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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 260, 3rd Waxing of Pyatho 1383 ME www.gn Tuesday, 4 January 2022

74th Honouring the Anniversary Independence day

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.

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

THE following are messages of felicitations from Foreign Heads of State/Government sent to Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, on the occasion of the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia sends congratulatory message to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

I would like to convey to Your Excellency my warmest congratulations on the auspicious occasion of the 74th Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Cambodia and Myanmar enjoy traditional relations of friendship and cooperation. Cambodia also greatly values its close association with Myanmar through participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum. Please be assured of our continuing commitment to Myanmar's peaceful development.

I extend my best wishes for the future well-being of Myanmar.

Mr Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation sends congratulatory Message to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

PLEASE accept sincere greetings on the occasion of the national day of your country– Independence Day.

Russia-Myanmar relations are characterized by traditional friendship. I am convinced that by joint efforts we will be able to ensure the further development of bilateral cooperation in political, trade and economic, science and technology and other spheres for the benefit of our peoples, in the interests of strengthening regional stability and security.

I wish You good health and successes and to all citizens of Myanmar–peace and prosperity.

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia sends congratulatory message to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

I wish to extend my congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellency, and through you to the People of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I am pleased that the long-standing bilateral relations and cooperation between Cambodia and Myanmar have been strengthened and cherished over the years.

As the chair of ASEAN in 2022, Cambodia stands ready to working closely with Myanmar to help achieve national reconciliation and durable peace in the country, thus safeguarding and promoting peace, stability and sustainable development in the region and beyond.

While looking forward to meeting Your Excellency in Myanmar soon, please accept the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Ministers of Foreign Affairs send felicitations to the Union Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The following are messages of felicitations from Ministers of Foreign Affairs sent to Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Wunna Maung Lwin, on the occasion of the 74th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation sends Congratulatory Message to Union Minister for Foreign Affairs

PLEASE accept greetings on the occasion of the national day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar – Independence Day.

Russia-Myanmar relations are characterized by traditional friendship and mutual respect. We look forward to strengthening interaction between the ministries of foreign affairs of both countries, deepening coordination in international and regional fora. I am convinced that further promoting multifaceted cooperation meets the interests of peoples of our countries, contributes to maintaining peace and security in the Asia-Pacific Region.

I wish You and all colleagues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar good health and success.

SEE PAGE-5

IN building a union based on democracy and federalism, it is necessary to choose a system compatible with our country, notwithstanding the differences on the concept of democracy and federalism. The will of the majority is to prevail while that of the minority is to be respected in pursuit of democracy. There is no region or state in our country where only a single national race resides. Different national races and ethnicities are living harmoniously in every state and region.

We are implementing peacebuilding efforts as a national task to hand over a peaceful and stable future to our new generations and to build a prosperous and developed nation in the world. We wish all our national races to enjoy the democratic rights.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 1/ 2021 of the National Unity and Peacemaking Coordination Central Committee on 3 March 2021)

Message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on occasion of marking 74th Anniversary of Independence Day which falls on 4 January 2022

Esteemed all ethnic national people,

I respectfully extend greetings to all ethnic national people residing in the country with healthiness, happiness and auspiciousness on the occasion of the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The national brethren residing in Myanmar in unison had stood tall in the world as an independent and sovereign country with its own monarch since yore in good traditions while preserving its own culture and own customs.

However, Myanmar was aggressively occupied similar to other countries by colonialists in the late-19th Century due to colonialism overwhelming the entire world, losing the independence and sovereignty of the State.

All national brethren of the Union sharing their future together fought back the colonialists through the Union spirit and regained the independence and sovereignty of the State on 4 January 1948. So far, Myanmar has regained its independence for 74 years.

The country lost its independence within some months but took many years to regain its independence in its struggle, with the sacrifice of many lives. The loss of independence is of great importance for a country, so all citizens are fully responsible for safeguarding the sovereignty in perpetuity.

Despite regaining the independence of Myanmar, the divide-and-rule policy exercised by the colonialists between the hilly regions and plain regions for more than a hundred years sowed a seed of spark among the national brethren to decline the trust, and the doubts ignited the armed conflicts harming the internal peace. At that time, the AFPFL was the most powerful political organization in the country. Later, the different attitudes of leaders made the country faint. Although the AFPFL could be combined with organizations in diverse political concepts such as communists, socialists and Pyithu Yebaw, later, the organizational measure broke down because of different opinions in groups and personal cults. Consequently, the AFPFL split into small groups, pushing the country into the narrow corner.

Later, the conflicts based on political doctrines and isms in different forms harmed the stability of the State. Despite 74 years of term when the conflicts are being solved, the country lagged in development behind the neighbouring countries and regional countries.

Taking the lessons from the bitter past experiences of the evil colonialism, the entire ethnic people always need to take notice of instigation, incitement and posing pressure in serving the interests of the State. All citizens have to unitedly preserve the non-disintegration of the Union, the non-disintegration of the national solidarity and the perpetuation of sovereignty as the national duty with the mature nationalistic spirit and loyalty to the country, nationality and religion. As such, Myanmar would stand tall as an independent and sovereign nation.

Fully exercising the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy in fairness, national brethren born in the Union all need to build the Union based on democracy and federalism through mutual respect, understanding and trust.

To be able to restore the perpetual peace through the united strength, it is necessary to continue the cooperation among all for ensuring the harmonious development of the Union in all aspects.

In so doing, the ethnic people and relevant organizations should join hands in unison with the Tatmadaw for the State to continuously strengthen on the right track of democratization. Our country is located on fertile soil and favourable weather. It is necessary to systematically utilize these naturally sound foundations together with human resources. If not only the government but political forces, political parties, the Tatmadaw and the ethnic national people harmoniously participate in domestic businesses and manufacturing industries with concerted efforts, it is sure that all would enjoy the fruits of development.

The government of the State Administration Council focuses on the prosperity of the country and food sufficiency as the way of development for the State. The prosperity of the country comprises peace and stability of the State, national unity and socio-economic development. The political system practised and to be practised by the State must be harmonized with the political culture for ensuring the peace and stability of the State. The political system being practised and to be practised by Myanmar is the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy.

Individuals and organizations need to have a wider scope of political knowledge to practise democracy. It is necessary to realize the all-inclusive political system. To do so, the government is holding meetings with relevant political parties on a wider scale.

The government is joining hands with the people in effectively preventing terror acts of NUG and PDF terrorists which harm the peace and stability and security of the people.

As Myanmar is a Union formed with all ethnic nationals, strengthening the national unity is to serve the national interests of the State and the people. Colonialists committed disunity of national races in the colonial era to last the term of enslavement. Likewise, it is noticeable that neo-colonialists are still committing the disintegration of unity among the national brethren to have the chance to exploit Myanmar as they like. The government is striving for ceasing the internal armed conflicts and disunity based on the different doctrines and isms to restore perpetual peace. Hence, all the entire ethnic people are urged to participate in the process.

More than 70 per cent of the people are residing in the rural areas of Myanmar, engaging in agriculture and livestock as their livelihoods. Hence, priority is being given to ensure food sufficiency for the improvement of the social life of the people. Food is a basic need across the world, and food is essential that it is used daily for the daily life of humans.

Plans are underway to increase the per-acre yield of crops and develop mechanized farming through modern techniques in agriculture and livestock farming works. All the entire ethnic people are urged to strive for prosperity of the nation and food sufficiency with might and main. Such a development plan is the actual needs of the State. At present, the entire national people are facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

While making efforts for overcoming the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, all need to implement the development plan which actually needs for the State. In so doing, all national brethren must amicably strive for implementation of the plan based on the genuine Union spirit.

SEE PAGE-4

Message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on occasion of marking 74th Anniversary of Independence Day which falls on 4 January 2022

FROM PAGE-3

While the State Administration Council is implementing the five-point road map and nine political, economic and social objectives to build the Union based on democracy and federalism by fully exercising justice and fairness for the genuine disciplined multiparty democracy, the entire national people must overcome all difficulties and hindrances they face through the united strength. As such, the genuine disciplined democracy can be realized to emerge a good, clean government and governance.

As today is the knowledge age, education plays a crucial role in the development of the country. Only when Myanmar, a developing country, emphasizes state-building and nation-building based on knowledge will it conform with the era and keep abreast of the globe. Section 366 of the Constitution (2008) states that "Every citizen, in accord with the educational policy laid down by the Union: (a), has the right to education: and (b) shall be given basic education which the Union prescribes by law as Compulsory."

The government is emphasizing the learning of all citizens and school-age children to finish the KG+9 (basic education middle school level). Only when they complete the basic education at the KG+9 level will they have to continue further learning in at least vocational education. Hence, the entire national people are urged to actively encourage them to learn for the future of the State.

