on 4 January 2022, yesterday morning.

At the talk show, Author Win Nwe (Pathein) and Staff Officer of the Htantabin Township IPRD Daw Su Hlaing discussed the emergence of an independent nation, the nature of independence, struggles for independence, the essence of independence and why it should be protected from loss.

Author Win Nwe (Pathein) explained the efforts of ethnic groups, students and workers who fought for independence which replaced the Union Jack flag with the Union flag at 4:20 am on 4 January 1948. He also highlighted the need for young generations to maintain independence and to be more united.

The Htantabin IPRD is holding talk show programmes and broadcasting online during the COVID-19 period. — Zin Min Htike (Htantabin)/GNLM

PHOTO : ZIN MIN HTIKE (HTANTABIN)

Winners of 74th Independence Day Contest in Mongreh awarded

PHOTO : MONGREH IPRD

WITH the supervision of the Department of Information and Public Relations, an award-giving ceremony for the contest to commemorate the 74th Independence Day, which will be convened on 4 January 2022, was held at the Basic Education High School in Mongreh, yesterday morning.

The Independence Day contest was held on 22 December at the Public Library of the Information and Public Relations Department. Twenty students from basic education middle school participated in the competition.

The winners of the pre-Independence Day quiz contest were announced by the Township Information and Public Relations Department. Township IPRD staff officer Daw Khin Mar Lar and headmistress Daw Aye Aye Myint of Mongreh Basic Education High School presented the awards respectively. — Mongreh IPRD/GNLM

National unity means not just the unity amongst the leaders. It is the wholehearted unity of the entire people across the nation irrespective of race, religion, gender or faction that drives to accomplish national tasks in order to fulfil the aspirations of the national people not only by words but also by deeds.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Bogyoke Aung San at the conference held on the middle terrace of Shwedagon Pagoda on 20-1-1946)

Smooth peace processes much depend on the cooperation of the people and international community, says Senior General

FROM PAGE-1

points of the roadmap support the last point. If one harms the first four points, it will be a hindrance to the last point. At present, the government will not change its policy.

Export volume increased from October to December, especially the export of agricultural products. With regard to the importation, palm oil and fuel oil import must be placed under control. Ministries must reduce the use of fuel oil without harming the work process. Efforts must be made to increase manufacturing rather than foodstuff and personal goods.

Regarding the storage of data at relevant ministries, the Senior General said: **"At a meeting of the economic committee, our country is weak in the storage of data. It happened not only in the term of our government but in eras of successive governments. We don't have documents and records. As we fell under colonial rules, our records were destroyed. It is very difficult to search for some documents. Some facts were extracted from the publications in the English language. Concerning our data, some of them were expressed on the palm leaves. Most of them were traditional medicine treatises. We have some records but most of them were traditional medicine treatises. If we want to know something, we are difficult to search the data. So, ministries need to systematically store the data. As another worsening one, when our offices moved to Nay Pyi Taw from Yangon, some data were left as useless ones. So, it is a root cause. Some data are not here but in Yangon.**

For example, some documents are stored at National Library in Yangon but here. Some equipments related to culture are in Yangon and here. In PyinOoLwin, I asked to open a room at PyinOoLwin Railway Station. First, the room was shut. When I ordered to open the room, I found ancient photos depicting locomotives and railway stations. They are very valuable. Some persons do not understand the value of storing documents. We have to know why we changed. How do ministries change, how our political and economic affairs changed, how our economic forms changed? For example, how do matters related to paddy, beans, oil, rubber and rubber products change in agriculture? We have documents and records in the country. Now is very easy. This era is reachable for us. We can pick out data from the last three decades. If we do so, when time changes in the coming two decades, all the time would be 50 years. If we can search data in the last 30 years, such data would be 50 years old in the coming two decades. These would be very valuable. As predecessors did not store the data, we work difficultly. So, ministries need to address such weak points."

> Priority is being given in the sports and transport sectors. In the education sector being implemented for the 30 years plan, the past curriculums used in the past was edited for the topics not in conformity with the social system of the country. Officials need to supervise the systematic construction of the universities, lecture halls, halls and gymnasiums for ensuring long term existence.

Priority is being given in the sports and transport sectors. In the education sector being implemented for the 30 years plan, the past curriculums used in the past was edited for the topics not in conformity with the social system of the country. Officials need to supervise the systematic construction of the universities, lecture halls, halls and gymnasiums for ensuring long term existence.

The Union Ministers sought the approvals for the respective sectors. In his concluding remarks, the Senior General said ministries and region and state governments need to strive for securing the deserved taxes. They have to report the proposals for exemption of tax if it is true.

Despite foreign trade volume showing a surplus, the annual budget expresses deficiency. Ministries need to practise thrifty measures as much as possible and seek ways for earning more foreign exchange. Value-added products rather than the raw materials must be exported. It is necessary to seek ways for producing and exporting value-added products by effectively applying natural resources.

Myanmar and China have signed the agreement on the direct exchange of Yuan and Kyat. Now, the government has agreed with Thailand and India to use the direct exchange of currencies of both countries.

A plan was set to vaccinate 50 per cent of the total population of the country in December. The Ministry of Health reported that more than 51 per cent of people above 18 and over 87 per cent of students above 12 have been vaccinated. But they all need to abide by the COVID-19 restrictions.

Necessary measures must be taken for anyone not to reside in the ministerial lands under the laws and procedures. Primarily, they have to serve the State interests. The Diamond Jubilee Union Day falls in 2022 and the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day also falls in 2023. The Senior General underscored the need for ministries to further emphasize their respective sectors to contribute the best to the successful holding of Diamond Jubilee ceremonies. — MNA

369 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 30 December, total figure rises to 530,645

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 530,645 after 369 new cases were reported on 30 December 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 508,053 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,265 after 3 died.—MNA

Announcement for NCA-signatory ethnic armed organizations

THE NLD extremists and their organized terrorist groups committed bomb attacks on hospitals, schools and religious buildings and killed the people in some cities after Tatmadaw had assumed the State responsibilities due to the State of Emergency on 1 February, and security forces and dutiful people work together to arrest the suspects.

Tatmadaw has strictly followed the NCA signed on 15 October 2015 and extended the nationwide ceasefire until 28 February 2022 to ensure peace.

Between 1 February and 30 December 2021, there were 3,751 violent incidents in some cities and the security forces arrested 1,492 terrorists and seized 133 weapons, 1,693 rounds of ammunition, 28 grenades, 217 homemade mines and other explosives. Moreover, the police also detained 9,958 terrorists and seized 3,417 firearms, 161,500 rounds of ammunition, 647 grenades, 6,895 homemade mines and other related materials in time.

Due to these measures, they uncovered the main terrorist groups that controlled the terrorist attacks in Yangon and cities of the southern part of the country. In 15 cases, there were 272 arrested suspects and the seizures of arms and ammunition were 228 various types of weapons, 27,228 bullets, 286 mines and grenades, including 44 pistols, eight .22 guns, 51 MK-12s, 30 M-16s, 15 M-22s, 55 AK-47s, 10 M4-A1s, five 56-1s and four M-79s.

According to the confession of suspects, they attended the explosive training at some brigades of KNU and there were 173 with exact name lists and there were some without exact name lists.

Most of the seized arms and ammunition are the ones imported to the country via the areas of KNU.

Therefore, the NCA-signatory ethnic armed organizations are urged to abide by the provisions in the NCA and to maintain their subordinates to adhere to the NCA.

They are the remnants of some of the great countries that have aided and abetted post-Cold War and post-Cold War armed conflicts in South-East Asia.

Tatmadaw has strictly followed the NCA signed on 15 October 2015 and extended the nationwide ceasefire until 28 February 2022 to ensure peace.

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services has already said, **"Tatmadaw will strictly abide by the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in restoring the perpetual peace that is needed for the country and people,"** during the meetings, discussions and ceremonies related to peace.

Moreover, peace-related matters are prioritized in the five-point roadmap and nine objectives of the State Administration Council and it also organized the National Unity and Peacemaking Central Committee, National Unity and Peacemaking Working Committee, National Unity and Peacemaking Coordination Committee to accelerate the peace processes and paved ways for effective measures for peace talks.

Therefore, the NCA-signatory ethnic armed organizations are urged to abide by the provisions in the NCA and to maintain their subordinates to adhere to the NCA. When breaching the points provided in the NCA, any necessary security measures will be undertaken for the stability of the State.

