

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.

Honouring the persons who served the interests of the State and the people with excellent performances is a good tradition, says Senior General

THE independence was regained by all the ethnic nationals in unison with diligence, perseverance and courage under the leadership of national leader General Aung San, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing at the presentation of honorary title at the ceremony to mark the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the Thabin Hall of the Office of SAC Chairman yesterday morning.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said that the Tatmadaw has fine traditions to present honorary titles and medals to the recipients on significant days. Although a country can lose its independence in a short time, the country needs to hardly strive for regaining independence with the sacrifice of life and limb of the forefathers for more than 100 years. The independence was regained by all the ethnic nationals in unison with diligence, perseverance and courage under the leadership of national leader General Aung San.

As such, independence and sovereignty are the hearts of all



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing cordially greets the honorary title holders at the presentation ceremony to mark the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day in Nay Pyi Taw on 4 January 2022.

the Myanmar people. To sustain the independence regained by the national leaders and forefathers with sacrifices, the national objectives of Independence Day must be deeply accepted and implemented by all ethnic national people in unity. Moreover, all Myanmar people should strive for peace and stability and modernity of the independent country as a national duty.

Honouring the persons who served the interests of the State and the people

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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.

Mr Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus sends the 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

ON Behalf of the Government of the Republic of Belarus and my own, I sincerely congratulate you on the National Holiday – the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I take this opportunity to confirm my sincere desire to strengthen the dialogue between the Belarusian and the Myanmar peoples, as well as to deepen the mutually beneficial cooperation between our countries in trade and economic spheres.

There is significant potential for the further development of constructive ties between Belarus and Myanmar. For my part, I am ready to provide this process with all the necessary support.

I wish You, Your Excellency, sound health, success and well-being. Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Statement to appreciate teachers' efforts

TEACHERS are honoured as part of the Five Infinite Venerables, and the manner of paying respect to the teachers can be only seen in Myanmar as a tradition. The teachers teach their pupils based on their goodwill like their own children and dutifully serve a teacher's duties. They must train their pupils and students in the best discipline. They see that they grasp their lessons well. They instruct them in the arts and sciences, they provide for their safety in every quarter, and they introduce them to their friends and associates.

As the COVID-19 infection rate is controlled to a certain extent, the basic education high, middle and primary schools under the Department of Basic Education have reopened across nation for the 2021-2022 academic year starting 1 June.

Those who want to seek good sake of one party, political extremist NLD members and supporters, NUG, CRPH and PDF committed arson attacks at the schools using mines, homemade bombs and grenades to fail the teaching processes, and threatened the teachers in addition to the incitements, social punishment and threats against education staff to join CDM while the officials made preparations for the reopening of schools and during the current teaching period. Their doings left some casualties, and the State Administration Council has expressed its deepest condolences and sympathy to the victims' families.

The SAC also appreciates the concerted efforts of teachers, who understand two virtues, Hiri — shame at doing evil —and Otappa—fear of the results of doing evil —for teaching the new generations of the country amid such difficulties and challenges.

The security forces will take extraordinary measures to ensure the safety of teachers who are making efforts in the academic sector for the next generations in order to promote the education qualification. The people should keep security awareness and cooperate with the security members in community peace and peaceful learning of children.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Indian delegation to attend 1st joint committee meeting-JCM arrives in Yangon

A delegation led by Chief Hydrographer of the Indian Navy Vice-Admiral Adhir Arora, and his wife arrived in Yangon by air yesterday evening to attend the first Joint Committee Meeting-JCM to be held in Myanmar. Senior officers from Tatmadaw (Navy), the Indian Naval Attaché to Myanmar and officials welcomed them at Yangon International Airport.

The delegation will spend five days in Myanmar until 8 January to attend the 1st Joint Committee Meeting and visit places of significance in Yangon. —MNA



Senior officers from Tatmadaw Navy greet the delegation led by the Chief Hydrographer of the Indian Navy yesterday.

144 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 4 January, total figure rises to 531,299

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 531,299 after 144 new cases were reported on 4 January 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 509,182 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,278 after 1 died.—MNA

Honouring the persons who served the interests of the State ...

FROM PAGE-1

with excellent performances is a good tradition. As such, the scrutiny body recommended the recipients to be awarded the honorary titles and medals for their excellent performances with sacrifices under the relevant provisions and additional provisions for awarding the titles.

This year, the Thray Sithu title awarded in 2021 will be presented to one person, the Sithu title to 10 persons, the Thura title to one person, the Zeya Kyaw Htin title to 17 persons, and the Wunna Kyaw Htin title to two persons totalling 31.



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing speaks on the occasion of the honorary title presentation ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.



The Senior General presents the Thray Sithu title to the Vice-Senior General.



The Senior General offers ten Sithu titles.

Honorary titles are the records for excellent performances of the recipients in serving the interests of the State and the citizens. As the title is a record of the government in recognizing the excellent performances of the recipients, new generations of the recipients who could not attend the ceremony should take pride in winning the titles. The Senior General on behalf of the State and the people took pride in winning the titles.

The Senior General presented the Thray Sithu title to Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime

Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, the Sithu title for recipients through SAC member General Mya Tun Oo, the Thura title to the wife of Lance Corporal Thet Shay from No 207 Light Infantry Regiment, the Zeya Kyaw Htin title for 17 recipients through Lt-Gen Kyaw Swa Lin and the Wunna Kyaw Htin to two recipients through U Maung Ko.

The Senior General posed for documentary photos together with title recipients and their families. After the ceremony, the Senior General cordially greeted the title recipients and their family members. — MNA



The Senior General awards the Thura title to the wife of Lance Corporal Thet Shay.



The Senior General presents 17 Zeya Kyaw Htin title recipients.



The Senior General gives two Wunna Kyaw Htin title awardees.

Names of patriotic heroes would never disappear and would flourish in the motherland Myanmar forever, said Senior General



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing addresses at the event to present medals and certificates for military gallantry in Nay Pyi Taw on 4 January 2022.