Education is a tool to build necessary mental and physical characters to successfully overcome challenges whenever everybody faces the way of the mundane world. On the other hand, if one has adequate education, one will know to be healthy. If they are educated ones, they will have the knowledge to be healthy. Hence, continuous efforts must be made for ensuring the abundance of educated ones and for the emergence of well-versed human resources based on knowledge. I'd like to urge our people to strive for the development of the State with their capacity.

As such, the entire national people have to accept the four national objectives of the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day

- All ethnic nationals to safeguard non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, and perpetuation of sovereignty;
- To ensure the emergence of a good and clean government and administrative system by implementing a genuine disciplined democracy;
- All ethnic nationals to amicably and unitedly cooperate in the country development based on the genuine Union spirit;
- To strive for restoring perpetual peace the entire people aspire with a firm vow and to harmoniously participate in the implementation of the road map of the State. Taking lessons from the past events, in which forefathers passed their lives as slaves, on the integration of unity and lack of a strong permanent armed force, they all have to understand the value of independence. The new generations are urged to serve the interests of the motherland as much as they can after understanding the value of independence we have regained.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing
Prime Minister
Chairman, State Administration Council

Sports activities to commemorate 74th Anniversary of Independence Day continue

MULTI-MINISTERIAL sports competitions to commemorate the 74th Independence Day continued to be held at the respective stadiums at Wunna Theikdi Sports Complex, Nay Pyi Taw.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs U Min Thein Zan, Deputy Minister U Myo Hlaing and officials, and sports enthusiasts attended and supported the competitions.

The Union minister and party watched the final match of volleyball (women) and final match of volleyball (men) between the Ministry of Home Affairs team and the Ministry of Defence team and awarded a trophy and a cash award of K100,000 each to the best players who played respective positions during the match.

The Ministry of Home Affairs team won the first prize in the women's volleyball competition and the Ministry of Defence team won the first prize in the men's volleyball competition.

The Union minister and party also watched the final match of Sepak Takraw (men) between the Ministry of Home Affairs team and the Ministry of Defence team, the final match of Futsal (men) between the team of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the team of the Ministry of Defence, and awarded the teams.

On 4 January from 7 am, men's/women's 100-metre, 200-metre, 400-metre and 800-metre races, tug of war competitions (men/women), and htoke-see-toe competitions will be held at Wunna Theikdi Sports Complex. — MNA

Prizes presentation event to mark 74th Independence Day in progress.

74th Independence Day to be broadcast live on MRTV

THE flag hoisting and saluting ceremony to mark the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day 2022 will be held in front of the City Hall in Nay Pyi Taw starting from 7 am on 4 January.

The ceremony will be broadcast live on MRTV, National Races Channel (NRC), MITV, Myawady Television (MWD), MWD Variety, Channel 7, Channel 9, 5Plus and Skynet (National Races Programme) and aired live on Radio Myanmar, Padamyar FM, Cherry FM, Mandalay FM, Pyinsawady FM and Shwe FM starting from 6:40 am on that day. The Live Stream is also available to watch the ceremony on MRTV Facebook Page. — MNA

Notifications announced for conferring titles

THE Chairman of the State Administration Council issued notifications 1/2022 and 2/2022 on conferring the titles in commemoration of the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day 2022 on 4 January 2022. The Notification 1/2022 consists of the religious titles that are conferred upon venerable members of the Sangha who are performing the duties of Buddhism which are Pariyatti (Buddha teaching) and Patipatti (Buddhist meditation) as well as upon the lay disciples who are supporting Buddhism by giving alms and donations and Notification 2/2022 honorary titles and medals. — MNA

Union Information Minister discusses preparations for Diamond Jubilee Anniversary of Union Day

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, in his capacity as chairman of the Diamond Jubilee Anniversary of Union Day Organizing Committee presided over the 1/2022 committee coordination meeting yesterday.

First, the Union minister said the Diamond Jubilee Anniversary of Union Day on 12 February 2022 will be conducted with military parade, which was also presented in terms of three former presidents after the country gained its independence and also staged on 4 January 2015 on the 67th Independence Day.

He highlighted the aims of staging military parade and holding of current meeting to make preparations by the respective ministries and role of regions/stages chief ministers explained in the previous virtual meeting on 31 Decemebr 2021.

Committee vice-chairman Union Minister U Min Thein Zan and Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Maung Maung made remarks.

The committee chairman played the record photos of military parade staged in 2015 and discussed the further preparations for the ceremony.

The committee secretary and other officials briefed the organizing of committee and sub-committees on duty assignements. — MNA

MoI Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn chairs the coordination meeting 1/2022 of the Diamond Jubilee Anniversary of Union Day Organizing Committee yesterday.

Ministers of Foreign Affairs send felicitations to the Union Minister...

FROM PAGE-2

Mr Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Cambodia sends congratulatory message to Union Minister for Foreign Affairs

ON behalf of the people of Cambodia, I would like to convey my felicitations and best wishes to Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar on the joyous occasion of the 74th Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I am pleased with Your Excellency recent working visit to Cambodia as it is contributed to the building of mutual trust and friendship between the two countries.

I would like to reaffirm Cambodia's commitment to continue working closely with Myanmar and other fellow ASEAN Member States to uphold our fundamental principles and assist Myanmar in returning to normalcy, thereby safeguarding regional peace, stability and prosperity.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Mr Nikola Selaković, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia sends congratulatory message to Union Minister for Foreign Affairs

ON the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I extend to you, on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and my own behalf, cordial felicitations and best wishes for the overall progress of your country and its people.

I am convinced that the traditionally friendly relations between the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, established back in the founding days of the Non-Aligned Movement, constitute a stable basis for further advancement of cooperation in many areas of common interest, to the benefit of our two peoples.

In that context, I would like to underline the importance and to once again express my gratitude for the participation of Myanmar and you personally at the High-Level Commemorative Meeting to mark the 60th anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Belgrade on 11 and 12 October 2021.

I take this opportunity as well to express my deep gratitude for the consistent and principled support of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia, which I hope will continue in the future.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Mr Ri Son Gwon, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sends congratulatory message to Union Minister for Foreign Affairs

I extend my warm congratulations to you on the occasion of the 74th anniversary of the independence of Myanmar and wish you success in your responsible work.

130 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 3 January, total figure rises to 531,155

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 531,155 after 130 new cases were reported on 3 January 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 508,926 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,277 after 3 died.—MNA

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

THE Ministry of Commerce is overseeing 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. One bower carrying 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen transported them via 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

KNLA, PDF terrorist groups attack oxygen truck

THE State Administration Council has been working hard in the fight against COVID-19 and conducting oxygen-related matters such as import processes in addition to local production to meet the local demands.

The KNLA and PDF terrorists attacked the vehicle, that carried 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen imported from Thailand, at about 2000 metres from Apyin Kwin Kalay Village of Myawady Township while it was leaving for Yangon from Myawady of Kayin State yesterday.

Terrorist attack on the boxer (in picture) transporting liquid oxygen to Yangon via Myawady.

During the attack, driver U Zaya and conductor U Aung Gyi got a serious gunshot wound and the vehicle was damaged. The Thingan Nyi Naung social welfare team took them to Tatmadaw hospital in Thingan Nyi Naung Town.

When the government makes efforts regarding the oxygen in the outbreak of COVID-19, the KNLA and PDF terrorist groups committed such attacks without humanitarian grounds and so the security forces will conduct the necessary measures to eliminate the terrorist attacks. — MNA

Vaccination processes conducted across nation as planned

Workers from factories and workplaces in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) get jabbed against Covid-19.

THE Tatmadaw medics, health officials, nurses and health workers of public hospitals including volunteers conduct vaccination programmes in regions and states for monks, nuns, people aged over 40, inmates, people with disabilities, ethnic armed groups, patients with chronic disease, people at IDP camps and students aged over 12.

About 1,280 people in three townships of Shan State (North) were vaccinated against COVID-19 yesterday while 4,235 people in four townships of Shan State (East), 9,287 people in 16 townships of Mon and Kayin states, 3,100 people in four townships of Yangon Region, 19,273 people in 26 townships of Ayeyawady Region, 5,885 people in three townships of Rakhine State, 7,577 people in seven districts of Mandalay Region and 1,474 people in three townships of Bago Region.

Similarly, 932 students in 26 townships of the Ayeyawady Region received their vaccines on the same day.

The respective region commanders and officials inspected the vaccination processes and instructed the necessary things. — MNA

RC bridge on Shadaw-Loikaw road of Kayah State hit by mine attack

Ravages are seen in the aftermath of the mine attack.

A combined team of KNPP and PDF terrorist groups bombed a reinforced concrete bridge on Shadaw-Loikaw road of Kayah State at about 9:30 am on 2 January.