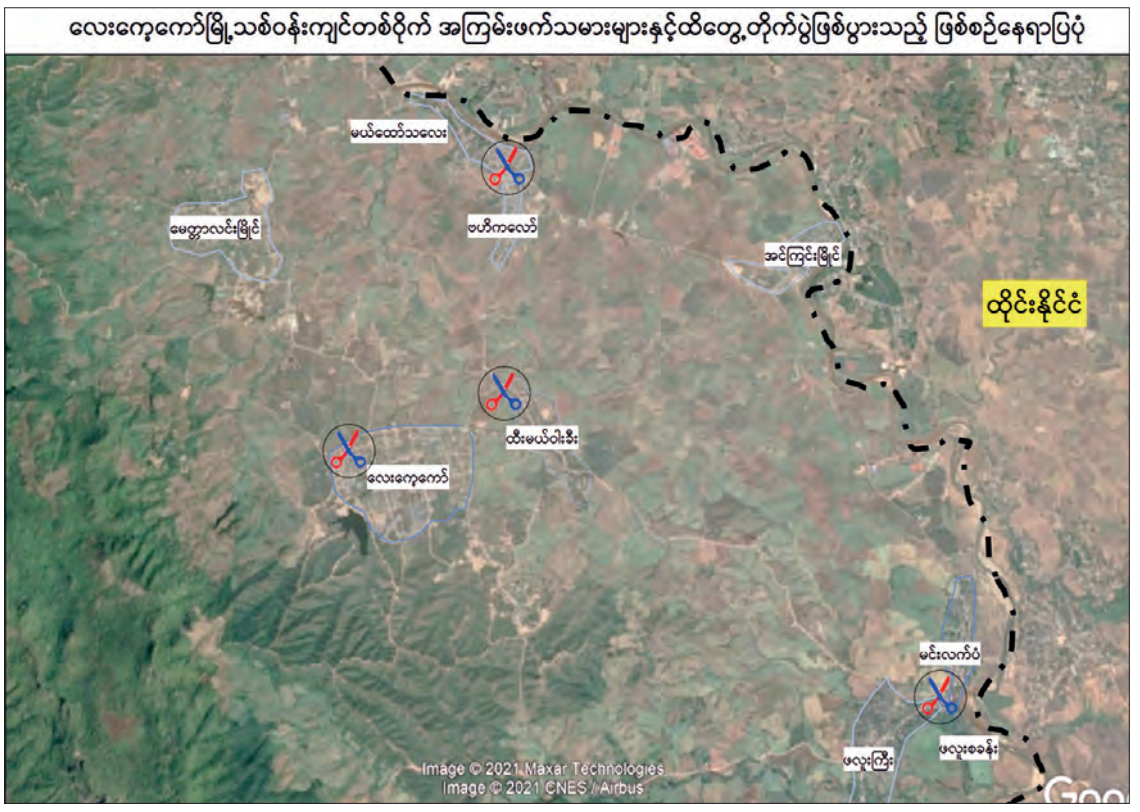
Information Team
State Administration Council

To issue citizenship scrutiny cards to the people

THE errors in the voter list caused some problems in the 2020 multiparty democracy general election. As such, the Ministry of Immigration and Population was formed to issue the citizenship scrutiny cards to the people under the Pankhin project as over three million cast votes without identity cards.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 18/2021 of the State Administration Council on 13-12-2021)

Press Release on identification, arrest of NUG, PDF terrorists hiding near Htee Mae Wah Khee, Mae Htaw Tha Lay, Lay Kay Kaw town, committing acts of terrorism



Places of armed clashes with terrorists in the vincinity of Lay Kay Kaw.

TATMADAW has been working for lasting peace since the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) on 15 October 2015 by respectfully abiding by the provisions of the NAC agreement.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services has stated that **"the Tatmadaw will strictly abide by the terms of the NCA agreement in order to achieve the lasting peace that the State and the people need"**, at peace meetings and ceremonies. In addition, peace process is also being implemented as a priority in the Five-Point Road Map and Nine Objectives of the State Administration Council. Despite this, some ethnic armed organizations have taken advantage of the current political situation to violate the NCA agreement in a variety of ways.

On 27 March 2021, some Tatmadaw officers and soldiers were killed and wounded when KNU Brigade 5 led by Baw Kyaw He ambushed the Htee Muu Hta camp which took duty of military operations and territorial control, near Thanlwin River in Kayin State. On April 27 and 28 April and 3 June, the KNU Brigade 5 stormed the Dar Kwin camp, which was occupied by a Tatmadaw force, but withdrew with heavy casualties.

On 17 December, some KNU Brigade 1 troops attacked the Kya Thaung Seik camp, and Tatmadaw troops left the camp temporarily. Although some were wounded, the camp was recaptured by the Tatmadaw.

As some troops from KNU Brigade (1) and (5) bombed and detonated landmines to disrupt the delivery of COVID-19 prevention and treatment medicines to Papun Township in various ways, Tatmadaw is working to provide the necessary security for the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines for the local people and civil servants.

Some KNU brigades and battalions are opening explosive training courses and providing arms and ammunition to CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorists who have been perpetrating terrorist acts across the country, with the grants from some big countries

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Confiscated arms and ammunition.

State Administration Council
Press Release
Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who reside in various regions for many reasons

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

Information Team
State Administration Council

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Press Release on identification, arrest of NUG, PDF terrorists hiding near Htee Mae Wah Khee, Mae Htaw Tha Lay, Lay Kay Kaw town . . .

FROM PAGE-5

who intend to blatantly interfere in Myanmar's internal affairs, and NGOs, INGOs that are ignoring and supporting terrorism, according to the arrested suspects, and local people who did not want violence that led them flee their homes.

As of yesterday, since 1 February, there were 3,751 acts of terrorism in some big cities. Security forces detained 1,492 terrorists, and confiscated 133 weapons, 1,693 rounds of ammunition, 28 hand grenades, 217 homemade mines and other explosives. In addition, security forces conducted search operations to prevent the violence, and 9,958 terrorists were identified and 3,417 weapons, 161,500 rounds of ammunition, 647 hand grenades, 6,895 homemade mines and other explosive devices were detained in a timely manner.

According to the findings on the interrogation of the terrorists arrested in Yangon and other big cities, confiscated arms and ammunition were transported from Lay Kay Kaw town in Kayin State to big cities such as Yangon, Bago, Mawlamyine, Toungoo, Pyay in various ways.

Tatmadaw has negotiated with KNU/KNLA officials in a formal/friendly manner several times to abide by the NCA agreement and to monitor their subordinates since the Htee Muu Hta camp engagement until the Lay Kay Kaw clash.

According to reports, at the KNU meetings, some leaders of KNU who want to divert from the NCA route and rekindle the conflict in peaceful Kayin State are reportedly convincing to back the NUG and PDF terrorist groups with foreign funding to destabilize the current government.

After Tatmadaw inevitably assumed all State responsibilities on 1 February, those who fled to commit terrorist acts following the violent protests of extremist NLD members and supporters, were accepted on humanitarian grounds, and KNU sought financial support of some large foreign countries with the help of these exile groups and aimed at provoking armed conflicts to the point of total annihilation of the country. The State Government has informed KNU officials, through the National Solidarity and Peace Negotiation Committee (NSPNC), to maintain peace, to focus on regional stability, to stop terrorism and not to accept terrorists. In addition, departments related to Tatmadaw and EAOs has informed them several times.

Confiscated arms and ammunition.

However, as some KNU brigades and junior leaders have ignored the negotiations and used the Lay Kay Kaw town, a symbol of the peace outcome, to embrace the so-called PDF terrorists and provide terrorism and bombing training and support terrorist activities across the country, the KNU/KNLA officials have been informed in advance that the terrorists will be identified and arrested, and security forces launched the operation on 14 December.

In such doing, 21 terrorists, including two former Hluttaw Representatives from terrorist NUG and those who participated in the CDM campaign were arrested with seven assorted weapons. On 15 December, NUG and PDF terrorists and KNU members, including some KNU/KNLA leaders who want to violate the NCA agreement, opened fire at security forces, killing some security personnel and arresting some. Therefore, in order to defend itself, Tatmadaw used its least and limited force and defeated NUG and PDF terrorists and KNU army leaders and troops. The terrorist groups have rallied in large numbers, blocking Tatmadaw troops day and night, and fighting has intensified. Therefore, in accordance with the Rule of Engagement issued, Tatmadaw replenished necessary forces and with the air and artillery supporting fire enemy camps were defeated in 25 clashes. On 28 December, areas, including Htee Mae Wah Khee, Mae Htaw Tha Lay, Ingyin Myaing, Min Lat Pan, and Hpaloo village have been under control, except for Lay Kay Kaw new town. During the clashes, some bodies of the terrorists, and 19 arms and ammunition and homemade guns were confiscated.

Seized assorted weapons.

As a result of these clashes, innocent civilians are fleeing to other countries, and the Thai-Myanmar Border Committees are also planning to coordinate for the resettlement of innocent people in their villages as soon as possible.