EVERYBODY knows many numbers of the people who sacrificed their lives in independence struggle comprise not only patriotic ethnic people but members of the Sangha, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony to present medals and certificates for military gallantry at Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said safeguarding the nation for ensuring non-disintegration of the independence and sovereignty is the historic duty of all citizens. On the occasion of Independence Day, good citizens who served the State with courage and sacrifice of lives and limbs are honoured as they are deserved to be honoured. Such works are done for examples that new generation youths and new generation Tatmadaw members would emulate.

The independence and sovereignty of a country are of great importance. Everybody knows many numbers of the people who sacrificed their lives in the independence struggle comprise not only patriotic ethnic people but members of the Sangha. Their names have been recorded in Myanmar's history till today as a saying goes: **"Martyrs never die"** despite passing many years. The modern Myanmar Tatmadaw which emerged together with the independence struggle turned out a large number of heroes in line with the concept that **"Courageous sol-**

diers never go to hell". Names of patriotic heroes would never disappear and would flourish in the motherland of Myanmar forever.

Ethnic national people residing in the country wish to enjoy the fruits of peace and stability of the State and to do their livelihoods in peace. The Tatmadaw is defending the State and safeguarding the people. Basic principles on peace and stability, unity and development were adopted as part of serving the national political duties.

Due to voting frauds called political scandals which happened in the 2020 multiparty democracy general election, the Tatmadaw has been temporarily taking the State responsibilities in accord with the 2008 Constitution for about one year. The State Administration Council which has adopted the roadmap and objectives is striving for placing the State on the correct path. The point included in the five-point road map **"Emphasis will be placed on achieving peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Cease-fire Agreement"** expresses how the Tatmadaw emphasizes peace in performing national politics.

At the ceremony held this morning at the office of the State Administration Council, Thray Sithu title was conferred on one person, Sithu title on 10, Thura title on one and Zeya Kyaw Htin title on 17. This ceremony, Gallantry medal title will be conferred on six persons, Excellent Medal in Science (First Class) on eight, Gallantry certificate

of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services on two, and Honorary certificate of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services on two, totalling 18. On behalf of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, relevant military command commanders will present the Gallantry Certificate of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services to 40 persons and the Honorary Certificate of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services to 82 at the same time.

The Senior General urged new generations to emulate the good concept and belief of comrades who dutifully served the assigned duties with the sacrifice of life and limbs with the concept **"Courageously sacrifice life without fear in serving the State duty even encountering enemies such as the dragon and lion"**, and

should try hard to become the good patriotic Tatmadaw members and heroes on whom the State and the people rely in line with the Gambhisara Poem of Shin Mararatthasara.

The Senior General presented gallantry medal to one Major, one Captain, two Sergeants and two Lance Corporals, Excellent Medal in Science to six Lieutenant-Colonels and two Majors, Gallantry Certificate of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services to one Lieutenant-Colonel and one Major and Honorary Certificate of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services to one Colonel and one Captain.

The Senior General and party posed for documentary photos with Tatmadaw members and inheritors who accepted the gallantry medals.

The medal and title winners

were served with tea with the entertainment of Myawady Entertainment Troupe.

The Senior General then cordially greeted the medal and title winners.

With regard to the number of winners who secured the gallantry medals and certificates at the Tatmadaw till January 2021, there are six recipients in the Aung San Thuriya title, 50 in the Thiha Thura title, 546 in the Thura title, six in the Thiha Bala title, 1,860 in gallantry certificate, 2,018 in gallantry medal, 339 in the gallantry certificate of the Supreme Commander, 2,987 in gallantry certificate of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, nine in the honorary certificate of the Supreme Commander and 1,901 in the honorary certificate of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. — MNA



The Senior General confers the Excellent Medal in Science to six Lieutenant-Colonels.

Invite all stakeholders and organizations to join the peace talks

THE year 2022 is of importance. Coming 12 February is the Diamond Jubilee Union Day and the 4 January 2023 will be the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day. As such, this year is the pre-Diamond Jubilee period. Hence, it is important to further strengthen the sovereignty of the State and progress of the nation with development fruits. So, we have to start the new paces for restoration of the peace this year. As it is mentioned in the fourth of the five-point road map, all stakeholders and organizations are invited to join the peace talks.

(Excerpt from the New Year Message delivered by
Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 1 January 2022)

74th Independence Day Reception and Dinner
held in Nay Pyi Taw

STATE Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla hosted the 74th Independence Day Dinner on the lawn of the Office of the Chairman of the State Administration Council in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe and Union Ministers and their wives greeted those who attended the ceremony.

Afterwards, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, arrived at the lawn of the State Administration Council Chairman's Office, and cordially greeted the chairpersons and representatives of political parties.

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, SAC members General Mya Tun Oo, Admiral Tin Aung San, General Maung Maung Kyaw, Lt-Gen Moe My-

int Tun, Mahn Nyein Maung, U Thein Nyunt, U Khin Maung Swe, Daw Aye Nu Sein, Jeng Phang Naw Taung, U Mounghar, U Sai Lone Seng, Saw Daniel, Dr Banya Aung Moe, Lt-Gen Soe Htut and U Shwe Kyein, Council Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe, Joint Secretary of the Council Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo and their wives, Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Than Kyaw, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Thein Soe, Union Ministers, Auditor-General of the Union, Honorary title awardees, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Chairman of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and their wives, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) and wife, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and their wives, Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and wife, Deputy Ministers, Advisory members of the Chairman of



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing cordially greets the attendees at the 74th Independence Day Reception and Dinner yesterday.

the State Administration Council, Chairpersons and representatives of political parties, family members of honorary title recipients and invitees attended the ceremony.

At the dinner, fireworks were displayed to commemo-

rate the 74th Independence Day.

Next, the Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister and wife and attendees enjoyed performances by artistes from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, to the accompaniment of the

Myanmar modern music band before and during the dinner.