The bridge attack occurred on 60 feet long bridge which was constructed near kilometrepost 39 along Shadaw-Loikaw road section and about eight feet by eight feet collapse occurred in the bridge deck in the middle part.

Currently, the vehicles cannot pass over the bridge and the officials cooperated with the security forces for repair works. — MNA

COVID-19 vaccines distributed to respective regions/states

MILITARY doctors, health workers and civil society groups are working hard to provide health care services, and the COVID-19 vaccines are being transported by Tatmadaw (Air) and motor vehicle as per cold-chain standards.

A total of 179 doses of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine, 8,210 doses of Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine and 1,819 doses of Covishield COVID-19 vaccines to Myitkyina, 738 doses of Sinopharm, 14,682 doses of Covishield to Sittway, 150 doses of Sinopharm, 3,000 doses of Sinovac and 4,546 doses of Covishield to Kengtung, 51 doses of Sinopharm and 910 doses of Covishield to Loikaw, 56 doses of Sinopharm, 200 doses of Sinovac and 910 doses of Covishield to Loikaw, 56 doses of Sinopharm, 200 doses of Sinovac and 910 doses of Covishield to Dawei, 63 doses of Sinopharm and 3,146 doses of Covishield to Myeik, 33 doses of Sinopharm, 175 doses of Sinovac and 1,819 doses of Covishield to Kawthoung, 203 doses of Sinopharm, 13,048 doses of Sinovac and 3,455 doses of Covishield to Lashio were transported by Tatmadaw aircraft yesterday.

Officials have received them and will distribute them to the relevant authorities, authorities said. — MNA

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

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.

India extends free import deadlines for three Myanmar pulses

INDIA has extended a deadline to import Myanmar green gram, pigeon pea and black bean, according to a statement from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (India).

Earlier, the import policy of free imports of three Myanmar pulses was to expire on 31 January 2022. But now, it has been extended to 31 March 2022.

Besides, if the import consignments of these items with the bill of landing will be issued on 31 March 2022 and the port clearance of imported cargos should be completed by 30 June, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India notified.

Earlier, the import policy of free imports of three Myanmar pulses was to expire on 31 January 2022. But now, it has been extended to 31 March 2022.

A memorandum of understanding was signed on 18 June to export a total of 350,000 tonnes of Myanmar pulses, including 250,000 tonnes of black bean and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon pea to India in five consecutive years (from the 2021-22FY to the 2025-26FY), according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Currently, the local price of mung bean is about K1,285,000 per tonne, according to the Yangon Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Bayintnaung Commodity Exchange).

Last September, the pulses price skyrocketed due to the sharp rising of foreign exchange rates, hitting a record high of K2 million per tonne in the domestic market.

Currently, more than 169,827 tonnes of various pulses and beans were delivered to foreign markets in the current financial year 2021-22 (from 1 October -19 November), with an estimated value of US$144.004 million, the Commerce Ministry's data indicated.

During these FY, the country shipped $135.55 million worth of 160,792.5 tonnes of pulses and beans to foreign markets through the sea route, and $8.46 million valued at 9,034.8 tonnes were sent to the neighbouring countries through land borders.

Myanmar exported US$1.57 billion worth of over 2 million tonnes of various pulses to foreign trade partners last financial year 2020-2021. The country shipped $966.4 million valued at 1.24 million tonnes of pulses and beans to foreign markets through the sea route, and $604.3 million valued 786,920 tonnes were sent to the neighbouring countries through land borders.

The black bean plantations yielded around 400,000 tonnes annually in Myanmar, and the bean is mainly exported to India. Similarly, Myanmar has also produced about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon pea yearly and exported them chiefly to India.

Myanmar is the top producing country of black beans that India demands. Besides Myanmar, other beans such as pigeon pea, green gram and yellow pea, are also grown in Australia and Africa, the association stated. — NN/GNLM

Myanmar's foreign trade value drips by nearly US$601 mln in mini-budget year

MYANMAR'S foreign trade has dropped nearly US$601 million in nearly three months of the mini-budget year of the 2021-22 financial year (FY) starting in October last year, according to the figures released by the Commerce Ministry on Saturday.

From 1 October to 24 December this mini-budget year, the country trade was $6.662 billion, while the previous FY saw $7.263 billion in the same period. This year saw a drop of over $601 million compared to the same period of last year.

Similarly, the country has earned over $3.437 billion from exports, while its imports was valued at over $3.225 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, CMP raw materials and consumer goods.

According to the annual data released by the commerce ministry, the country's foreign trade value was $18,045.929 million in the 2012-2013FY, $27,714.826 million in 2015-2016FY, $29,209.607 million 2016-2017FY, $33,578.052 million in 2017-2018FY, $18,728.815 million in 2018 mini-budget year and $35,147.012 million in the 2018-2019FY.

Agro-based food production, textile and clothing, industry and electronics, fishery production, forestry production, digital production and services, logistics services, quality management, trade information services and innovation and entrepreneurship sectors are the main priority areas of the National Export Strategy (NES) 2020-25. — ACM/GNLM

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, CMP raw materials and consumer goods.

Comprehensively understand 'the strength of the nation lies within'

THE national brethren residing in Myanmar have been standing tall in the world as an independent and sovereign country in good traditions with their own monarch since yore while preserving their own culture and customs.

All national brethren sharing their future together fought back the colonialists through the Union spirit and regained the independence and sovereignty of the State on 4 January 1948. So far, Myanmar has regained its independence for 74 years.

The country lost its independence within some months but took many years of time to regain the independence in its struggle, with the sacrifice of many lives. The loss of independence is of great importance for a country, so all citizens are fully responsible for safeguarding the sovereignty in perpetuity.

> Being a sovereign country, Myanmar has the right to steer itself for shaping its future. No country has the right to exploit Myanmar. Own fortune and future are in hands of Myanmar. All Myanmar people are State builders. They are responsible for safeguarding independence and sovereignty without accepting the influence of any countries and interference in the internal affairs of Myanmar's own issues.

Despite regaining the independence of Myanmar, the divide-and-rule policy exercised by the colonialists between the hilly regions and plain regions for more than a hundred years sowed a seed of spark among the national brethren to decline the trust. Moreover, all the national people need to analyze the moves of neo-colonialists at present.

Due to the evil legacy of the past events, the conflicts based on political doctrines and isms in different forms in successive eras harms the stability of the State. Despite 74 years of term when the conflicts are being solved, the country lagged in development behind the neighbouring countries and regional countries.

Taking the lessons from the bitter past experiences, the entire ethnic people always need to take notice of instigation, incitement and posing pressure in serving the interests of the State. All citizens have to unitedly preserve the non-disintegration of the Union, the non-disintegration of the national solidarity and the perpetuation of sovereignty as the national duty with the mature nationalistic spirit and loyalty to the country, nationality and religion.

Being a sovereign country, Myanmar has the right to steer itself for shaping its future. No country has the right to exploit Myanmar. Own fortune and future are in hands of Myanmar. All Myanmar people are State builders. They are responsible for safeguarding independence and sovereignty without accepting the influence of any countries and interference in the internal affairs of Myanmar's own issues.

All Myanmar ethnic nationals are standing tall on their own strength. They all are ready to lend a helping hand to each other. They all totally understand that unity is the strength that lies within the nation.

Try to become State builders in line with the national objectives of Independence Day

By Aung Kyaw Thant

MYANMAR regained its independence on 4 January 1948 which falls in the winter. On the cold and misty day, the entire people of Myanmar waited for the time to declare the independence of the motherland.

From the time of the post-independence era to date, the Union flag is hoisted atop the flag pole at 4.20 am every year as a gesture of honouring Independence Day. Hence, the entire national people wait for the set time of Independence Day in the early dawn setting aside the coolness of climatic conditions.

In retrospect, Myanmar was declared by the British colonialists as an independent country starting from 4.20 am on that day chosen for its auspiciousness. Since its birth, all the Myanmar national people under the leadership of the successive governments have been hailing and honouring Independence Day in various forms.

The successive governments have been celebrating the ceremony to mark Independence Day, showing the parade of the Guard of Honour, distinguished guests and ethnic people on a grand scale. On the occasion, a State leader reads the message sent by the Head of State to the ceremony in commemoration of Independence Day honouring the endeavours of the people and the stakeholders who sacrificed their life, limb and blood in the struggles for regaining and safeguarding the independence of the nation.