Tatmadaw has set the road-map and objectives for perpetual peace during the state of emergency, and strictly adhering to the NCA agreement. Therefore, security measures required for the stability and peace of the country and lives and property of the people will continue to be provided. All ethnic people who want peace in Kayin State and across the country are urged to work together for peace and stability in the region.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Handover ceremony of "China-aided Pilot Project of Poverty Reduction Cooperation in Myanmar" held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE handover ceremony of "China-aided Pilot Project of Poverty Reduction Cooperation in Myanmar", which was jointly developed by the Department of Rural Development of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development and the International Poverty Reduction Centre in China (IPRCC) of the National Rural Revitalization Administration (NRRA) of China, was held yesterday.

During the event, the Chinese Ambassador Mr Chen Hai said the project was conducted in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar due to the proposal of Chinese Premier Mr Li Keqiang at the East Asia Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw 2014. The pilot projects were implemented in two villages of Myanmar despite the challenges during the outbreak of COVID-19. The efforts of China-Myanmar employees are also appreciated for accomplishing the project amid the difficulties.

Myanmar and China sign the document to hand over the China-aided Pilot Project of Poverty Reduction Cooperation in Myanmar.

The villages with the project will develop and stand as model villages. China will keep sharing the proper experiences in poverty reduction and the long existence of villages activities.

It also provides the rural development programmes; technique supports in upgrading the agriculture products and plans to export the farming products to China.

Then, Union Minister U Hla Moe said, "The pilot project of poverty reduction cooperation was initiated in the country to improve the socio-economic status of rural people, capacity and share the poverty reduction activities.

The project was implemented in Min Pyin Village of Lewe Township and Ayechantha (Model) Village of Tatkon Township of Nay Pyi Taw using the financial assistance of China between 23 February 2018 and 31 March 2021.

He then highlighted the advantages of projects including the benefits to about 1,560 households in two villages.

Then, the Union Minister and the Chinese ambassador signed and exchanged the project documents.

The Union Minister also met the Chinese ambassador separately and discussed cooperation works for rural development activities of the two countries. — MNA

MNA to run relief flights to five countries in January

One of the aircraft in the MNA Fleet. **PHOTO : KANU**

MYANMAR National Airlines (MNA) will operate relief flights and special relief flights to India, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines in January 2022, according to the airlines.

For India and the Philippines flights, it will run Yangon-New Delhi-Yangon relief flight on 4 and 18 January 2022 and Yangon-Manila-Yangon flight on 11 January. The Yangon-Bangkok-Yangon relief flight will be on every Wednesday and the special relief flight on every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday. For Singapore and Malaysia, the Yangon-Singapore-Yangon relief flight will be on every Monday while the special relief flight on every Wednesday and Saturday. The Yangon-Kuala Lumpur relief flight will be on Monday, Thursday and Saturday and the Yangon-Kuala Lumpur relief flight will be on every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday.

The foreign relief flight tickets can be bought at MNA ticket centres or via MNA Website www.flymna.com, Application or at the nearest travel agent. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

Sports events held to mark Independence Day in Kengtung Township

THE sports competitions to mark the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day was held at No (7) BEHS in Kengtung Township of Shan State (East) on 29 December,

Some of the games include a 100-metre sprint, balloon popping, potato picking and other popular fun games, and the high, middle and primary school students participated in the games.

The sports events were also organized at basic schools in Kengtung Township in advance marking the 74th Independence Day and the prize winners will be awarded on 4 January. — Aung Zin Myint (IPRD)/GNLM

Sports events in action in Kengtung. **PHOTO : AUNG ZIN MYINT**

Public Notice

1. The government seizes/uncovers illegal arms and ammunition, mines, communication equipment and other related materials in addition to terrorist attacks of NUG and CRPH, which were declared as terrorist groups in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and their subordinates PDF groups with homemade guns, gunpowder, mines and accessories, as well as arms and ammunition, mines, communication equipment and other materials imported via border areas by some ethnic armed organizations aiming to make political and military profits on a daily basis, and it also exposes the cases of the terrorists who possess firearms in various ways.
2. Moreover, some terrorists take advantage of the honesty of the people and they make them keep their illegal arms and ammunition, mines, communication devices and other related materials, including restricted materials using different ways and forms.
3. Therefore, in order to prevent unnecessary legal action against those who are not related to the terrorists, all the citizens should hand over the illegal arms and ammunition, mines, communication equipment and other related materials, including drugs banned by the government according to the law no later than 31 December 2021 to the respective wards/village administration offices/security forces if they keep these things in their houses, apartments and other places for various reasons and ways, and if they are found after the deadline, action will be taken against them under the existing laws.

Information Team
State Administration Council

31 DECEMBER 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Take special care of fires, not at forests but residences

CURRENTLY, the planet Earth is facing various kinds of natural disasters, including forest fires which may cause loss and damage to habitats of plants and biodiversity species.

Smoke and flames of the forest fire also cause loss of natural resources, water pollution, worsening of greenhouse effects, soil erosion and human life.

The National Interagency Fire Centre in the US showed data on the outbreak of forest fires throughout the world. It stated there were 58,950 times of forest fires in 2020, leaving 10.1 million acres of forests ablaze. In 2019, the forest fire destroyed 4.7 million acres of forest areas.

In 2020, the forest fire in Brazil destroyed 30 per cent of the largest forest. A total of 22,000 times of outbreaks of fire within a year caused death to 17 million vertebrates including replies, birds, and gorillas as a record, according to the report on 16 December.

> So, people should take sanitation and keep fire extinguishers to be used for readiness to put out the fire. Not only the forest fire but all forms of fires can indeed destroy the life and property of the people. Thus, all the people across Myanmar take special care of breaking out fire not only in forest areas but the public residences without fail.

Flora and fauna are essential for the nature of the earth. Living beings including humans, trees and animals rely on one another. Nature gives feeds and habitats to the animals and trees. Animals and trees give food, clothing and shelter to humans. As such, biodiversity plays a key role in the sustainable existence of all living beings including more than seven billion of the global population.

A forest fire and greenhouse effects will impact the damage of the Ozone layer which screens the ultraviolet not to fall on the earth. While protecting the biodiversity, animals and trees from the outbreak of forest fire, efforts must be expedited to prevent various forms of living beings and non-living beings not to disappear biodiversity species and their habitats. Truly, the protection of biodiversity species, trees and living beings, including humans, can be defined as environmental conservation.

Now is a season with coldness and dryness in Myanmar. Hence, Myanmar people need to take care of the danger of fire. Cold and dry substances are sensitive to sparks of fire as fuses from the explosives. So, people should take sanitation and keep fire extinguishers to be used for readiness to put out the fire. Not only the forest fire but all forms of fires can indeed destroy the life and property of the people. Thus, all the people across Myanmar take special care of breaking out fire not only in forest areas but the public residences without fail.

■ ■ ■

South American Continent

By THAN HTUN
(MYANMAR GEOSCIENCES SOCIETY)

SOUTH America, fourth largest of the world's continents. It is the southern portion of the landmass generally referred to as the New World, the Western Hemisphere, simply the Americas. The continent is compact and roughly triangular in shape, being broad in the north and tapering to a point-Cape Horn, Chile-in the south.

South America is bounded by the Caribbean Sea to the northwest and north, the Atlantic Ocean to the northeast, east, and southeast and the Pacific Ocean to the west. In the northwest, it is joined to North America by the Isthmus of Panama, a land bridge narrowing to about 50 miles at one point. Darke Passage, south of Cape Horn, separates South America from Antarctica.

Relatively few islands rim the continent, except in the south. These include the glaciated coastal archipelagoes of Argentina and Chile. The Falkland (Malvinas) Islands are east of southern Argentina. To the north, the West Indies stretch from Trinidad to Florida, but those islands usually are associated with North America. Of the remainder, most are small oceanic islands off the coasts of South America, including the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, in the Pacific Ocean.

South America has a total of about 6,878,000 square miles or roughly one-eighth of the land surface of the Earth. Its greatest north-south extent is about 4,700 miles, from Point Gallinas, Columbia, to Cape Horn, while its greatest east-west extent is some 3,300 miles, from Cape Branco, Brazil to Point Parinas, Peru. At 22,831 feet above sea level, Mount Aconcagua, in Argentina, near the border with Chile, is not only the continent's highest point but also the highest elevation in the Western Hemisphere. The Valdes Peninsula, on the southeastern coast of Argentina, includes the lowest point, at 131feet below sea level. In relation to its area, the continent's coastline — some 15,800 miles in length-is exceptionally short.