After the dinner, the Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister and wife cordially greeted those present at the ceremony. — MNA

74th Independence Day flag hoisting, saluting ceremonies held in Yangon

YANGON Region government organized the flag hoisting and saluting ceremonies to mark the 74th Independence Day of 2022 yesterday. The ceremonies were held at the Public Square in Yangon in line with the COVID-19 preventive guidelines.

Those present at the ceremonies were Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Hla Soe, Commander of the Yangon Command Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe, Chief Justice of Yangon High Court and Region Ministers, Region Advocate-General, Region Auditor-General, senior Tatmadaw officers, departmental officials, representatives of the Myanmar



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Hla Soe read out the message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.



Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Women's Affair Federation, and ethnic people.

The flag hoisting platoon led

by Captain Tin Naing Htoo raised the flag at 4:20 am. At 7 am, Chief Minister U Hla Soe of Yangon Region and the attendees saluted the State Flag together with the

Guard of Honour. The Guard of Honour also saluted the nation's fallen leaders and soldiers and took the four-point oath. Afterwards, the chief minister read

the message for the 74th Independence Day sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. — MNA



The hoisting of State Flag at 4:20 am in progress.

Flag hoisting, saluting ceremonies of 74th Independence Day held in Nay Pyi Taw



The national races are saluting the State Flag at the event in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

CEREMONIES to hoist and salute the State Flag to mark the 74th Independence Day were held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The event took place in front of Nay Pyi Taw City Hall following COVID-19 health rules.

The ceremony was organized with four national objectives of the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day – (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; and (4) To strive for restoring perpetual peace the entire people aspire.

The flag hoisting platoon raised the State Flag at 4:20 am together with the ethnic races.

At 6 am, those present at

the ceremony were Union Ministers, Union Auditor-General, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Governor of Central Bank of Myanmar, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman, senior military officers, Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union, the Myanmar Constitutional Tribunal members, Union Election Commission members, Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, Deputy Ministers, UCSB members, Deputy Governor of CBM, Nay Pyi Taw Council members,

Anti-Corruption Commission members, departmental heads, staff members and national people.

At 7 am, the flag saluting ceremony was organized and the Guard of Honour (Tatmadaw Army, Navy and Air) marched to the City Square.

Next, Chairman of 74th Anniversary of Independence Day Ceremony Organizing Central Committee Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win

took the salute of the Guard of Honour.

He then saluted the State Flag together with the Guard of Honour and attendees to the event.

The Guard of Honour also saluted the nation's fallen leaders and soldiers and took the four-point oath.

Afterwards, the Vice-Senior General read the message sent by SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the 74th Anniversary Independence Day. — MNA



The State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General reads out the message sent by the SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General at the event yesterday.



Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanmar 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

Events, sports competitions commemorate 74th Independence Day

YESTERDAY was the 74th Anniversary of Independence Day, the happiest day for all Myanmar people and Independence Day celebrations and Sports and Games were held in various regions and states across Myanmar.

In addition, famous pagodas, parks and public places are crowded with pilgrims and visitors.

In addition, illumination ceremonies were held in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, Yangon, and other cities, including Mandalay, to mark the Independence Day.

It is reported that the events were crowded with visitors. — MNA



Maha Bandoola Park crowded with visitors on Independence Day

THE Maha Bandoola Park in the heart of Yangon was crowded with people on the public holiday, the 74th Independence Day.

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) temporarily closed 62 parks and playgrounds to carry out effective preventive measures against COVID-19 and reopened the Maha Bandoola Park starting 3 November 2021 from 5 am to 6 pm daily.

The YCDC also extended the opening hours of the park from 5 am to 9 pm daily starting 2 January 2022 for the public who strictly follow the COVID-19 health rules. — Pwint Thitsar/GNLM



People at Maha Bandoola Park on Independence Day. PHOTOS: SOE MYINT AUNG

Collect data for studies to shrink timeframe for decades

THE functions of research and data collection are crucial for the improvement of any organization. Conducting the research can assist in knowing the comprehensive process of any subject whereas the data collection contributes to correct decisions and planning.

Generally, Myanmar does not have the practice of collecting data in all subjects. Hence, the country has a weakness in data. Such weakness can be found not only at present but also during the past successive governments. The country does not have proper records. There is one of the significant points, which the

Indeed, departmental officials, researchers and those related to the data collection process need to have a wider scope of knowledge on the importance of keeping records, which show how the ministries, functions, national economy and business models changed and developed.

so, all the data are reachable for researchers and these can be collected in a short period.

Indeed, departmental officials, researchers and those related to the data collection process need to have a wider scope of knowledge on the importance of keeping records, which show how the ministries, functions, national economy and business models changed and developed. What are the changes in development in rice, beans, edible oil, and rubber cultivation methods? How do rubber products change? To know, they all need records.

Studying the data can shrink the timeframe of gaining experiences from data and records which last for decades. All the researchers and departmental officials need to shrink the timeframe with a collection of data to be studied contributing it to the development of the nation.



Nibbling cats and Covid masks: First look at CES tech show

A FINGER-NIBBLING plush cat and a cooling fan for the ever-present anti-Covid mask: the CES tech show in Las Vegas on Monday offered a glimpse of the offerings at this year's meet-up.

CES, one of the world's largest trade fairs, is pushing ahead with an in-person edition after being online-only last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Here are timely — and quirky — products that will be pitched at the Wednesday to Friday convention:

Cooling masks

Entrepreneur Eric Fouchard got tired of feeling hot and stuffy under his anti-Covid mask, so he came up with a tiny ventilation system that can be mounted under a face covering.

The fan is held in place with a magnet assembly and is powered by a small rechargeable battery held in a strap that passes over

the back of a user's neck.

"The first way to use it is when you are on a plane or a train," he told AFP. "The second one is when you are working and you need to remove the mist on your glasses."

"The filtration of the mask stays the same," Fouchard, a Frenchman, said of his Aeronest system.

'Sweet biting'

The Japanese phrase "amagami" translates roughly to "sweet biting" in English.

"We find it very comfortable and we want to bring it to the world," Japanese entrepreneur Shunsuke Aoki said.

He transformed that impulse into a small, battery-powered plush creature that nibbles gently on your finger.