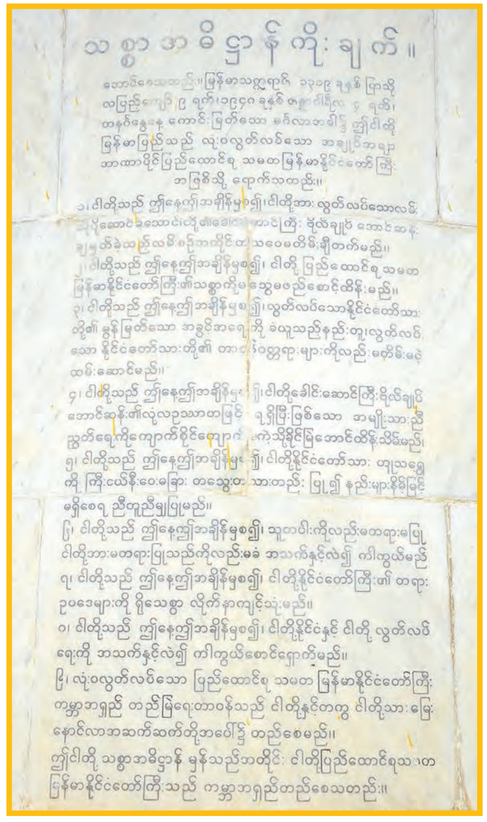
Myanmar's forefathers fought against the colonialists and Fascists and drove them out of the country giving uncountable numbers of casualties in the fighting for more than 100 years so as to regain their independence. In this regard, they sacrificed their lives and limbs for the State and the people without relentless efforts. Most of the persons who participated in the independence struggles with the loss of life were absent when Myanmar regained its independence. As such, those forefathers showed off their dutiful sacrifice for the State and the people.

Now, Myanmar has regained its independence for 74 years. During the period, new generations of forefathers have been following their route of safeguarding independence and sovereignty. Whenever the country faced important issues, those generations discharged duties with relentless efforts to safeguard the country. It can be said that the forefathers and current generations serve

The past and present generations supported the country for standing tall among the global countries. As such, the posterities need to follow the plans of those fathers and forefathers. They all should also discharge the State defence duty with the sacrifice of their life and limb. Moreover, they have to hand over their legacy left by forefathers to more posterities in order to safeguard the nation and the independence without fail to be able to avoid the influence and interference of other countries in the internal affairs of the motherland.

Currently, the government of the State Administration Council is making preparations to organize the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day at least three months before the celebration. In order to mark the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day, the Central Organizing Committee for Organizing the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day laid down four national objectives of the independence day as follows:-

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.



Indeed, the national objectives of Independence Day are based on the Our Three Main National Causes. Such causes are not changeable for the nation as a Universal truth to ensure the perpetuity of the nation and independence. Hence, the objectives are based on the non-disintegration for the perpetual existence of the nation. It is because if the country does not have 'non-disintegration', it is sure to integrate in a short time. Every citizen should analyze the situation of Myanmar facing the danger of neo-colonialists who are waiting for the best chance to penetrate the motherland in various ways and means. Hence, everybody needs to avoid the possible dangers and overcome their challenges at any time.

As such, all the people should participate in the activities of marking Independence Day with festivities in honour of that day. As a public holiday, Independence Day will be a great chance for all the people young and old to participate in sports activities in the cool weather. The creation of happiness will bring auspiciousness and good fortune to society on a significant day. The fresh and active minds of the people will be the best tool to build the peaceful and prosperous society of Myanmar.

Hence, all the entire people need to adopt a vow for ensuring the perpetual existence of Myanmar with peace and prosperity and they need to decide to be State builders without fail. They all need to avoid the acts of undermining the State and wiping the saboteurs out.

Moreover, all the people are to take responsibility for persuading the persons who derail from the path of democracy and peace process into the roundtable discussions for seeking the best solutions of restoring the perpetual peace of the nation. On the other hand, those from the ethnic armed groups residing on the land of Myanmar need to recognize the gratitude of the motherland where they have been residing and upholding their loyalty to the nation. That is why they need to choose the options without harming the future of the nation and the people.

Truly, the governing bodies of the nation similar to that of global countries will change one after another depending on their terms. It is of a political nature. But, the Day of Independence will not change for the country forever. The governing bodies are just to rule the nation and the people. Actually, not only the governing bodies but also the people need to pay tributes to the independence of the nation and perpetually mark Independence Day.

That is why all the people including the governing bodies must emphasize the safeguarding of the independence of the nation with might and main for perpetuity. And, they all have to enhance their capacity to become State builders.

■■■

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

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 3 January 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 4 January, 2022: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Shan, Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperature in Shan State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 January, 2022: Likelihood of isolated light rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 January, 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 January, 2022: Likelihood of isolated light rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

World powers make rare pledge to prevent nuclear weapons spread

FIVE global nuclear powers pledged Monday to prevent atomic weapons spreading and to avoid nuclear conflict, in a rare joint statement setting aside rising West-East tensions to reaffirm a goal of a nuke-free world.

"We believe strongly that the further spread of such weapons must be prevented," said permanent UN Security Council members China, France, Russia, the UK and United States, adding: "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."

The statement was issued after the latest review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — which first came into force in 1970 — was postponed from its scheduled date of 4 January to later in the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the major recent tensions between both China and Russia and their Western partners, the five world powers said they saw "the avoidance of war between nuclear-weapon states and the reduction of strategic risks as our foremost responsibilities".

The powers added: "We each intend to maintain and further strengthen our national measures to prevent unauthorized or unintended use of nuclear weapons".

The statement also pledged to abide by a key article in the NPT under which states committed to full future disarmament from nuclear weapons, which have only been used in conflict in the US bombings of Japan at the end of World War II.

"We remain committed to our NPT obligations, including our Article 6 obligation" on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict control. According to the UN, a total of 191 states have joined the treaty. The provisions of the treaty call for a review of its operation every five years.

'Reduce tensions'

The statement comes as tensions between Russia and the United States have reached heights rarely seen since the Cold War over a troop build-up by Moscow close to the Ukrainian border.

That has raised fears that the Kremlin, worried by the possibility of further eastward expansion of NATO, is planning a new attack on its pro-Western neighbour. Crunch talks between Russia and the US on European security are expected in Geneva on 10 January.

The rise of China meanwhile under President Xi Jinping has also raised concerns that tensions with Washington could lead to conflict, notably over the island of Taiwan. Beijing considers Taiwan part of its territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary.

Russia welcomed the declaration by the atomic powers and expressed hope it would reduce global tensions.

"We hope that, in the current difficult conditions of international security, the approval of such a political statement will help reduce the level of international tensions," the Russian foreign ministry said in a statement. — AFP ■

Strong quake hits off Taiwan's eastern coast

Commuters exit a Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) station in Xindian in New Taipei City on 3 January 2022, after a strong earthquake struck off the coast of eastern Taiwan with shaking felt in the capital Taipei. **PHOTO : AFP**

A strong earthquake struck off the coast of eastern Taiwan on Monday evening with shaking felt in the capital Taipei, but authorities said there were no immediate reports of widespread damage or injuries.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) said the quake measured 6.2 in magnitude and hit at a depth of 28 kilometres (17 miles).

The epicentre was given in the sea 64 kilometres east of the coastal city of Hualien.

Taiwan's fire service said initial impact reports were limited to a handful of people stuck in elevators who had since been rescued. No major property destruction was reported.

An AFP reporter in Taipei said buildings swayed violently when the tremor struck during the rush hour commute at 5:46 pm (0946 GMT).

"The shaking lasted for a good 20 seconds with the ground moving left and right," the reporter said. Taipei's MRT subway system kept running after the quake.

Morgan Everett, an American who has lived in Taiwan for 13 years, said the quake was "one of the stronger ones I've felt" during her time there. "My two teen sons were in our building elevator coming home from school, which was a bit scary," she told AFP.

"They could feel quite strong shaking and hear the cables creaking. Thankfully the elevator operated normally and they were able to exit." — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Yemen rebels seize vessel in latest escalation

YEMENI rebels have seized an Emirati-flagged vessel in the Red Sea, the insurgents and a Saudi-led coalition said on Monday, giving contrasting explanations for the latest escalation in a seven-year war.

The coalition, fighting in support of Yemen's internationally recognized government, said the vessel was carrying medical supplies but the rebels said they seized "a military cargo ship with military equipment".

The coalition has been fighting for nearly seven years in support of Yemen's government against the Iran-backed Huthis, in a conflict that has displaced millions and created the world's worst humanitarian crisis, according to the United Nations.

"The militia must promptly release the ship, or the coalition forces will undertake all necessary measures and procedures to handle this violation, including the use of force if necessary," coalition spokesman Turki al-Malki said.

In a statement cited by the official Saudi Press Agency, he said the vessel was travelling from Yemen's Socotra island, off the country's south coast.

It was returning to the Saudi city of Jazan carrying medical supplies after finishing a mission to set up a field hospital on the island, Malki said.

"The boat named Rawabi, bearing the flag of the United Arab Emirates, was pirated and kidnapped at 23:57 (2057 GMT) Sunday while off Hodeida province," he said.