Name

The name America is derived from that of the Italian navigator Americo Vespucci one of the earliest European explorers of the New World. The term America originally was applied only to South America, but the designation soon was applied to the entire landmass. Because Mexico and Central America share an Iberian heritage with nearly all of South America, this entire region frequently is grouped under the name Latin America.

Physical Divisions

There are three physical divisions in the South American Continent. Western mountains and highlands, Eastern Highlands and Central Lowlands.

Western Mountains

In the Western mountains and highlands region, Andes is South America's primary mountain system. The Andes is the world's longest continental mountain range, about 4350 miles long and stretching through the entire continent in the north-south direction from the Isthmus of Panama to the strait of Magellan. The Andes covers part of seven countries: Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. The Andes maintain system occupies hundreds of peaks more than 4,500 meters tall, many of which are volcanic (part of Pacific Ring of Fire). In Northern Andes, Mountain Chimborazo and Mount Cotopaxi are active volcanic peaks. The widest Central Andes covers Altiplano/ Andean/ Bolivian, the second-highest plateau in the world. Lake Titicaca (largest in South America) and Lake Poopo are located in Central Andes. Central Andes includes the Atacama Desert, the driest non-polar desert in the world, between the Chilean Coast Range and Andes. South Andes includes the highest peak in the Andes- Mount Aconcagua (6,962 metres) in Argentina, near Chile border – continent's highest point, also highest peak outside Asia. It also includes the highest active volcano in the world, Ojos del Salado, which lies on Argentina and Chile border.

Eastern Highlands

The rocks of Eastern Highlands are older than the Andes- made up of very old rocks and form an undulating surface with a gentle slope. It consists of three main plateaus: Guiana Highlands/Shield, Brazilian Highlands and Patagonia Highlands. Guiana Highland/Shield is a 1.7 billion years old Precambrian Craton. It lies north of the Amazon River and south of the Orinoco River. It acts as the divider between Amazon and Orinoco basins and it is known for being the highest waterfall in the world. Angel Falls (3133 ft) high on River Caroni in Venezuela. Brazilian Highlands covers most of the eastern, southern and central portions of Brazil. It includes Plateau of Mato Grasso Plateau of Borborema. Patagonian Plateau is located primarily in Argentina and is bounded by the Andes in the west and the Atlantic Ocean to its east. It is the semiarid scrub plateau that covers nearly all of the Southern portion of mainland Argentina. It is also known as Patagonian Desert/Patagonian Steppe. Patagonian Plateau is the largest desert in Argentina and is the 8th largest in the world by area.

Central Lowlands

The Central Lowlands lie between the Andes and the Eastern Highlands and cover more than half of the continent's area. Most of Central Lowlands is sparsely populated because of leached soils, but Pampas in Argentina are very fertile. Lowlands consist of three river basins: Llanos basin, Selva's basin and La Plata Basin. Llanos basin was created by the Orinoco River and its tributaries. Selva's basin was formed by Amazon and its tributaries. Amazon is the world's largest river by volume. This basin is covered with Equatorial Rain Forest (Lungs of the world). La Plata basin was created by Parana, Paraguay and other rivers. This basin forms an estuary known as Rio-de-la Plata which serves as an excellent harbour.

Contemporary political map of South America: Source; Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia

Islands

Several noted island groups are usually affiliated with the physical region of South America. The three significant islands are the Galapagos Islands, the territory of Ecuador, the Falkland Islands, known as Malvinas is an overseas territory of the UK and Easter Island and Robinson Crusoe Island in the Pacific Ocean which is now controlled by Chile. The islands contributed to scientist Charles Darwin's evolution theory and natural selection concept. Galapagos National Park has established in 1959; first in Ecuador; a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Major Lakes

Lake Titicaca is a freshwater lake and is the largest lake in South America. It is located on the border of Bolivia and Peru and is the highest navigable lake in the world. Lake Poopo is situated in Bolivia. Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela is a tidal bay and one of the major oil-producing regions.

Inhabitants

The original inhabitants of South America are believed to have descended from the same Asiatic peoples who migrated to North America from Siberia during the most recent (Wisconsin) ice age. Few of these peoples, however, survived the arrival of Europeans after 1500, most succumbing to disease or mixing with people of European and (especially in Brazil) African Origin. Some parts of continents are now industrialized with modern cities, but the people in rural areas still follow an agricultural way of life. The wealth of mineral products and renewable resources is considerable, yet economic development in most of the continent lags behind the more industrially advanced regions of the world. Nonetheless, concern has arisen about the rapidly increasing and often destructive exploitation of these resources.

Culture areas

Many South Americans resist recognizing ancestry as being socially significant, especially as language, religion, and other cultural aspects tend to cross ethnic lines. In practice, however, an individual's ethnic background can be a factor in determining social status, educational attainment, and economic opportunities. Ethnic distinctions can be divided into three broad types of regions based on the predominant ethnic element in what otherwise are mixed populations, with those three elements being people of predominantly American Indian, African and European descent. Those regions have been defined to a large extent since the end of the colonial period. The people within them, however, are not of uniform ancestry but rather are clustered into different cultural groups. Moreover, ethnicity in South America is often self-determined.

Geologic history

The geologic history of South America can be summarized in three different developmental stages, each corresponding to a major division of geologic time. The first stage encompassed Precambrian time and was characterized by a complex series of amalgamations and dispersals of stable blocks of proto-continental crust called cratons. The second stage coincides with the Paleozoic Era, during which time the cratons and material accreted to them contribute to the formation first of the Supercontinent Gondwana and then of the even larger Pangea. The third stage, in which the present continental structure emerged, occurred in the Mesozoic and Cenozoic eras and includes the breakup of Pangea and Gondwana, the opening of the South Atlantic Ocean, and the generation of the Andean cordillera.

The present tectonic framework of South America consists of three fundamental units: the ancient craton, the relatively recent Andean ranges, and a number of basins. Five cratons – Amazonia, Sao Francisco, Luis Alves, Alto Paraguay, and Rio de la Plata – represent the Precambrian core of South America, and (with the exception of the Alto Paraguay craton) those now appear as upward massifs arrayed from north to south in the immense eastern portion of the continent; a number of other Precambrian crustal blocks also were accreted along the margins of South America cover geologic time.

The lofty ranges and intermontane plateaus of the Andes rise along the entire western margin of the continent and represent the collision in the Cenozoic Era of the Pacific and South American plates brought by the opening of the South Atlantic. Finally, vast, down warped, sediment-filled basins are found between the cratons and along the entire eastern margin of the Andes.

Mineral Resources

South America is relatively rich in mineral resources. However, they are highly localized: few countries have a good balance of fuels and raw materials within their boundaries, and two countries, Uruguay and Paraguay, are nearly devoid of mineral wealth. Nevertheless, South American economies have traditionally relied on a foundation of mining, fishing and forestry, and non-exportable manufactures.

Large quantities of oil and natural gas are found in several areas in South America. The greatest quantities are located in the sedimentary layers surrounding Venezuela's Lake Maracaibo and the adjacent Caribbean coastal margin. Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina and Chile are oil producers and exporters.

South America contains about one-fifth of the world's iron ore reserves. Brazil and Venezuela are supplying domestic iron and steel industries as well as significant exports. Nonferrous metals are abundant in South America. The continent's copper reserves which are found in Chile and Peru represent more than one-quarter of the world's known reserves. Bolivia ranks among the world's four of five largest tin producers. Significant tin deposits also occur in Brazil's western Amazon basin. Lead and zinc are dispersed among many countries but are found in the greatest abundance in the central Andes of Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, and northern Argentine Andes. Brazil is South America's leading gold producer, with deposits in the Amazon basin.

Animal life

South American animal life is particularly rich and well-diversified as a result of the wide range of habitats. Moreover, because of its isolation from the rest of the world during the Paleogene and Neogene times (about 66 to 2.6 million years ago), the South American landmass is characterized by considerable biological originality. There are some similarities between South America's fauna and that of other continents as a result of past geologic developments. Regarding principal faunal types, there are 2,700 species of freshwater fishes that have 89 families. The range of mammals includes those that existed on the continent before its complete isolation and those that migrated to and from South America. Later, tapirs, deer, bears, rabbits, and many others arrived, as did the camel family, which gave rise to vicunas, and guanacos some 6,000 years ago. Amphibians are well represented by caecilians, toads and varieties of frogs. Reptiles include a great variety of turtles and tortoises, crocodiles, caimans, geckos, and many snakes. Most South American insects, spiders, crabs, centipedes, and millipedes are found nowhere else in the world. Most of the best-known arthropods (e.g., mosquitos, sandflies, and kissing bugs) are responsible for the transmission of human diseases such as dengue and malaria.