Aoki said young dogs or cats will harmlessly do the same thing, which is a source of comfort for people — noting that he likes to

let the device nibble his finger while driving.

"In a Covid situation, with people staying home every day, it gives you very good comfort," he added.

Who's driving?

Who will be behind the wheel of the race cars scheduled to hit the track at CES? No one.

"It's completely self-driven. There's software that tells the car what to do," said Paul Mitchell, president and CEO of Energy Systems Network, the organizers of the Indy Autonomous Challenge racing competition.

"It takes the information from the sensors and it tells the car whether to turn, whether to brake, accelerate or overtake another vehicle," he added.

Autonomous cars will race on Friday on the Las Vegas Motor Speedway at speeds of up to 160 miles (nearly 260 kilometres) per hour.

The exercise is not just for fun: Mitchell said the competition tests autonomous tech at high speeds so that, one day, cars can operate themselves on highways.

"Race cars and racing in general is a great platform to push the technology to the absolute edge," he added.

Mask for more than Covid

The white plastic shell of these masks covers the nose and mouth — and looks like something out of Star Wars.

But their inventors say they can stop pollution, bacteria and even Covid.

Connected to a belt-worn device, it contains an "active" filter capable of destroying fine particles and pathogens or pollutants.

"It's a fantastic tool to fight the Covid crisis," said Franck Glaizal, co-founder of Airpop.

"Traditional masks are not 100 per cent airtight, air passes through the sides. Our mask is



AirPop's Active+ mixes breathing sensors with air quality data. AirPop: The connected Halo sensor (just in the wearer's bottom-left) actively monitors user respiratory health stats and local air quality, providing feedback regarding breathing and mask performance through the companion app. PHOTO: AIRPOP/AFP

completely airtight", said Trong Dai Nguyen, an engineer with the company. The current model is due to be released in a few months, for about \$340.

"If you change (surgical) masks every four hours, after three years it is more expensive than our mask," he added.

SOURCE: AFP

Research suggests substantial weight loss might decrease severe COVID-19 complication risk

THE findings of a recent study suggest that among patients with obesity, prior weight loss achieved with bariatric surgery was associated with a 60 per cent lower risk of developing severe complications from COVID-19 infection.

The research has been published in the JAMA Surgery Journal.

Numerous studies have established obesity as a major risk factor for developing serious illness from an infection of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Obesity weakens the immune system, creates a chronic inflammatory state, and increases risk for cardiovascular disease, blood clots, and lung conditions. All of these conditions can complicate COVID-19.

Successful weight-loss intervention

The aim of this study was to examine whether a successful weight-loss intervention in patients with obesity prior to contracting COVID-19 could reduce the risk of developing a severe form of this disease. "The research findings show that patients with obesity who achieved substantial and sustained weight loss with bariatric surgery prior to a COVID-19 infection reduced their risk of developing



A total of 20,212 adult patients with obesity were included in this observational study. PHOTO: SCITECHDAILY/ANI

severe illness by 60 per cent," said Ali Aminian MD, lead author of the study and

director of Cleveland Clinic's Bariatric & Metabolic Institute.

"Our study provides strong evidence that obesity is a modifiable risk factor for COVID-19 that can be improved through a successful weight-loss intervention," he added. A total of 20,212 adult patients with obesity were included in this observational study. A group of 5,053 patients with a body mass index (BMI) of 35 or greater who had weight-loss surgery between 2004 and 2017 were carefully matched 1:3 to non-surgical patients, resulting in 15,159 control patients. Compared with those in the non-surgical group, patients who had bariatric surgery lost 19 per cent more body weight prior to March 1, 2020 (the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in Cleveland).

After the COVID-19 outbreak, researchers looked at four COVID-19-related outcomes: rate of contracting SARS-CoV-2 infection, hospitalization, need for supplemental oxygen and severe disease (defined as a combination of ICU admission, need for mechanical ventilation or death). Although the rate of contracting SARS-CoV-2 was similar between the groups (9.1 per cent in the surgical group and 8.7 per cent in the non-surgical group), participants in the weight-loss surgery group experienced much better outcomes after contracting COVID-19

compared with those in the non-surgical group. Researchers found that patients with prior weight loss surgery had a 49 per cent lower risk of hospitalization, 63 per cent lower risk of need for supplemental oxygen, and 60 per cent lower risk of developing severe COVID-19.

Healthier at the time of contracting

Although the exact underlying mechanisms are not known, these data suggested that patients who underwent weight-loss surgery were healthier at the time of contracting a SARS-CoV-2 infection, which resulted in better clinical outcomes.

"Striking findings from the current study support the reversibility of the health consequences of obesity in the patients with COVID-19," said the study's senior author, Steven Nissen, M.D., Chief Academic Officer of the Heart, Vascular and Thoracic Institute at Cleveland Clinic.

"This study suggests that an emphasis on weight loss as a public health strategy can improve outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic and future outbreaks or related infectious diseases. That is a very important finding considering that 40 per cent of Americans have obesity," he added.

SOURCE: ANI

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Appointment of Head of Service Organization

THE State Administration Council has appointed U Tin Ko Ko Naing, Deputy Director-General of the Social Security Board, Ministry of Labour, as Director-General of the same board on probation from the date, he assumes charge of his duties.

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

Yezin Agricultural University to reopen undergraduate, postgraduate classes

1. Yezin Agricultural University under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will open the following undergraduate and postgraduate classes for the Academic Year 2019-2020 and the Academic Year 2021-2022 on 6 January 2022.
 - (a) Fourth Year (Semester II)
 - (b) PhD (Semester I)
 - (c) Master (Semester I)
 - (d) Postgraduate Diploma (Semester I)
 - (e) Postgraduate Master of Philosophy (Semester I)
2. Vaccination must be reported at the time of enrolment with the immunization card. If the vaccine has not been administered yet, officials will continue to work with the Ministry of Health as soon as possible to provide the vaccine.
3. Details will be posted on the website www.yau.edu.mm. For more information, please call 0925-4325-155 and 0925-4023-383.