Malki was unable to confirm the number of people on board when contacted by AFP. There was no immediate comment from the United Arab Emirates. — AFP ■

UK PM says hospitals face 'considerable pressure'

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday said that the UK's state-run hospitals will face "considerable pressure" in the coming weeks due to the steep rise in virus infections.

Speaking during a visit to a vaccine centre, Johnson said "the pressure on our NHS hospitals is going to be considerable in the course of the next couple of weeks and maybe more" as "Omicron continues to surge through the country".

The UK saw record numbers of cases in the last days of 2021 though it has not released figures for the whole country this year.

The country is one of Europe's worst affected with a death toll of nearly 149,000.

The prime minister said that he was aware of high levels of hospital staff absences due to Covid, adding: "we're looking at what we can do to move people into those areas that are particularly badly affected".

Around 50,000 NHS staff were absent from work Friday because they were ill or self-isolating due to Covid-19, The Sunday Times newspaper reported.

Chris Hopson, the chief executive of NHS Providers, which represents hospitals in England, told Sky News that "the pressure on hospitals outside London is now growing" after the capital bore the brunt of virus cases earlier.

Johnson urged the public to get a booster vaccination, saying there are slots available for two million people this week. — AFP ■

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (R) visits a Covid-19 vaccination centre at the Rainbow Pharmacy in the Open University Campus, Walton Hall, in Milton Keynes on 29 December 2021. **PHOTO : GEOFF PUGH / POOL / AFP**

Aussie state's hospitalizations surge to new high amid Omicron variant wave

THE number of COVID-19-related hospitalizations surged to a new high in Australia's most populous state of New South Wales (NSW), while the country battling with its largest outbreaks of COVID-19 fuelled by the Omicron variant.

The NSW, the epicenter of Australia's current wave of the pandemic, recorded 20,794 new cases and four deaths in the past 24 hours to 8:00 pm Sunday, slightly dropping from its peak of 22,577 daily increase recorded on 1 January.

However, despite the fluctuant increasing infections, the number of hospitalization and people in intensive care unit (ICU) in the state grows steadily with 1,204 hospitalized patients reported on Monday, including 95 cases in ICUs and 25 requiring ventilation.

The mounting cases and a huge number of close contacts imposed great pressure on the state's healthcare system. Australian Medical Association vice president Chris Moy told local media outlet AAP that the system was "struggling" with staff shortages as case numbers rise and health workers fall sick, test positive or are identified as close contacts.

Local newspaper the Australian said nursing staff at a leading Sydney hospital have been asked to identify patients for early discharge and to accept cash incentives to cancel their annual leave due to "critical staffing shortfalls" reaching "crisis level" because of COVID-19.

Australia's Health Department reported 1,978 hospitalizations on Sunday's statistics including 148 in ICU and 51 currently ventilated, a record high since the pandemic began in the country in early 2020.

At the same time, the state of Victoria, Australia's second most populous state, recorded 8,577 new cases and three deaths on Monday, the highest daily increase in the state since the pandemic hit Australia.

Victoria's COVID-related hospitalized cases also slightly increased to 491 from Sunday's 472. — Xinhua ■

US air travel still messy, with another 2,600 flights scrapped

AMERICANS returning home from holiday travel had to battle another day of airport chaos Sunday, with more than 2,600 flights cancelled due to bad weather or airline staffing woes sparked by a surge in Covid cases.

Further disruptions are predicted for Monday, as a winter storm blows eastward.

As of 10:00 pm (0300 GMT Monday), more than 2,650 domestic flights or international ones starting or finishing in the United States had been cancelled — almost as many as the 2,750 scrapped over the course of Saturday, said the flight-tracking service FlightAware.

That figure represented well over half of the nearly 4,400 flights cancelled around the world. Almost 8,600 US flights were delayed.

Southwest Airlines, one of the hardest-hit carriers, had to cancel some 400 flights Sunday morning, a spokesperson said in an email to AFP, adding that it expected further cancellations.

Passenger Nick Kagy was beside himself after his Southwest flight was cancelled.

"ARE YOU KIDDING ME @ SouthwestAir," he wrote on Twitter. "We waited on hold for almost 3 hours to rebook because we couldn't rebook online, and after getting things (not really fully) resolved, you cancelled our second flight to out of another airport."

On Saturday, poor weather, much of it linked to Winter Storm Frida, forced Southwest to cancel 490 flights, most of them in the centre-north states south of the Great Lakes and reaching west to the Great Plains.

The result: intense frustration for many travellers.

Missed connections

"This is insane," tweeted Haley, another Southwest passenger who was trying to fly out of Chicago. "This is the 3rd cancellation and still not home. Was supposed to be home 4 days ago!!!"

Airports in Chicago — a major transit hub — were the most affected Saturday, but by Sunday the airports in Atlanta, Denver, Detroit, Houston and Newark were also hard hit. — AFP ■

A sign reminds airline passengers to wear face masks as they wait to collect bags from a baggage carousel at the Harry Reid International Airport (LAS) on 2 January 2022 in Las Vegas, California. Americans returning home from holiday travel had to battle another day of airport chaos on 2 January with more than 2,000 flights cancelled due to bad weather or airline staffing woes sparked by a surge in Covid cases. **PHOTO : AFP**

Tokyo's daily coronavirus cases top 100 for 1st time in 3 months

People wearing masks walk in Tokyo's Shibuya on 3 January 2022. **PHOTO : KYODO**

TOKYO confirmed 103 daily coronavirus cases Monday, marking the first time in about three months that the count has surpassed 100, as concerns grow over a gradual rebound in infections in Japan with the spread of the virus's Omicron variant.

The daily figure reported by the Tokyo metropolitan government was up from the 84 cases logged Sunday during the country's New Year holidays. New cases in the Japanese capital had been below 100 after 135 cases were confirmed on 8 October.

Tokyo Gov Yuriko Koike said Monday 25 residents were newly confirmed to be infected with the highly transmissible Omicron strain, and 11 of them had no recent history of overseas travel.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida held a meeting on Monday with health minister Shigeyuki Goto and Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno to discuss the COVID-19 situation in the country. The number of new COVID-19 infections in Tokyo and elsewhere in Japan has been rising, though overall cases remain relatively small compared with the fifth wave that prompted the government to implement rounds of COVID-19 states of emergency and quasi-states of emergency. — Kyodo ■

Brazil to probe cruise companies over Covid outbreaks

BRAZILIAN health authorities said Sunday they would investigate reports of cruise liners violating Covid-19 protocols, after outbreaks hit three ships plying the coast.

"Failure to follow health protocols and disobeying restrictive measures imposed by the authorities constitute infractions that, if confirmed, will result in fines and the suspension of (cruise companies') activities," the federal health regulator, Anvisa, said in a statement.

The statement came after Brazilian media reported passengers on one of the Covid-hit ships, the Costa Diadema, violated quarantine orders to hold a booze-fuelled New Year's Eve party.

Brazil allowed cruises to resume in November, but ordered companies to implement strict protocols against Covid-19, including testing passengers and quarantining them in case of infection.

Anvisa said it would also reinforce a recommendation it made Friday to the Brazilian health ministry to suspend all cruises immediately, given the global surge in Covid-19 cases driven by the Omicron variant.

The crackdown comes after Covid-19 outbreaks erupted on the Costa Diadema and two other ships off the Brazilian coast at New Year's.

Anvisa said 26 passengers and two crew had tested positive from the MSC Preziosa, a 333-metre (1,093-foot) ship that was cruising off the coast of Rio de Janeiro. — AFP ■

CES tech fair prepares to draw crowds as Covid surges

Attendees walk through the Las Vegas Convention Center 10 January 2020 on the final day of the 2020 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada. **PHOTO : AFP**

THE Consumer Electronics Show (CES), one of the world's largest trade fairs, returns to Las Vegas in person this week under a newly resurgent pandemic that has supercharged the industry but threatens its downsized expo.

Multiple companies — including Amazon, BMW and Microsoft — reduced or cancelled their attendance as Covid-19 case numbers broke records, but organizers said safety protocols were in place for thousands of expected attendees.

Masks and proof of vaccination are required at the show that opens Wednesday and was trimmed by one day to end Friday, with expected exhibitors down more than half to roughly 2,200 from the last in-person CES.

"We are confident that attendees and exhibitors can have a socially distanced but worthwhile and productive event in Las Vegas," organizers told AFP in an email, declining to state the number of cancellations. But some experts urged caution and daily testing, as not all attendees can be counted on to comply with mask-wearing rules.

"An indoor event with thousands of people at this point in time carries risks, even with vaccination and masking requirements," Vincent Rajkumar, a professor of medicine at the Mayo Clinic, told AFP.

The showfloor — which organizers concede may be pocked with gaps after cancellations — was set to include the most buzzed-about tech, such as autonomous vehicles, commercial spaceflight, NFT digital goods, work-from-home tools and the usual array of gadgetry.