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Myanmar national returnees provided with free quarantine, COVID-19 tests and medical treatment

THE State Administration Council is arranging relief flights and Tatmadaw naval vessels to evacuate Myanmar citizens stranded overseas due to COVID-19 and providing healthcare to those who have been repatriated, including those who returned home through land borders.

As of 28 December since 1 February 2021, 46,622 people returned home by 904 relief flights,1,086 people by Tatmadaw naval vessels and 92,133 people came back through border crossings.

The following is a list of facility quarantine entrants who returned to Myanmar by relief flights.

a.	Malaysia	24,426
b.	South Korea	6,224
c.	Singapore	7,713
d.	China	843
e.	Thailand	3,674
f.	Dubai	1,190
g.	India	925
h.	Japan	490
i.	Laos	11
j.	Philippines	54
k.	Jordan	326
l.	China (Taipei)	157
m.	Cambodia	91
n.	Vietnam	91
o.	Bangladesh	164
p.	Other countries	243

Under the guidance of the Central Committee on the Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19, the State Administration Council, the Ministry of Health has been working together with relevant ministries and state/region governments, and providing free facility quarantine at designated places and COVID-19 RT-PCR tests. Of 46,622 people who returned to Myanmar by relief flights, 2,817 people were diagnosed with COVID-19; Of 1,086 people who returned home by Tatmadaw vessels, 2 people had tested positive for COVID-19; Of 92,133 people who repatriated through land borders, 2,003 people had tested positive. A total of 4,822 people who were diagnosed with COVID-19 were provided with medical treatment until the disease is cured by the Government. – MNA

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

THE Ministry of Commerce is facilitating the importation 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 one company using one vehicle. A total of 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen carried by one bowser was imported via the Myawady trade zone yesterday.

In addition, one bowser carried liquid oxygen from the Myawady trade zone to Yangon.

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

Officials welcome Myanmar returnees at various land borders

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

On 29 December, a total of 196 returnees —114 males and 82 females — came back home through Muse, northern Shan State.

Similarly, 11 returnees — four males and seven females returned to Myanmar through Chinshwehaw and three returnees — two males and one female through Laukkai.

A total of 176 returnees, including 106 males and 70 females, also came back home through Tachilek, eastern Shan State yesterday.

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 then escorted them to their respective places in passenger vehicles, and the infected people were quarantined to facilitate necessary medical and administrative matters, officials said. —MNA

Reception processes are underway for Myanmar returnees.

Government of the People's Republic of China donates USD300,000 to Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Thet Thet Khine received Chinese Ambassador Mr Chen Hai to Myanmar at the Ministry's meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, the Union minister said that relief funds and disaster awareness centres are being set up in five townships in Shan State with the support of the Mekong-Lancang Programme.

The ministry is working on social protection measures to develop the people freely and securely and to build resilient communities, the Union Minister added.

She said that further steps include repatriation of displaced persons and social harmony activities are essential and the establishment of the University of Social Sciences in Nay Pyi Taw and Centre for Social Protection Resources will be implemented.

The MoSWRR Union minister receives US$300,000 donation from China.

Next, the Chinese ambassador said that US$300,000 was donated to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement on behalf of the Chinese government.

He said that it was part of an annual US$1 million donation to the peace process in Myanmar, and this was the sixth time. Afterwards, the Union Minister received US$300,000 donated by the Chinese ambassador on behalf of the Government of the People's Republic of China and returned the Certificate of Honour. —MNA

COVID-19 vaccination continues in different states, regions

DOCTORS and nurses from public hospitals, Tatmadaw medical teams, healthcare workers and volunteers are working hard to give 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 the 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 over the age of 40, students, religious leaders, prisoners, people with disabilities, ethnic armed groups, people with chronic diseases, people in IDP camps and over 12-year-old students respectively.

Doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers have already given COVID-19 vaccines to 5,922 people from 12 townships in Northern Shan State, 2,335 people from three townships in Eastern Shan State, 18,923 local people from 15 townships in Mon and Kayin States, 520 people from Pulaw Township in Taninthayi Region, 5,551 people from five townships in Yangon Region, 22,047 people from 26 townships of Ayeyawady Region, 12,475 people from seven townships in Rakhine and Chin States, 9,436 people from seven districts of Mandalay Region and 1,405 people from Toungoo and Htantabin Townships in Bago Region respectively.

Similarly, healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 186 students from three townships in northern Shan State, 10 students from Monghsat Township, Eastern Shan State, 1,244 students from three townships in Yangon Region, 636 students from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region, 180 students from Minbya Township, Rakhine State and 478 students from Toungoo Township, Bago Region respectively.

It is reported that officials from the respective Military Command Headquarters visited the site and coordinated the necessary work. —MNA

Rapid Covid tests not as accurate with Omicron: US regulator

RAPID Covid home tests are more likely to give a false negative with the heavily-mutated Omicron variant compared to earlier strains, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said Tuesday. The news comes as the country is facing a massive surge in cases that experts say is being under-captured as a result of a testing crunch, with long wait times for the more accurate PCR tests, and home kits in extremely short supply. In a statement, the FDA said it was collaborating with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study the performance of home tests, also known as "antigen" tests, against patient samples containing live versions of the Omicron variant. "Early data suggests that antigen tests do detect the Omicron variant but may have reduced sensitivity," the agency said.

Sensitivity is a measure of how likely a test is able to detect a positive. Previous testing had focused on heat-inactivated virus samples, rather than live virus which is better, and a drop-off in performance hadn't been spotted until now, the statement added.

The FDA said it would continue to authorize the use of antigen tests -- which work by detecting surface proteins of the coronavirus -- and that individuals should continue to use them in accordance with the instructions.

For instance, some rapid tests instruct users to take two tests, a certain amount of time apart, in order to confirm a negative. If a person tests negative with a rapid test but is thought likely to have Covid, either because of symptoms or their exposures, they are still recommended to get a "gold standard" molecular test -- such as PCR.—AFP ■

A box with rapid antigen tests for the coronavirus (Covid-19), at the university hospital in Halle/Saale, eastern Germany. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Belgium suspends Covid closure of cultural venues

A Belgian court on Tuesday suspended the closure of cultural venues, including theatres, a measure announced last week to stem the spread of the Omicron Covid-19 variant.

The decision — which will not immediately lead to the reopening of cinemas, themselves subject to further legal challenges — came after protests from the country's hard-hit cultural sector that it was being unfairly singled out.

A ruling from Belgium's highest administrative court said the authorities had not demonstrated "in what way entertainment venues are particularly dangerous places for (people's) health... in that they would spread coronavirus, to the extent necessary to order their closure".

Prime Minister Alexander De Croo announced the original measure on 22 December as Belgium saw a sharp increase in the percentage of tests showing the Omicron variant.

"We are currently analyzing the court ruling in detail," De Croo's office said in a statement Tuesday, promising that "all necessary consultations" would rapidly follow.

The court decision is not subject to appeal and while it does not directly give cinemas the green light to reopen immediately, such a development appeared only to be a matter of time.

"So the closing of theatres is lifted. There is no point in waiting for a new ruling to reopen cinemas," concluded Benedicte Linard, minister of culture for Brussels and the French-speaking region Wallonia.

The decision to suspend cultural activities had come despite an overall drop off in Covid-19 infections since a peak at the start of the month as the country battled a fourth wave that strained hospitals.—AFP ■

The court decision is not subject to appeal and while it does not directly give cinemas the green light to reopen immediately, such a development appeared only to be a matter of time. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Aussie state battling Omicron surge faces harsh tests

THE COVID-19 testing facilities in Australia's most populated state New South Wales (NSW) are being overwhelmed, due to the massive daily surge in case numbers during the year's busiest holiday season when people are keen to travel.

NSW reported a record-high 11,201 new cases on Wednesday and three deaths, with hospital admissions rising to 625, which is 68 more than Tuesday.

The disease's frenetic transmission rate is placing unprecedented pressure on the state's health system, with people frequently queuing for over six hours to receive their PCR tests and then waiting for several days for results when time is of the essence.

There were 157,758 tests in the 24 hours up to 8:00 pm local time Tuesday, up from 93,581 the previous day.—Xinhua ■

South Africa reinstates Covid contact tracing

SOUTH Africa said Tuesday it would reinstate efforts to trace the contacts of people infected with coronavirus after a backlash over plans to scrap the measure.

The health authorities said Thursday they would stop contact tracing everywhere except places like prisons and schools, as they believed most of the population had already been exposed to the virus through vaccination or infection.

"The department of health has been inundated with media, stakeholders and public enquiries and comments since the release of the revised protocols," it said.