Yezin Agricultural University

သတင်းစာ မှတ်တမ်းပြုစု ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါတယ်
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Funfairs and sports activities across states/
regions in celebrating 74th Independence Day



Myitkyina, Kachin State.



Mandalay, Mandalay Region.



Kyaikto, Mon State.



Mindon, Thayet District, Magway Region.



Wakema, Myaungmya District, Ayeyawady Region.



Kyunsu Township, Myeik District, Taninthayi Region.



Pyay Town, Bago Region.



Loikaw, Kayah State.



Myaung Town, Sagaing Region.



Hlaingbwe, Kayin State.

Mann Chaung Dam fulfils irrigation needs in Minbu Township



An aerial view of Mann Chaung Dam. Mann Chaung Dam can store water approximately to 83,250 acre-feet and will supply adequate irrigation to 18,760 acres of summer crops in Minbu Township, according to Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department. **PHOTO: NAY THIT**

MANN Chaung Dam is ensuring adequate irrigation water throughout the year in the tropical Minbu Township, Magway Region. Mann Chaung Dam surrounded by evergreen forests is the heart of irrigated agriculture in the region.

“Water is more valuable than gold in our region. Mann Chaung Dam helps lessen our concerns

in agriculture. The growers most commonly cultivate paddy, chickpeas and sesame,” said U San Aung, a grower from Kuywa village in Minbu Township.

Mann Chaung Dam can store water approximately to 83,250 acre-feet and will supply adequate irrigation to 18,760 acres of summer crops in Minbu Township, according to Irrigation

and Water Utilization Management Department.

Mann Chaung Dam will distribute irrigation water to the growing acres under Mann and Aingma irrigation network starting from 1 March in the 2021-2022 cultivation season.

“More than 30,000 acres of monsoon and summer crops were planted in the 2020-2021 fi-

nancial year. This year, the dam retained a greater amount of water and contribute to 35,364 monsoon paddy acres. Under the 2021-2022 growing season, the dam is projected to cover up to 18,760 acres, U Tin Myo Hlaing, assistant director of the department explained.

Mann Chaung Dam located in Ngaphe Township, Minbu District, Magway Region is 4,480 feet long and 135 feet high. The storage capacity is estimated at 120,000 acre-feet and it has 136 square miles catchment area. This dam was constructed in 1995 and the project was completed in the 1998-1999FY.

“This dam distribute water through the Aingma diversion weir. It irrigated sowing acreage in Ngaphe, Minbu and Sagu townships. Maezali diversion weir on Mone Chaung delivers irrigation water in Pwintbyu Township,” said U Myo Zin Thet, staff officer of the Minbu Township Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department.

At present, a water-efficient irrigation system has not been adopted yet, causing conflicts among growers and water loss from unsystematic distribution

methods. To tackle those problems, authorities and growers are working together in improving the irrigation system. The formation of water users groups (WUG) is also being undertaken.

“We have formed more than 90 WUGs under the Mann and Aingma irrigation network. We have been coordinating with WUGs for water-use efficiency,” U Myo Zin Thet elaborated.

The Department of Irrigation and Water Utilization Management aims to fulfil irrigation needs without water loss. The department also focuses on enhancing irrigation systems depending on the allocated fund and international financial assistance.

“The department is making efforts for sustainable dam operations and dam upgrading in-between the growing seasons,” U Myo Zin Thet explained.

Magway Region is relying on irrigated agriculture and the dam also secures water supply for the local people. Irrigated agriculture helps effectuate the socio-economic development of the local community as well. —Aung Min Han/GNLM

New Mingala Market to be completed in June

THE new Mingala Market project in Yangon will be completed in June 2022, according to the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

The market is constructed by San Myat Tun Company and it has now completed 40.5 per cent of construction. The foundation process of the building is also completed and officials will continue the other operations.

The Mingala Market with

over 4,000 stalls was caught fire twice on 24 May 2010 and 9 January 2016. The Sun Myat Tun company was chosen to work with the YCDC to build the new market.

The new Mingala Market construction project started at the end of 2018, and the operation was suspended during the outbreak of COVID-19 and cannot be completed on schedule.

The deadline was March

this year and the company offered an extension for a further three months. The project is being resumed with about 200 construction workers to complete in June.

There will be a two-storey basement car park and the shop owners of the old market will be relocated from the first to the fourth floor and the other eight-storey (except for residential flat) will contain a car park,



The new Mingala Market is seen under construction (40 per cent completed). **PHOTO: KO NAING (BAGO)**

shops, showrooms including international standard fire ex-

tinguishing system. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM



Sweet potato growers expect better prices in Shan state

SWEET potato growers in Taunggyi, Shan State, are hoping for better prices to cover growing costs. Due to the current price situation and the high price of kerosene, it is difficult to convey it to other townships, according to the growers.

Khun Phyo, a local sweet potato grower, said, “I grow five acres of sweet potatoes on my own. The market situation is not good this year. Last year, one bag of sweet potatoes could make over K10,000 but not this year. One bag is equal to about

24 visses. Some are about 25 visses.”

“There are many growers and traders of sweet potatoes,” he added.

One bag of 24 visses sweet potatoes was priced at K13,000 and now only K10,000. The sweet potatoes are mainly transported to Yangon and Mandalay, as well as to other townships. — Aik Thon/GNLM

A bag of sweet potato (approximately 24 visses) was priced at K13,000 before but at K 10,000 now. **PHOTO: AIK THON**

About 40 trucks of Myanmar products exported daily to China through Kyinsankyawt trade post

ABOUT 40 trucks of Myanmar products are being exported to China through Kyinsankyawt checkpoint at the Muse border trade, said U Min Thein, vice-chair of the Muse Rice Wholesale Centre.

Earlier, the export truck of Myanmar products to China was roughly about 400 trucks per day.

"This Kyinsankyawt is a checkpoint that used to be able to cross about 300 or 400 truckloads of goods. But now, only 30 or 40 trucks are passed through the crossing," U Min Thein clarified.