Not attending

Big Tech has been a big winner during the pandemic, with social media, e-commerce and a bevy of online services amassing mountains of users and cash as people stayed home — but one of its signature conclaves has fared less well.

The 2022 show was meant to be the triumphant return of an event that hosted some 170,000 people and more than 4,500 exhibitors in one of the last major US events before virus lockdowns hit in 2020. — AFP ■

Troubled Evergrande suspends share trading again

EMBATTLED Chinese developer giant Evergrande announced Monday it was once again suspending trading of its shares in Hong Kong ahead of an announcement.

The country's property firms have struggled in the wake of Beijing's drive to curb excessive debt in the real estate sector as well as rampant consumer speculation.

Drowning in $300 billion in liabilities, Evergrande has struggled to repay bondholders and investors after Beijing's crackdown suddenly turned off the liquidity taps.

"At the request of the Company, trading in the shares of the Company was halted at 9:00 am on 3 January 2022 pending the release by the Company of an announcement containing inside information," the group said in a short statement on the Hong Kong stock exchange.

It previously saw a period of suspended share trading back in October.

The troubled developer was labelled as being in default by international ratings firms last month after it failed to repay liabilities on time.

Earlier struggles to pay suppliers and contractors due to the debt crisis led to sustained protests from homebuyers and investors at the group's Shenzhen headquarters in September. Last week, Evergrande momentarily cheered investors by insisting it would be able to deliver tens of thousands of units this month, and pay off some debts. But its shares took a dive at the end of the week after a report that the group had failed to meet two more offshore payments.

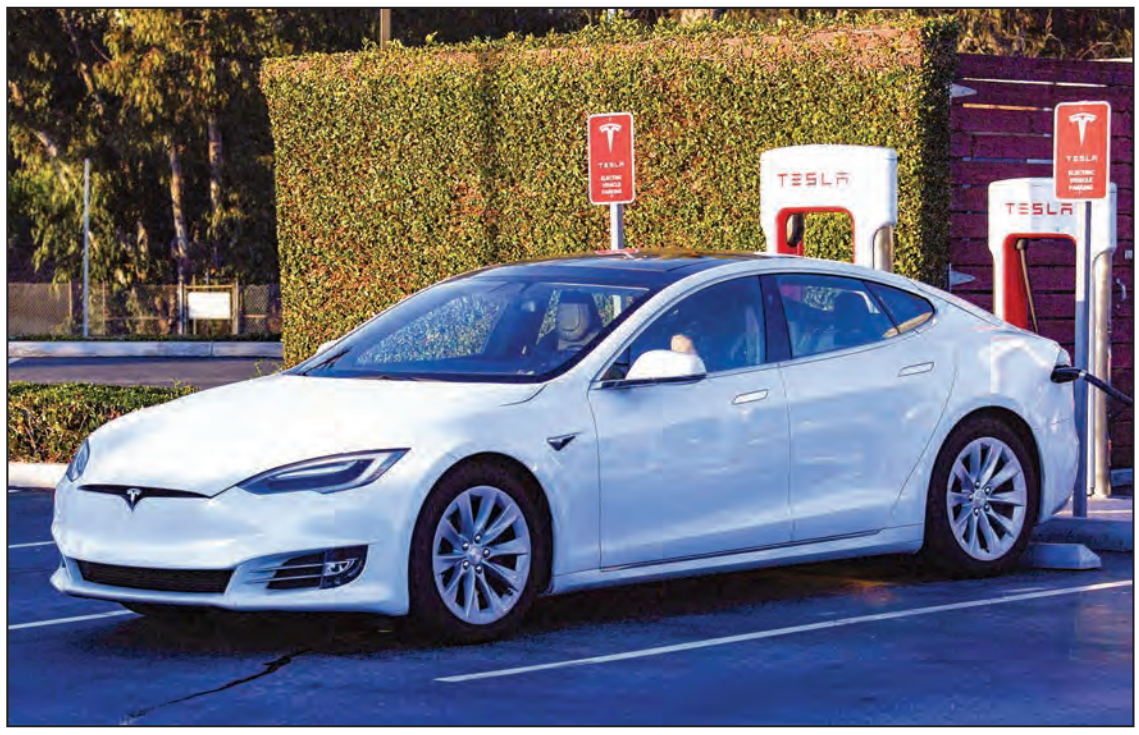
In recent months, the company has repeatedly said it will finish its unfinished projects and deliver them to buyers in a desperate bid to salvage its debts, despite having missed the earlier payment of more than $1.2 billion.

But in a new headache for the firm, local Chinese media reported over the weekend that it has been ordered to demolish 39 buildings by the authorities on Hainan island because the structures were built illegally on an artificial archipelago in the tourist hub.

The bloated firm has tried to sell assets and shave down its stakes in other firms, with chairman Hui Ka Yan — known as Xu Jiayin in Mandarin — paying off some of the debts using his own considerable personal wealth. The provincial government of Guangdong — where the firm is headquartered -- is currently overseeing Evergrande's debt restructuring process.

Evergrande's woes have had knock-on effects throughout China's property sector with some smaller firms also defaulting on loans and others struggling to find enough cash. — AFP ■

Tesla delivers almost 1 mn cars globally



A Tesla Inc electric vehicle charges at a supercharger station on 4 January 2021 in Redondo Beach, California. After shares rocketed higher in 2020 on surging auto deliveries, Tesla enters 2021 with plenty of momentum even as its vision of taking electric cars mainstream remains a way off. **PHOTO : AFP**

TESLA said Sunday it delivered nearly one million vehicles in 2021, almost twice as many as in the previous year, results that were better than expected despite global supply challenges.

The US electric carmaker delivered more than 936,000 cars of all models in 2021, an increase of 87 per cent over the previous year, the company said in a statement.

Tesla had announced last January that it was aiming to increase deliveries by 50 per cent per year over several years, so Sunday's results far exceeded that goal.

The group, which recently moved its headquarters from Palo Alto, California to Austin, Texas, sold 911,208 Model 3 and Model Y vehicles as well as 24,964 vehicles of its luxury S and X models (at a price of $90,000 and $100,000 respectively).

In the fourth quarter alone, Tesla delivered 308,600 cars.

Tesla has managed to overcome global logistics issues that have plagued the auto industry.

Its chief Elon Musk previously said he was able to get around much of the semiconductor shortage by using new chip designs and rewriting software.

Tesla got another boost in October when it received an order for 100,000 electric vehicles from the rental company Hertz, to be completed by 2022.

This announcement brought the automaker into the very select club of companies worth more than $1 trillion on the stock market.

Tesla, however, finds itself under scrutiny from the NHTSA auto regulator, which is probing its autopilot system over safety concerns.

The automaker has also agreed to update its software to prevent drivers from playing video games on the car's system while the vehicle is in motion, following a government safety investigation. — AFP ■

84% of firms in Japan see economic growth in 2022

ABOUT 84 per cent of major companies in Japan expect the country's economy to grow in 2022, driven by recovering personal consumption amid hopes that the coronavirus pandemic will subside, a Kyodo News survey showed Sunday.

In the survey of 106 companies, including Toyota Motor Corp and SoftBank Group Corp, 13 firms predicted the economy will be flat as people remain cautious about the pandemic. But none of the firms said it will contract.

Of the surveyed companies, 84 expect growth to be moderate in the year ahead, while five see a more solid expansion.

With multiple answers allowed, 91 per cent of them that expect growth cited a pickup in consumer spending, followed by 64 per cent predicting the unusual situation caused by the pandemic will return to normal, 35 per cent forecasting that capital investment will rise, and 19 per cent looking forward to a recovery in the US economy.

The overall per centage of firms forecasting growth in the world's third-largest economy is up from the 74 per cent in a similar Kyodo News poll a year earlier.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has vowed to minimize the spread of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus while moving swiftly to get the economy back on track. The fifth wave of infections, which took place when Tokyo hosted the Olympics last summer, prompted the government to declare a state of emergency in a number of prefectures and urge people to refrain from making nonessential outings.

The lifting of the emergency on 1 October has raised expectations that demand will get close to pre-pandemic levels among a number of industries, especially leisure-related ones such as travel and restaurants.— Kyodo ■

Asian markets get 2022 off to mixed start in thinned trade

THE new year got off to a mixed start on Monday in holiday-thinned Asian trade, following a healthy run-up at the end of last week, with some cheer provided by data suggesting regional economies improved last month.

However, investors remain shackled by concerns about a range of issues including the fast-spreading Omicron variant, inflation, the removal of central bank stimulus and geopolitical tensions.

While the last few months of 2021 were marked by uncertainty on trading floors, global stocks enjoyed blockbuster rallies in 2021 as economies reopened and lives in most countries returned to some semblance of normal, fuelling optimism that the recovery would stay on track. And data showing factory activity picked up last month across the region — including South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia and the Philippines — provided a little optimism to start the year. The readings come after China posted a better-than-forecast figure on Friday thanks to a dip in commodity prices.