"The department has decided to put the implementation of the revised policy changes on hold, while taking all... comments and inputs received into consideration."—AFP ■

Omicron dominant in Switzerland, triple-jabbed in hospital

OMICRON is now the dominant coronavirus variant in Switzerland and has even caused triple-jabbed people to be admitted to hospital, officials said Tuesday.

Switzerland has one of the highest infection rates in continental Europe, with people in their 20s the most affected, officials told a press conference in the capital Bern.

Around 55 per cent of Swiss cases are now due to Omicron, and the variant is soon expected to represent almost all recorded infections.

The country has registered around 40 cases of people who had received a "booster" third vaccine dose but nonetheless ended up in hospital with the Omicron strain, said the health ministry's crisis management chief Patrick Mathys.

More than 13,000 new Covid-19 cases were announced Tuesday, with the figure expected to reach 20,000 per day in January. Switzerland, a country of 8.6 million people, has recorded more than 1.27 million positive tests during the pandemic.—AFP ■

Protesters against the current measures to tackle the spread of the coronavirus demonstrate under snow in front of the Swiss House Parliament on 28 November. **PHOTO: FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Profit recovery from pandemic to keep Tokyo stocks on uptrend in 2022

THE Tokyo stock market is expected to maintain its upward momentum into 2022, as a continued rebound in corporate earnings will likely offset lingering concerns over global inflation along with expectations of improvement in the pandemic situation.

Market analysts forecast the benchmark 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average to rise to as high as 34,000, a level not seen since March 1990 and an 18 per cent rise from the closing level on the final trading day of 2021 on the Tokyo Stock Exchange. The downside is expected to hold firm around 26,000.

The Nikkei index advanced 4.9 per cent in 2021 to end at 28,791.71, a third straight year of climb but a narrower gain than the 16 per cent rise the previous year.—Kyodo ■

Lebanon seizes Captagon shipment in fake oranges

A shipment of fake oranges hid millions of Captagon pills intercepted by Lebanese authorities, the interior minister said Wednesday, in the latest regional seizure of the stimulant drug.

Customs officers seized "nearly nine million Captagon tablets" at Beirut's port, Bassam Mawlawi said at a press conference, noting that the cargo was heading for a Gulf country.

Captagon is an amphetamine-type stimulant manufactured mostly in Lebanon and Syria. Much of it is bound for illegal recreational use in Saudi Arabia. A customs officer confirmed to AFP that this cargo was en route to Kuwait.

The Captagon tablets were placed in small bags hidden in fake oranges among a real fruit shipment. An investigation has been opened to determine its source. Lebanon – which is suffering political paralysis and economic crisis – has boosted efforts to thwart Captagon trafficking through its ports following criticism from Gulf countries over lack of cooperation.—AFP ■

Energy costs soar in 2021, fuelled by political unrest

ENERGY prices soared in 2021 -- with gas, oil, coal, electricity and carbon all shooting higher in large part owing to a resurgence of geopolitical tensions between producers and consumers.

The "steep rise in prices was probably the most dramatic development on the commodities markets in 2021", noted Commerzbank analyst Barbara Lambrecht.

The most spectacular surge was that of Europe's reference gas price, Dutch TTF, which hit 187.78 euros per megawatt hour in December -- 10 times higher compared with the start of the year. The spike has been fuelled by geopolitical tensions surrounding Russia, which supplies one third of Europe's gas.

A line of vehicles at a Tesco station in Camberley, England.
PHOTO: ADRIAN DENNIS/AFP

Western countries accuse Russia of limiting gas deliveries to put pressure on Europe amid tensions over the Ukraine conflict and to push through the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline set to ship Russian gas to Germany.

Critics say Nord Stream 2 will increase Europe's dependence on Russian gas and Ukraine has described it as a "geopolitical weapon".

Russian energy giant Gazprom has strongly rejected Western accusations that Moscow is limiting gas deliveries to Europe, already hit by low stocks as economies reopen from pandemic lockdowns.

Reliance on gas increased as calmer weather has reduced the availability of wind power.

OPEC oil impact

Crude oil prices rocketed also in 2021, gaining more than 50 per cent as demand recovered and oil producing nations led by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia modestly boosted supplies.—AFP ■

Russian gas supplies to Europe under scrutiny

The pipeline, opened in 1994, runs over 2,000 kilometres (1,242 miles) to Germany from the city of Torjok in central Russia, transiting through Belarus and Poland.
PHOTO: THEMOSCOWTIMES/AFP

WITH the arrival of winter in Europe and energy prices soaring, tensions are running high over the provision of gas from Russia -- especially through the Yamal-Europe pipeline that runs through Poland and Belarus.

But the Yamal pipeline is just one part of a complex gas infrastructure network shaped not only by energy needs but also wider economic interests and politics, including strife between Russia and Ukraine.

The pipeline, opened in 1994, runs over 2,000 kilometres (1,242 miles) to Germany from the city of Torjok in central Russia, transiting through Belarus and Poland.

It delivers 30 billion cubic metres of gas to Europe each year, making it one of the most important vehicles for the provision of Russian gas to the continent.

Russia sells Germany gas at a cheaper rate than it does to Poland, in part to make up for the higher transit fees through the longer delivery distance.

But this means that it is more cost efficient for Poland to buy Russian gas from Germany.

Some of the gas sold by German traders to Poland flows directly into Polish territory, or if that is not sufficient, the pipeline can also operate in reverse to send more to Germany's eastern neighbour.

Since 21 December, the pipeline has been operating in reverse, with gas flowing east back into Poland from the German border, according to data from management company Gascade seen by AFP.—AFP ■

China issues first white paper on export controls

CHINA issued Wednesday its first white paper on export controls to provide a full picture of related policies and help the international community better understand its position.

The document, titled "China's Export Controls" and released by the State Council Information Office, elaborated on China's position, institutions, and practices in improving export control governance, as well as its commitments and actions to safeguard world peace and development, and security at national and international level.

The main body of the white paper consists of four parts: China's basic position on export control, continued improvement to the legal and regulatory system for export control, modernization of the export control system, and international exchanges and cooperation.

The world is undergoing profound changes of a scale unseen in a century, with an increase in destabilizing factors and uncertainties, disruption to international security and order, and challenges and threats to world peace, the white paper said.

The white paper stressed that fair, reasonable, and non-discriminatory export control measures are increasingly important to addressing international and regional security risks and challenges and safeguarding world peace and development.

China is pursuing a holistic approach to national security and taking more active steps to integrate into the process of economic globalization, the white paper said.— Xinhua ■

The Port of Qingdao is a seaport on the Yellow Sea in the vicinity of Qingdao, Shandong Province, People's Republic of China.
PHOTO: XINHUA

Northvolt opens Europe's first homegrown battery gigafactory

SWEDISH battery group Northvolt said Wednesday it has launched its "gigafactory" in northern Sweden, the first of its kind to be undertaken by a European company on the continent.

Intended to compete with US electric car giant Tesla and Asian producers of lithium-ion batteries, the factory in Skellefteå assembled its first battery cell late Tuesday, Northvolt said.

Once at full capacity, Northvolt's European gigafactory is expected to produce enough batteries to power one million electric vehicles annually, with an annual production capacity of 60 gigawatt hours (GWh). **PHOTO: NORTHVOLT/AFP**

"Marking a new chapter in European industrial history, the cell is the first to have been fully designed, developed and assembled at a gigafactory by a home-grown European battery company," Northvolt said.

Once at full capacity, the site is expected to produce enough batteries to power one million electric vehicles annually, with an annual production capacity of 60 gigawatt hours (GWh), according to the firm.

"Today is a great milestone for Northvolt which the team has worked very hard to achieve," Northvolt chief executive Peter Carlsson said in a company statement.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GREEN CLARITY VOY.NO. (0251-041N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GREEN CLARITY VOY.NO. (0251-041N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-12-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S'PORE) PTE., LTD.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V VENUS C VOY.NO. (2176S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V VENUS C VOY. NO. (2176S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-12-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

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THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICTY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(7/2021-2022)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	DMP/L-001(21-22)CAP (MINI)(Retender)	14", 10", 4" HFERW API 5L Grade X-42 3LPE Coated Steel Line Pipe (3) Items	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qtty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from **30 December 2021** at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.
3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **12:00 pm** on **20 January 2022**.
4. Tender Closing Date & Time – **20-1-2022, 12:00 pm**

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67 – 411206

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION ENTERPRISE

Extension of Bid Submission Date for Hybrid Power Plant (Gas Generation and Solar Generation) on Independent Power Producer and Build-Operate-Own Basis

1. Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE) invited the bid for the purchasing electricity from **Hybrid Power Plant (Gas Generation and Ground mounted Solar Generation)** on Independent Power Producer and Build-Operate-Own Basis with **Tender No. 11/EPGE/2021-2022(Mini)** on December 6, 2021.
2. In accordance to ITB Clause-8 of Tender Document, Bid Submission Date in Section V, Bid Data Sheet, shall be amended as follow:

For Package-1. Magway & For Package-2. Myingyan

2.	Bid Submission Date for Administrative and Technical Proposals (including consortium information) and Price Proposals	**February 7, 2022**
8.	Location, Time and Date for Envelope I Opening	Electric Power Generation Enterprise Ministry of Electricity and Energy Office No. 27, Naypyitaw, Myanmar Time: 14:00 (Myanmar Standard Time) **(7.2.2022)** Bid Submission Date

3. The Bidders shall prepare and submit the proposals in accordance with the above Bid Submission Date.
4. The necessary information of this tender can be inquired within office hour.