China shut down all the border crossings with Myanmar in the wake of COVID-19 negative consequences. Of the land borders, Kyinsankyawt has been

reopened on a trial run from 26 November.

Thus, it has to be done step by step with many restrictions during the pandemic period. Besides the trucks carrying goods are being stuck in the one checkpoint.

Currently, rice and broken rice, rubber, various types of peas, dried plums, watermelon, melons and other foodstuffs are exported to China through land borders.

The Muse border, which is the mainstay of Myanmar-China border trade, is connected with Nandawphyu, Hsinphyu, Mang Wein, Kyinsankyawt-Wang Ding and Pansai-Wamting borders.

At present, Myanmar car-



At present, Myanmar carries out border trade with China mainly through Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti and Kengtung border checkpoints. Of these, Muse border trade points stood the largest trade zone.

ries out border trade with China mainly through Muse, Lwejel, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti and

Kengtung border checkpoints. Of these, Muse border trade points stood the largest trade zone.

Nevertheless, checkpoints from the Muse border trade zone were closed for over four months in 2021 due to COVID-19.

As a result of the complete closure of the Myanmar-China border, about 5,000 labourers from Myanmar are now unemployed. Now, about 50 or 60 buses operating between Muse and China are facing losses. Likewise, the merchants in Muse, who are trading with China are facing the loss as well.

In the 2019-20FY, the value of border trade through the Muse border zone totalled \$4,057.724 million, according to the official statistics of the Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce. — NN/GNLM

Myanmar Central Bank sells nearly \$444 mln in Feb-Dec period



This move is aiming to boost the bilateral cross-border trade, facilitate the trading and bilateral transaction and increase the use of domestic currency in line with the objectives of ASEAN Financial Integration.

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold US\$443.8 million at its FX auction rate to the authorized dealers in the past 11 months (February-December) 2021, according to the auction results released by the CBM.

Consequently, the exchange rate was pegged at around K1,700-1,800 in December-end, according to the CBM.

In a bid to strengthen the local currency and govern the market volatility, the CBM reportedly sold about 6.8 million dollars on 3 February 2021, \$12 million in April, \$24 million in May, \$12 million in June, \$39 million in July, \$28 million in August, \$63 million in September, \$110 million in October, \$31 million in November and \$118 million in December in the auction market.

The CBM trades the foreign currency with the authorized private banks under the rules and

regulations of the FX auction market.

The currency intervention is required to steer the own currency value. It is one of the responsibilities of the CBM to control the price. This is why the CBM practised the foreign exchange intervention.

Additionally, the use of Yuan or Kyat in the bilateral transaction is officially allowed in the border areas between Myanmar and China in a bid to encourage the trade, according to the notification released by the Central Bank of Myanmar on 14 December; in the exercise of the power conferred by Sections 17 and 22 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law.

This move is aiming to boost the bilateral cross-border trade, facilitate the trading and bilateral transaction and increase the use of domestic currency in line

with the objectives of ASEAN Financial Integration.

The local forex market's data showed that the dollar exchange rate touched the maximum of K1,345 and the minimum of K1,327 in January 2021. The rate moved in the range of K1,335-1,465 in February. It reached the lowest of K1,420 and the highest of K1,550 in March. The rate fluctuated between K1,550 and K1,610 in April. The rate fluctuated between K1,585 and K1,730 in May and it moved to the maximum of K1,595-1,620 last month. The local forex market's data showed that the dollar exchange rate touched the maximum of K1,345 and the minimum of K1,327 in January 2021. The rate moved in the range of K1,335-1,465 in February. It reached the lowest of K1,420 and the highest of K1,550 in March. The rate fluctuated between K1,550 and K1,610 in April. The rate fluctuated between K1,585 and K1,730 in May and it moved to the maximum of K1,595-1,620 in June. The rate stood at K1,626-1,670 in July. It hit the lowest of K1,660 and the highest of K1,682 in August. The rate edged up to K3,200 and fell to K1,696 in September. In October, it stayed between K2,430 and K1,830. The rate was pegged around K1,700-1,800 in November and December. — KK/GNLM

Agricultural export contracts by \$150.5 mln as of 24 Dec

THE value of agricultural exports plunged to US\$913.96 million as of 24 December in the current mini-budget period (October 2021-March 2022), indicating a significant drop of \$150.54 billion as against the year-ago period, as per the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

The agro exports stood at \$1.06 billion in the corresponding period of the 2020-2021FY.

The figures dropped only after China gave the go-ahead to border trade. China's import regulations and prevention measures for the COVID-19 caused a delay, exporters said.

The use of Yuan or Kyat in the bilateral transaction is officially allowed in the border areas between Myanmar and China in a bid to encourage trade. Therefore, trade is expected to increase in the coming months.

China constitutes 90 per cent of Myanmar's fruit and vegetable export. During the previous financial year, the closure of border posts by China adversely affected the fruit growers.

During the mini-budget period, the coronavirus pandemic impacted the foreign demand for agricultural products, livestock, mineral and finished industrial goods. On the contrary, the exports of the fishery, forest products and other goods rose slightly.

In the exports sector, the agriculture industry performed

the best, accounting for 37 per cent of overall exports. The chief items of export in the agricultural sector are rice and broken rice, pulses and beans and maize. Fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and other agro products are also shipped to other countries.

Myanmar agro products are primarily exported to China, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. Sometimes, the export market remains uncertain due to unsteady global demand.

The country requires specific export plans for each agro product, as they are currently exported to external markets based upon supply and demand. The G-to-G pact also ensures a strong market for the farmers. Contract farming systems, involvement of regional and state agriculture departments, exporters, traders, and some grower groups, are required to meet production targets, the Agriculture Department stated.

The Commerce Ministry is endeavouring to help farmers deal with challenges such as high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs, and erratic weather conditions.