Singapore enjoyed healthy gains thanks to news that the city-state's economy expanded 7.2 per cent last year, having suffered in 2020 its worst performance since independence.

Seoul, Taipei and Jakarta also rose, though Manila dipped.

Jun Rong Yeap, of IG Asia, said: "While the rising Omicron spreads may warrant a cautious approach toward reopening, some expectations may be that improved vaccinations will aid to limit the eventual economic impact."— AFP ■

The financial business district is pictured from the Helix Bridge in Singapore on 3 January 2022. **PHOTO : AFP**

Singapore economy rebounds from virus-induced recession

SINGAPORE'S economy grew 7.2 per cent last year, rebounding from its worst recession since independence sparked by the coronavirus pandemic, government data showed Monday. The city-state plunged into its worst economic performance in 2020 as businesses and international borders shut down, choking its trade and tourism economic lifeline.

Authorities initially imposed tough measures to restrict movement and gatherings but later shifted to a policy of living with the virus as the majority of residents got fully vaccinated.

Singapore has logged a total of 280,290 cases with 829 deaths as of Sunday.

The trade ministry released advance estimates Monday showing the economy expanded by 5.9 per cent year-on-year in the fourth quarter to December.

This brought full-year economic growth to 7.2 per cent, reversing a 5.4 contraction in 2020, the country's worst since independence in 1965.

Manufacturing, a pillar of the trade-reliant economy, surged 12.8 per cent year-on-year driven by global demand for semiconductors and semiconductor equipment, the ministry said.

Construction, a driver of domestic growth, rose 18.7 per cent for the full year.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong however said in his New Year message that Singapore was not out of the woods yet.

"Entering the new year, the fight against Covid-19 is not over. The Omicron variant has brought new uncertainties," Lee said.

He added, however, that Singapore was in a better position to deal with the virus compared to two years ago as booster jabs have been rolled out and vaccination of children under 12 years is underway.

"We have also learnt to better manage the public health challenges while minimising the hit on our economy," he said.

"As we brace ourselves for the impact of Omicron, we can be quietly confident that we will cope with whatever lies ahead."

He added that the economy is expected to grow 3.0-5.0 per cent this year. — AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V HINASE

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V HINASE VOY. NO. (202101)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **IBTT** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MCL 17

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 17 VOY. NO. (07)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MKH** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MCL 19

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 19 VOY. NO. (07)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AIPT-2** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

(FILES) In this file photo taken on 9 December 2021, US President Joe Biden speaks on the phone with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky, in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, DC. **PHOTO : AFP**

Biden tells Ukraine leader US will 'respond decisively' if Russia invades

US President Joe Biden on Sunday reassured his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky that Washington "will respond decisively" if Russia moves to invade its pro-Western neighbour, the White House said in a statement.

With a Russian military buildup on Ukraine's borders, Biden "made clear" to Zelensky during a phone call that the "United States and its allies and partners will respond decisively if Russia further invades Ukraine," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said.

The show of US support for Ukraine comes days after Biden warned Russian President Vladimir Putin of severe consequences if Moscow launches a military invasion.

In his call with Zelensky, Biden also stressed Washington's commitment "to the principle of 'nothing about you without you,'" in an apparent reference to the need to include Ukraine in negotiations about its own future.

Zelensky tweeted afterwards that he appreciated the United States' "unwavering support" and that the call "proves the special nature" of the two countries' relationship.

High-ranking US and Russian officials are due to sit down on 9 and 10 January in Geneva to discuss the crisis.

Earlier this week, Biden spoke to Putin, the two leaders' second conversation by phone in three weeks as tensions mount over Ukraine. — AFP ■

Devastating S Africa parliament fire brought under control

A huge fire that destroyed a large part of South Africa's parliament has been brought under control, firefighters said on Monday, a day before a suspect was due to appear in court over the blaze. The fire broke out early Sunday in the oldest wing of the parliament complex and dozens of crews battled throughout the day to extinguish the flames.

"The fire was brought under control during the night," spokesman Jermaine Carelse said, adding that the blaze was still burning in the part of the building where it began, which was completed in 1884 and has wood-panelled rooms. Officials said the entire part housing the National Assembly had been destroyed. "The most damage is in the National Assembly building," Carelse said. "That won't be used for months."

Earlier, parliament spokesman Moloto Mothapo said the roof of the National Assembly had collapsed and that the fire was "so intense" in that part of the building that firefighters had been forced to withdraw.

"The entire chamber where the members sit... has burned down," he said. No casualties were reported.

President Cyril Ramaphosa told reporters at the scene on Sunday that a man had been held and that the building's sprinkler systems had apparently failed.

'Criminal case'

"A man has been arrested inside the parliament, he's still being interrogated. We have opened a criminal case," police spokeswoman Thandi Mbambo said, adding that the suspect will appear in court on Tuesday.

The parliament building houses a collection of rare books and the original copy of the former Afrikaans national anthem "Die Stem van Suid-Afrika" ("The Voice of South Africa"), which was already damaged. — AFP ■

A fire truck is seen at the South African Parliament precinct in Cape Town on 2 January 2022, during a fire incident. A major fire broke out in the South African parliament building in Cape Town on 2 January 2022. **PHOTO : AFP**

A year after Capitol riot, Americans fear for their democracy: polls

ONE year after the violent assault on the US Capitol, Americans remain deeply concerned about the health of their democracy and about a third say violence against the government can sometimes be justified, according to two polls published Sunday.

The 6 January attack on the seat of Congress, led by supporters of Donald Trump, was "a harbinger of increasing political violence," and American democracy "is threatened," according to two-thirds of those surveyed for a CBS News poll.

Meantime, Americans' "pride" in their democracy has dropped sharply, from 90 per cent in 2002 to 54 per cent now, a Washington Post/University of Maryland survey found.

With the January 6 anniversary nearing, the polls offer specific causes for concern: CBS found that 28 per cent of respondents believe force can be used to defend the result of an election, while 34 per cent told The Washington Post that a violent action against government can sometimes be justified — the largest per centage in decades.

The results underscore the seemingly almost irreconcilable views dividing American society, which President Joe Biden — who took office 14 days after the Capitol rioting — has promised to overcome.

On Thursday, he and Vice-President Kamala Harris will deliver remarks to mark the one-year anniversary of the assault by Trump's supporters.

Two-thirds of his supporters continue to believe Trump's baseless charge that Biden is not the legitimately elected president. Trump had addressed thousands of supporters shortly before the Capitol assault, telling them the election had been "rigged" and that they should "fight like hell."

Some 60 per cent of those polled say Trump bears heavy reasponsibility for the invasion of the Capitol just as lawmakers were set to certify Biden's victory.

'Coordinated effort'

There again, opinion follows partisan lines: 83 per cent of Trump voters placed his level of responsibility at only "some" or "none," the Post survey found.

And 26 per cent of Americans want him to run again in 2024, according to CBS.

A select committee of the House of Representatives has spent months working to establish the roles and responsibility of those who incited or may have organized the protest. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man who crossed border into N Korea likely former defector to South: Seoul

A man who entered North Korea on New Year's Day by breaching the heavily fortified border from the South is presumed to be a defector from the North, the defence ministry in Seoul said Monday.

The man sparked a search operation by the South Korean military on Saturday when surveillance equipment spotted him crossing an eastern section of the border into the North. They failed to find him.

South Korean authorities have yet to identify him, but a defence ministry official said he is believed to be someone who came from North Korea in 2020 — also by breaching the border.

"We presume this to be the same man who defected to the South by climbing over the barbed-wire fence in November 2020," the official told AFP.

The man is in his 30s, the official added, without providing further details.

Separately, South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted a defence ministry official as saying the man "was recognized to be the same as the defector". No evidence of spying has been discovered so far, the official told Yonhap.

The man is believed to have worked as a cleaner in South Korea after defecting, the agency added. The South Korean military notified the North of the crossing at the weekend.— AFP ■

India begins vaccinating teens as Omicron fears rise

INDIA extended Covid vaccinations to teens aged 15-18 on Monday, after officials tightened restrictions in big cities to avoid a repeat of last year's devastating outbreak.

More than 200,000 people around India died in a huge spring Covid wave that overwhelmed hospitals and crematoriums.

Health workers have since administered more than 1.4 billion vaccine doses but less than half of India's population is fully inoculated, according to government data.

Hundreds of teenagers patiently queued with their parents on Monday morning outside a school turned into a makeshift medical centre in the capital New Delhi.

"It's really great to have your first vaccine," said 16-year-old Soumadeep, after receiving his first dose of the Indian-made Covaxin.

"It's like a new year gift for the children."