Electric Power Generation Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Building 27, Nay Pyi Taw
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ph +95 9 989330333

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Hawley & Hazel (BVI) Co. Ltd., a company incorporated and existing under the laws of British Virgin Islands, and having its registered office at Trident Chambers, P. O. Box 146, Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands, hereby declares that the Company is the Owner and Sole proprietor of the following Trademark:

DARLIE

The above Trademark is used in respect of "Non-medicated cosmetics, toiletry preparations and non-medicated dentifrices; teeth whitening strips; teeth whitening pens and preparations; toothpaste; tooth gel; tooth powder; denture polishes; preparations for cleaning and care of dentures; detergents (other than for use in industrial manufacturing operations and for medical purposes); mouth washes (not for medical purposes); shampoos; soap; bleaching preparations and other substances for laundry use; cleaning, polishing, scouring and abrasive preparations; perfumery; essential oils; bath, facial and body oils (cosmetics); towels, cloths and disposable paper and cotton articles impregnated with or for use with, cosmetics preparations; hair lotions, hair oils and hair care preparations; emery; potpourris (fragrances); cosmetics for animals; body cleansers; non-medicated mouth cleansers; non-medicated facial and body creams, gels and lotions; non-medicated personal sprays; deodorants for personal use; sun protection and tanning creams, oils and preparations (cosmetics); after sun preparations (cosmetics); fragrances for use in air fresheners; breath freshening preparations; breath freshening sprays and strips; tartar cleaners (non-medicated); incense (hygienic incense); skincare preparations and cosmetics; cosmetic kits; dental bleaching gels and preparations; teeth whitening rinses; all the aforementioned not for medical use." in **Class 3.**

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the above Trademark or other infringements whatsoever thereto will be dealt with according to law.

Daw Aye Tha Zin Myo, (***H.G.P***)
For **Hawley & Hazel (BVI) Co. Ltd**.
c/o **Baker & McKenzie Limited**
Suite 28, Level 14, Junction City Tower,
No. 3/A Bogyoke Aung San Road,
Pabedan Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Tel: +95 9 44918 9060
Dated: **31 December 2021**

Destitute 'heir' of India's emperors demands royal residence

Ms Begum is seeking recognition that she is the rightful owner of Delhi's Red Fort, once the seat of Mughal power in India. **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA COMMONS/AFP**

A destitute Indian woman who claims she is heir to the dynasty that built the Taj Mahal has demanded ownership of an imposing palace once home to the Mughal emperors.

Sultana Begum lives in a cramped two-room hut nestled within a slum on the outskirts of Kolkata, surviving on a meagre pension.

Among her modest possessions are records of her marriage to Mirza Mohammad Bedar Bakht, purported to be the great-grandson of India's last Mughal ruler.

His death in 1980 left her struggling to survive, and she has spent the past decade petitioning authorities to recognize her royal status and compensate her accordingly.

"Can you imagine that the descendant of the emperors who built Taj Mahal now lives in desperate poverty?" the 68-year-old asked AFP.

Begum has lodged a court case seeking recognition that she is rightful owner of the imposing 17th-century Red Fort, a sprawling and pockmarked castle in New Delhi that was once the seat of Mughal power.

"I hope the government will definitely give me justice," she said. "When something belongs to someone, it should be returned." Her case, supported by sympathetic campaigners, rests on her claim that her late husband's lineage can be traced to Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last emperor to reign.—AFP ■

China satirizes US applying for officials' visas for Beijing Games

People visit the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games and Winter Paralympic Games exhibition area at the World Winter Sports Exhibition Hall of the 2020 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing, capital of China, 5 Sept 2020. Together with the CIFTIS, the World Winter Sports (Beijing) Expo is held in Beijing. **PHOTO: XINHUA/LI MING**

CHINA on Tuesday satirized US visa applications for officials of the country to attend the 2022 Beijing Olympics, saying it is puzzling as Washington has pledged to implement a "diplomatic boycott" of the Winter Games.

"On the one hand, the United States claims it will not send diplomatic or official representatives" to the Olympics in February, but "on the other hand, it has applied for visas for" government officials, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

"No matter how the United States explains it, the facts are there," Zhao told reporters, while urging Washington to stop any wrong words and deeds that would disrupt the Beijing Olympics.

Earlier this month, the South China Morning Post said China has confirmed visa applications from US officials planning to visit during the Beijing Winter Olympics, which start 4 Feb.

The Hong Kong newspaper reported that the US government had recently submitted three-month visa applications for 18 people to provide "security support operations" at the games.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran president set to visit Russia early in new year

IRAN'S President Ebrahim Raisi is preparing to visit Russia following an invitation from his counterpart Vladimir Putin, an Iranian government spokesman said Tuesday, a first since 2017.

Putin has invited Raisi to Moscow early next year "in the framework of strategic interaction between Iran and Russia", said Ali Bahadori Jahromi.

It will be Raisi's most important official visit abroad since he took over the presidency in August from moderate Hassan Rouhani, who had travelled to Russia in March 2017.

"I hope that the president of Iran will accept my invitation and visit Russia early next year," Putin had told a joint news conference with the Greek premier earlier this month, according to the Kremlin's official website.

Moscow and Tehran have strong political, economic and military ties, shared interests in Afghanistan, and are key allies of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his country's decade-long civil war.—Xinhua ■

Hong Kong news outlet closes after police raid and arrests

HONG KONG pro-democracy media outlet Stand News said Wednesday it will close after a police raid and arrests of seven current and former staff members, in the latest blow to the city's rapidly-shrinking press freedoms.

Suppression of the semi-autonomous Chinese city's local press has increased in the wake of 2019's huge and often violent democracy protests and Beijing's subsequent imposition of a sweeping national security law. Stand News said in a statement posted on Facebook that its website and social media will no longer be updated and will be taken down soon. It added that acting editor-in-chief Patrick Lam, who was earlier arrested, had resigned and all employees have been terminated.—AFP ■

Cyberattack cripples publication at major Norway media group

NORWAY'S second-largest media group on Wednesday said a ransomware attack has halted the publication of some of its local newspapers in print for the foreseeable future.

Amedia said digital intruders were demanding a ransom to hand back control of affected servers after the cyberattack targeted the company in the night of Monday to Tuesday.

The group's IT director Pal Nedregotten warned of the "painstaking work" needed to restore the servers, a process he predicted will take "quite a long time". "It is a classic ransomware virus attack, where the intruder has invaded parts of our servers, encrypted our data and left a business card," he told Norway's public broadcaster NRK.

Nedregotten added that the company was "not going to enter into a dialogue" about the ransom.—AFP ■

Norway's second-largest media group on Wednesday said a ransomware attack has halted the publication of some of its local newspapers in print for the foreseeable future. **PHOTO: THE NORDIC PAGE/AFP**

Biden to offer 'diplomatic path' to Putin in new Ukraine crisis call

Pro-Russian rebels sappers walk toward the destroyed Donetsk international airport on 13 October 2015. **PHOTO: AFP / ALEKSEY FILIPPOV**

PRESIDENT Joe Biden will offer his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin a diplomatic path forward on the Ukraine crisis in a telephone call Thursday, a US official said, setting the tone for security talks next month.

It will be the second telephone call in less than a month between the two leaders, with Biden in early December warning Putin of "severe consequences" if Russian troops that have amassed on the Ukrainian border attack.

Biden, who is at his home in Delaware for the New Year's holiday, will say "we are prepared for diplomacy and for a diplomatic path forward," a senior administration official told reporters.

"But we are also prepared to respond if Russia advances with a further invasion of Ukraine," Biden will tell Putin, the official said, adding that "we continue to be gravely concerned" by Russian forces near the Ukrainian border.

Washington "would like to see a return of forces to their regular training areas."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed the call, saying it would take place Thursday evening Russian time.