The agricultural exports jumped to \$4.6 billion in the financial year 2020-2021, despite the downward trend in other export groups. — KK/GNLM

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

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

Market analysts forecast the benchmark 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average to rise to as high as 34,000, a level not seen since March 1990 and an 18 percent rise from the closing level on the final trading day of 2021 on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

The downside is expected to hold firm around 26,000.

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



Market officials wearing masks for protection against the coronavirus make a ceremonial hand-clapping at the Tokyo Stock Exchange after the last trading session of the year on 30 December 2021. PHOTO: KYODO

equipment makers, the retail, land and air transport and service sectors are expected to lead profit growth of Japan Inc. after restrictions imposed to curb the pandemic dented demand for shopping outings and travel to put these sectors in the toughest business environment among other industries.

The tourism industry, for example, is also expected to benefit from reopening economic activities in line with progress in vaccinations against COVID-19, as the government is expected to resume its “Go To Travel” subsidy campaign after the travel promotion programme was halted nationwide in December 2020 following a spike in new coronavirus cases.—Kyodo ■

Apple becomes 1st US firm with \$3 trillion market value

APPLE Inc. became the first US company with a market value topping \$3 trillion on Monday, aided by robust sales of iPhones and laptop products amid solid demand for remote learning and telework devices due to the coronavirus pandemic. Crossing the milestone means that Apple’s market value has tripled since August 2018 when it hit \$1 trillion. It went on to surpass the \$2 trillion mark in August 2020.

The IT giant’s current market value is roughly 10 times that of Toyota Motor Corp., the largest among



Apple Inc. became the first US company with a market value topping \$3 trillion on Monday, aided by robust sales of iPhones and laptop products amid solid demand for remote learning and telework devices due to the coronavirus pandemic PHOTO: KYODO

Japanese companies, and equivalent to nearly half the combined market value of all the companies listed in the First Section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

Apple’s fast growth has also been supported

by strong performance in other business sectors such as music distribution.

In addition, the continuation of monetary easing policy by the Federal Reserve has helped the New York stock market to remain bullish, facilitating the rise of Apple’s market value. The California-based firm posted a net profit of \$28.8 billion in the October-December period of 2020 as many consumers purchased its laptop computers and other products to work from home and adapt for remote learning amid the spread of the coronavirus.—Kyodo ■

Aussie bank calls for skilled migrants to keep businesses working

ABOUT four in 10 Australian businesses are experiencing significant impacts from labour shortages, according to a new research by one of the nation’s leading banks.

The Business Insight

Report, released by the National Australia Bank (NAB) on Tuesday, was based on responses from about 1,600 businesses across a broad range of industries from mid-November to mid-December last year.

NAB chief executive officer Ross McEwan said bringing talent into Australia would be the key to alleviating the employment situation. “Australian businesses are facing

significant skilled and unskilled labour shortages. Almost every employer I talk to, from cafes, tourism, agriculture, and manufacturing, is saying ‘we can’t get workers’,” McEwan said.—Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden blames meatpacking giants for soaring US meat costs

President Joe Biden offered independent US farmers \$1 billion in aid Monday as part of a battle against meatpacking giants he blames for driving up food prices — and hurting smaller competitors.

Biden was to meet by video with a group of independent farmers and ranchers to explain his “work to boost competition and reduce prices in the meat-processing industry,” the White House said.—AFP ■

Algeria energy firm to invest \$40 bn in five years: CEO

Algeria’s state-owned hydrocarbon firm Sonatrach will invest \$40 billion into oil exploration, production and refinement as well as gas prospecting and extraction between 2022 and 2026, CEO Toufik Hakkar said Monday.

“Our investment plan between 2022 and 2026 is approximately \$40 billion, including \$8 billion in 2022,” Hakkar said on state television, noting that a third of investments will involve foreign partners. “The largest part will be dedicated to exploration and production, to maintain our production capacities, as well as refining projects to meet the national demand for fuel,” he added. The plan includes a refinery project at the largest oil field in Algeria, Hassi Messaoud, as well as an extension of the Skikda refinery in the northeast to convert certain derivatives into fuel, the CEO added.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY.NO. (151S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY.NO. (151S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-1-2022 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE., LTD.

The Global New Light of Myanmar

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NEWS
IN BRIEFPakistan vows to
continue border
fencing despite
Taliban resistance

PAKISTAN Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Monday vowed to press ahead with the fencing of his country's border with Afghanistan despite confrontational incidents with Taliban authorities.

Pakistani soldiers clashed several times with Taliban fighters who had removed parts of the fencing from various locations. "We have erected the fence and we will continue to fence the border," the minister said at a media briefing.

Afghans do not accept the Durand Line separating Pakistan and Afghanistan as the international border. The dispute has been the main source of confrontation between Pakistani leaders and successive governments in Afghanistan.

Since 2017, Pakistan has been fencing the roughly 2,600-kilometre border that runs through rugged terrain to curb the cross-border movement of terrorists and flow of narcotics. Nearly 90 per cent of the installation of fencing has been completed.—Kyodo ■

Theranos founder
Elizabeth Holmes
guilty in fraud
trial

FALLEN US biotech star Elizabeth Holmes was convicted on Monday of defrauding investors in her blood-testing startup Theranos, in a high-profile case seen as an indictment of Silicon Valley culture. Holmes is a rare example of a tech exec being brought to book over a company flaming out, in a sector littered with the carcasses of money-losing companies that once promised untold riches. Her case shone a spotlight on the blurred line between the hustle that characterizes the industry and outright criminal dishonesty. Jurors took seven days of deliberations to reach their verdict, finding her guilty of four counts of tricking investors into pouring money into what she claimed was a revolutionary testing system.—AFP ■

Sino-US growing tensions may jeopardize
security in E Asia in 2022

A screen on a street in Beijing shows on 16 November 2021, footage of Chinese President Xi Jinping who held a virtual summit with US President Joe Biden. **PHOTO: KYODO**

AN acceleration of Sino-US tensions may jeopardize the security environment in East Asia in 2022 ahead of key political events in the world's two major powers, making circumstances surrounding Chinese Taipei and North Korea

more volatile.