A health worker prepares to administer a dose of the Covaxin vaccine against the Covid-19 coronavirus to students during a vaccination drive for people in the 15-18 age group, at the Nelamangala Government High School and Junior College in Bangalore on 3 January 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

Officials have fretted over the arrival of the Omicron coronavirus variant and a sudden rise in daily infections, with some of India's biggest urban centres imposing fresh restrictions last week.

New Delhi and tech hub Bangalore are under overnight curfews from 10 pm each evening, with bars and restaurants in both cities ordered to operate at half capacity.

Mumbai, India's commercial capital, has barred public gatherings of more than four people from 9 pm to 6 am and restricted wedding ceremonies to 50 guests.

Last year's Delta variant wave struck after one of the world's biggest religious gatherings, the Kumbh Mela, which attracted around 25 million Hindu pilgrims. That festival, along with large state election rallies, was blamed by experts for fuelling the surge.

India has the world's second-highest number of cases, with nearly 35 million confirmed infections. — AFP ■

Oath-taking ceremony held for HKSAR's 7th-term LegCo members

THE oath-taking ceremony for 90 members of the seventh-term Legislative Council (LegCo) of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) began at 11:00 am local time Monday at the Chamber of the LegCo Complex.

The lawmakers, one by one, began to take an oath to uphold the Basic Law of the HKSAR and swear allegiance to the HKSAR after jointly singing the national anthem of China together with HKSAR Chief Executive Carrie Lam, the oath administrator.

It is the first time for the lawmakers to take an oath in front of the national emblem in the history of the HKSAR LegCo.

According to the National Flag and National Emblem (Amendment) Ordinance of the HKSAR that came into effect in October 2021, the national flag and emblem must be displayed at the oath-taking ceremonies of the chief executive, principal officials, the judiciary, the Executive Council, the LegCo, and the District Council.

The taking of the oath is legally binding. The oath-taker must sincerely believe in and strictly abide by the relevant oath prescribed by law. An oath-taker who makes a false oath or who, after taking the oath, engages in conduct in breach of the oath, shall bear legal responsibility in accordance with the law.

A list of LegCo members, whose oaths are determined as valid, will be published after the oath-taking ceremony.

The seventh-term LegCo began its four-year term of office on Saturday. The new LegCo is expected to hold its first session on 12 January.

Photo taken on 3 January 2022 shows the oath-taking ceremony for 90 members of the seventh-term Legislative Council (LegCo) of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in Hong Kong, south China. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

The LegCo election, the first since improvements to the HKSAR's electoral system, was successfully held on 19 December 2021.

In the election, a total of 153 candidates had contended for 90 seats, including 20 from geographical constituencies, 30 from functional constituencies, and 40 from the Election Committee constituency. — Xinhua ■

S Korean president says not to stop efforts for peace on Korean Peninsula

SOUTH Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Monday that his administration will not stop efforts to institutionalize sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula until his single five-year term ends in May.

Moon made the remark in his final New Year's speech, saying South Korea still has a long way to go for relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

He said that if the two Koreas resume dialogue and cooperation, the international community will positively respond to it.

The president noted that his government will seek the normalized inter-Korean relations and an irreversible path to peace until the end, hoping that the next government would continue efforts for dialogue with the DPRK. The country's presidential election is scheduled for 9 March.

The Moon government has sought to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended with armistice, but it had yet to reach a tangible conclusion.

Denuclearization talks between the DPRK and the United States have been stalled since the second summit between top DPRK leader Kim Jong Un and former US President Donald Trump ended without an agreement in February 2019 in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. — Xinhua ■

Chinese superfan spends thousands on Olympic souvenir obsession

CRAMMED on every available surface in Zhang Wenquan's crowded Beijing home is Olympic memorabilia — from mascots and torches to flags, banners, clothes and cuddly toys.

The Chinese superfan scours the internet for rare souvenirs and snaps selfies several times a week by the countdown clock to the 2022 Winter Games in the capital.

Beijing will become the first city to host both the Summer and Winter Olympics when the event kicks off in February — a dream come true for the construction firm worker.

Zhang's interest was first piqued when he became glued to the 2000 Sydney Olympics as a high-school student.

"I saw China win many gold medals and felt inspired," the 35-year-old told AFP.

When the Games came to Beijing in 2008, he worked as an official volunteer — a life-changing experience that sparked his passion for collecting souvenirs.

Wearing a 2022 Winter Olympics scarf and sweatshirt emblazoned with its mascot — plus a headband reading "Come on, Winter Olympics!" — Zhang shows off the array of merchandise covering his home.

The house is so full of piles of boxes that he has been forced to sleep elsewhere. He estimates spending at least 400,000 yuan ($62,800) on 5,000 souvenirs so far.

Zhang scours eBay daily for new listings, with the most expensive find being a $1,900 torch from the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics.

He has row upon row of the mascot "Bing Dwen Dwen" for the coming Winter Games — a panda wearing a shell made of ice — in various colours and sizes. – 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 inves tment 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.

ONE Championship Strawweight World Championship to be held on 14 Jan

ONE Championship will launch its newest event in the new year 2022 with a Strawweight World Championship named Heavy Hitters featuring a knockout card of world-class fighters.

The event will be held in Singapore on 14 January.

"In the main event, ONE Women's Strawweight World Champion Xiong Jing Nan stands on the verge of clearing out the weight class, but standing in her way is 4-ranked Japanese submission ace, Ayaka Miura. With Xiong holding the record for most knockouts in the division and Miura owning the most tap outs, get ready for an explosive clash of styles," ONE Championship event organizers said.

"Plus, the precision and technique of the towering Roman Kryklia go up against the iron chin and raw power of Murat Aygun, with Kryklia's ONE Light Heavyweight Kickboxing World Title hanging in the balance.

Also on the star-studded card are Saemapetch versus Tawanchai, the debut of Khabib Nurmagomedov's protege Saygid Izagakhmaev, and Muay Thai phenom Supergirl, so mark your calendars, check your local listings, and download the ONE Super App now!," the ONE officials added.

There are a total of six main cards plus six lead cards in the championship event. — GNLM

Man City's 'title to lose' after Chelsea, Liverpool fall on their swords

Liverpool's Portuguese striker Diogo Jota (R) shoots during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Liverpool at Stamford Bridge in London on 2 January 2022. **PHOTO : ADRIAN DENNIS / AFP**

EVEN after a weekend in which Manchester City produced the worst performance of the Premier League's top four, the champions streaked further clear towards a fourth title in five years.

City manager Pep Guardiola admitted his side were second best despite coming from behind to beat 10-man Arsenal 2-1 with a 93rd minute winner that secured an 11th consecutive league win.

As Guardiola's men have hit their stride, Chelsea and Liverpool have run out of steam to turn a tight three-horse race, into a procession.

Struck down by coronavirus outbreaks and injuries, the two challengers for City's crown threw themselves into a titanic battle at Stamford Bridge on Sunday, but a 2-2 draw did little for either side's hopes of reeling in the leaders.

City's advantage now stands at 10 points from Chelsea, with Liverpool a further point back with a game in hand.

"It's a big gap, so they have the title maybe to lose at the moment," said Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk, one of those forced into a swift return to action after testing positive for Covid-19.

"We just have to get results, play good football and win games. It sounds pretty easy but it's tough."

Rather than cutting the gap, there is a likelihood it could grow in the coming weeks as Chelsea and Liverpool tackle their own issues.

Both are involved in two-legged League Cup semi-finals over the next two midweeks despite calls from managers for the ties to be switched to one-off games. — AFP ■

Real Madrid 'still on holiday' in Getafe loss, patched-up Barca beat Mallorca

CARLO Ancelotti said Real Madrid were "still on holiday" in their shock 1-0 loss to Getafe on Sunday while Barcelona overcame their Covid chaos to sneak a tight victory away at Mallorca.

Madrid's surprise defeat was their first in three months and gives fresh hope to the beleaguered chasing pack in Spain, after Eder Militao's early error allowed Enes Unal to score the winner at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez. "We were on holiday for an extra day," said Ancelotti afterwards.

"The team was not the same team that played before Christmas — less commitment, less concentration.

"We didn't deserve to lose but we ended up with a defeat that could be a wake-up call." Barcelona were without eight first-team players who had tested positive for Covid last week while a further six were out through injury or suspension.

Xavi Hernandez said on Saturday it was "crazy" the game had to go ahead, with Jordi Alba, Ousmane Dembele and Gavi among those infected while Sergio Busquets was suspended and Pedri, Ansu Fati and Memphis Depay injured. — AFP ■

Real Madrid's Belgian goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois (Top-R) catches the ball during the Spanish league football match between Getafe CF and Real Madrid CF, at the Col Alfonso Perez stadium in Getafe on 2 January 2022. **PHOTO : JAVIER SORIANO / AFP**