Russia has sent tens of thousands of troops to the border with Ukraine, according to Western officials who fear a repeat of 2014 when Moscow seized the Crimean peninsula and a pro-Russia insurgency broke out in eastern Ukraine that has left more than 13,000 people dead.

In a potential step to defuse tensions, senior US and Russian officials plan to meet on January 10 in Geneva.

The meeting comes after Russia offered proposals to the United States that included calls not to expand NATO eastward or to set up bases in former Soviet republics.

The United States has called some of the Russian positions non-starters but said it is willing to talk and will also bring up its own concerns.

The dialogue was set up when Putin and Biden met in Geneva in June. US officials at the time sought at least for greater predictability in the tense relationship with Russia — hopes that have been dashed with the latest troop movements.

The administration official made clear there were no plans for another in-person summit.—AFP ■

Years after war, health sector ailing in Iraq's Mosul

MONTHS after a minor motorbike accident, Amer Shaker is still suffering from poor treatment at a hospital in Iraq's Mosul, forcing him like many others to seek help elsewhere.

"At public hospitals, we have to pay for everything," said Shaker. "As soon as we arrived, we paid for the medicine, bandages, the anaesthesia."

But for the past seven months, he has been treated free of charge at Al-Wahda hospital, opened by Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in Mosul in 2018.

Having spent a small fortune in current Iraqi terms — about $8,000 — on medical care after an initial surgery by a Mosul doctor who failed to heal his leg, which had been fractured in three places, Al-Wahda was a godsend for the construction worker.

"The doctor had inserted a platinum plate, but it was not done right. I tried to find another doctor, but none of them were any good," said the 21-year-old.

Years of conflict have left much of Iraq's health sector struggling, prompting organizations like MSF to seek to fill the gap. **PHOTO: AFP/ ZAID AL-OBEIDI**

On his left leg, MSF doctors have attached an external fixator, an impressive frame of pins and screws — nearly impossible to find elsewhere in Mosul, he said.

His case is symptomatic of the wider affliction that ails Iraq's health sector, which like other public services has suffered from dilapidated infrastructure and the effects of successive conflicts.

The former stronghold of the Islamic State group, Mosul was devastated by the battle to oust the jihadists that ended in summer 2017.—AFP ■

Japan faces royal dilemma as ancient monarchy shrinks

A march to protest against the marriage of Japan's former Princess Mako to Kei Komuro in Tokyo. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

JAPAN'S imperial family is facing extinction due to a shortage of eligible emperors, but some experts say the ideas floated in a government inquiry for boosting the dwindling number of royals are out of touch.

With women barred from the throne under male-only succession rules, the place of Emperor Naruhito, 61, will one day be filled by his nephew Prince Hisahito instead of his only child Princess Aiko. But if 15-year-old Hisahito does not have a son, the royal family, whose history dates back more than 2,600 years, will run out of male heirs to continue the bloodline. Polls show the public broadly supports the idea of a woman taking the role of emperor -- one that holds no political power under Japan's post-World War II constitution but carries huge symbolic importance. However, pressure to stick to long-held tradition from conservative lawmakers and voters, who revere the royals as the perfect example of a patriarchal Japanese family, makes female succession unlikely any time soon.

Officials are brainstorming possible solutions to the dilemma, and last week a specially commissioned panel submitted two suggestions to the government. One is to allow royal women to keep their title and public duties when they wed outside the family. Currently, they must leave the family, as former princess Mako Komuro did in October after marrying her university sweetheart.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tutu remembered at Cape Town interfaith tribute

An interfaith, musical memorial to South Africa's revered anti-apartheid icon Desmond Tutu had a rabbi and a monk dancing in their seats on Wednesday as Cape Town said farewell to its first black Anglican Archbishop.

The colourful service at City Hall to Tutu, who died at the weekend, was attended by his family members and politicians, many wearing purple in honour of the Nobel peace laureate's famed purple robes.

The event peaked when the 1980 chart-topper "Paradise Road", which became an unofficial anthem for the struggle against apartheid, was emotionally performed by bare-footed South African singer Zolani Mahola.

Tutu died peacefully at a care centre on Sunday, just three months after his 90th birthday, prompting tributes to pour in from around the world.

Ahead of his funeral on Saturday numerous events are being held across South Africa to remember the apartheid foe and stalwart of the liberation struggle, who was also an outspoken critic of human rights abuses across the world.

He coined the phrase "Rainbow Nation" at the advent of South Africa's democracy, and that ideal was on full display at the memorial on Wednesday night.—AFP ■

Myanmar team placed in Group B for ASEAN U-23 Championship

THE drawing-lots event for the group stage of the 2022 ASEAN U-23 Championship was held on 29 December, with the Myanmar team falling in Group B.

The tournament will be contested by all 11 Southeast Asian nations and divided into three groups.

According to the draw result, Group A includes host Cambodia, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, and Brunei Darussalam.

Meanwhile, defending champions Indonesia is placed in Group B with Malaysia, Myanmar, and Laos.

Next, ASEAN powerhouse Thailand is falling in Group C with Vietnam and Singapore.

The competition will be held from 14 to 26 February 2022 in Cambodia.

This is the third time that the ASEAN Football Federation has hosted the tournament, and it will be held again after 2005 and 2019.

The ASEAN Football Confederation (AFC) had planned to hold the event annually from 2019 but was unable to do so in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Team Myanmar is falling in the tough group together with Malaysia and Indonesia teams.

The Myanmar squad will start preparing in January 2022 and will continue to prepare for the SEA Games in May after the ASEAN U-23 Championship. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM ■

Remove your tattoos, Beijing tells Chinese football players

Chinese men's national football team attend a training session in Shanghai on 18 Aug 2021.
PHOTO: XINHUA/FANG ZHE

FOOTBALLERS playing in China's national team should remove any existing tattoos and are "strictly prohibited" from getting any new ones, the country's sports administration body has said.

The sport has found itself in the crosshairs of the Communist Party's purity drive in recent years, and players on the national football team routinely cover their arms with long sleeves or bandages to hide their tattoos.

But the China Sports Administration statement, dated Tuesday, said that players in the national team "are strictly prohibited from having new tattoos".

"Those who have tattoos are advised to have them removed," the statement continued. "In special circumstances, the tattoos must be covered during training and competition, with the consent of the rest of the team."

It went on to say that the under-20 national teams and those even younger were "strictly prohibited" from recruiting anyone with tattoos. But not all fans appeared to be behind the new rules. "Are we choosing a good football player or a saint?" asked one angry fan on the social media platform Weibo. "Shall we just say outright that only the Party members could play football?" asked another.—AFP ■

Rangnick says Covid has hampered Man Utd progress

RALF Rangnick said Wednesday that the upheaval caused by the coronavirus crisis had hindered his efforts to stamp his authority on the under-performing Manchester United squad.

United are unbeaten in all four games they have played under the German, who replaced Ole Gunnar Solskjaer on an interim basis late last month.

But a Covid-19 outbreak at the club meant United had not played a match for more than two weeks before Monday's disappointing 1-1 Premier League draw at struggling Newcastle.

United, who host Burnley on Thursday, are seventh in the Premier League table, seven points behind fourth-placed Arsenal, but with two games in hand.

Asked if he had achieved as much as he had wanted in his first weeks in charge, Rangnick said: "Of course not. "Every coach, every ambitious coach — and there's no difference between other coaches and myself in that area — wants to take faster steps and larger steps forward.

"But in order to do that, you need to be able to train.—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.

Portugal's Paulo Sousa leaves Poland to be Flamengo coach

BRAZILIAN giants Flamengo announced on Wednesday that Paulo Sousa is their new coach, just hours after he paid a release clause to quit his job as coach of Poland's national team. The 51-year-old from Portugal, who began his coaching career in England with Queen's Park Rangers, has signed a two-year deal, Flamengo said on Twitter.

Paulo Sousa is the new coach of Flamengo after agreeing to sever his ties with the Poland national team. PHOTO: AFP

"Paulo Sousa is the Mengao's new coach," said Rio de Janeiro-based Flamengo, the most popular team in Brazil.

Poland's football federation announced Sousa's departure on Twitter and said the coach would have to pay "compensation in line with the federation's expectations."

Some media said that amounted to 300,000 euros ($340,000). "I'm very proud and satisfied to represent a club with Flamengo's incomparable greatness," said Sousa in a video message on Twitter.

"It is the time to work hard to give joy, titles and to bring the team close to more than 40 million fans."

Sousa replaces Renato Gaucho, who left the club following their defeat to compatriots Palmeiras in last month's Copa Libertadores final.

Sousa guided Poland to six wins, five draws and four defeats in 15 matches as they finished second behind England in their 2022 World Cup qualifying group. They face Russia in a playoff next March.—AFP ■