Relations between Beijing and Washington would deteriorate further as US President Joe Biden is set to take a tougher approach to the Communist-led government to garner support from

voters with anti-China sentiment before the midterm elections in November.

While Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to intensify provocations against Taiwan to pave the way for his controversial third term as leader, US-North Korea talks on denuclearization and sanctions relief are almost certain to make no headway.

To ease security concerns in the region, Japan and South Korea, whose president will be replaced in May, would be forced to seek balanced diplomacy that will not hurt their ties with either China or the United States, foreign affairs experts say. "Lobbing recriminations is easier than engagement because it doesn't require concessions or compromises," said Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies at Temple University Japan.

"Xi needs to look strong in the run-up to his appointment" at the ruling Communist Party's twice-a-decade congress in fall, "while Biden has been weakened politically and thus it will be difficult for him to adopt a more conciliatory policy toward China," he said. In addition, the US decision not to send its government officials to the Beijing Winter Olympics, slated for February, will "reinforce perceptions of a new Cold War" and make it "more difficult to pursue diplomatic engagement," Kingston said.

The United States and other democratic nations including Australia and Canada have announced they will conduct a "diplomatic boycott" of the Olympics. Some countries such as Japan have followed suit, although they have refrained from using that expression.—Kyodo ■

In record year, over
28,000 migrants crossed
Channel

A record number of more than 28,000 migrants crossed the Channel from France to the UK in small boats last year, the PA news agency reported Tuesday, based on its analysis of government data.

As people smugglers exploited demand, charging thousands of pounds for trips across the busy shipping lane in flimsy boats, at least 28,395 people reached the UK — more than triple the figure for 2020.

The peak came in November, during the course of which at least 6,869 people reached the UK, spurred by favourable weather conditions.

On 11 November, a record-breaking 1,185 reached British shores in a single day.

The higher numbers were partly due to the use of bigger boats, carrying an average of about 28 people and sometimes as many as 50.

Such crossings ended tragically for many, with at least 27 migrants drowning off France on 24 November during an attempted crossing in a boat likened by French officials to a children's inflatable pool.

The 27 victims were mostly men but also included seven women, a 16-year-old and a seven-year-old child.—AFP ■



More than three times as many migrants have attempted to cross the English Channel from France in 2021. A handout image from France's Societe Nationale de Sauvetage en Mer on 18 February 2019, shows British rescuers (front) helping some 20 migrants on a semirigid boat trying make their way from France across the English Channel. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Prince Andrew to urge
US judge to dismiss
sex abuse case

Prince Andrew has vehemently denied claims he had sex with Virginia Giuffre, and said he has no recollection of meeting her. **PHOTO: JOHN THYS AFP**

PRINCE Andrew's lawyers will use a court hearing Tuesday to urge a New York judge to throw out a sexual assault lawsuit brought against the British royal in the United States.

His attorneys are expected to argue that a once-confidential settlement between accuser Virginia Giuffre and late disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein unveiled on Monday protects Andrew from litigation.

The hearing, to be held between the parties' representatives via videoconference with press and public able to listen in by telephone, starts at 10:00 am (1500 GMT).

Giuffre alleges that Epstein lent her out for sex with his wealthy and powerful associates,

including Andrew, an allegation the prince has repeatedly and strenuously denied.

A deal made public for the first time Monday by a New York court shows that Giuffre agreed to drop a civil case against Epstein for \$500,000 in Florida in 2009. The settlement contained a provision that purports to protect "other potential defendants" from being sued related to alleged sexual abuse committed by Epstein, who killed himself in jail two and a half years ago.

Lawyers for Queen Elizabeth II's second son will cite the agreement during Tuesday's oral arguments when they will urge judge Lewis Kaplan to dismiss Giuffre's lawsuit against the prince.—AFP ■

China will continue to ‘modernize’ nuclear arsenal: foreign ministry

CHINA Tuesday said it will continue to “modernize” its nuclear arsenal and called on the United States and Russia to reduce their stockpiles a day after global powers pledged to prevent such weapons spreading. In a rare joint statement setting aside rising West-East tensions, the United States, China, Russia, Britain and France reaffirmed their goal of creating a world free of atomic weapons and avoiding a nuclear conflict.

The five nuclear powers also committed to full future disarmament from atomic weapons, which have only been used in

conflict in the US bombings of Japan at the end of World War II. But squaring that rhetoric with reality will not be easy at a time of heightened tension between those same global powers.

There are growing global concerns about China’s military modernization especially after its armed forces last year announced they had developed a hypersonic missile that can fly at five times the spread of sound.

The United States has also said China is expanding its nuclear arsenal with as many as 700 warheads by 2027 and possibly 1,000 by 2030.



Beijing said it would continue to ‘modernize’ its nuclear arsenal, a day after joining the four other major nuclear powers in pledging to prevent such weapons spreading. Chinese intercontinental strategic nuclear missiles at a military parade in Beijing. PHOTO: TAO LIANG/XINHUA

On Tuesday, China defended its nuclear weapons policy and said Russia and the United States – by far the world’s largest nucle-

ar powers — should make the first move on disarmament. “The US and Russia still possess 90 percent of the nuclear war heads

on Earth,” Fu Cong, director-general of the department of arms control at the Chinese foreign ministry, told reporters.— AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran vows revenge unless Trump tried for Soleimani killing

IRAN’S President Ebrahim Raisi vowed revenge against Donald Trump unless the former US president is tried over the killing of Qassem Soleimani, as Tehran marked two years since the revered commander’s death.

The Islamic republic and its allies across the Middle East held emotional commemorations for General Soleimani and his Iraqi lieutenant who were assassinated in a US drone strike at Baghdad airport on 3 January 2020.—AFP ■

23 dead in clashes between Colombian rebels

AT least 23 people — four of them Venezuelans — were killed in fighting between rival rebel groups in Colombia’s border region with Venezuela, top Colombian officials said on Monday. Civilians were “likely” among the casualties from clashes between members of Colombia’s last recognized guerrilla group, the ELN, and dissidents of the FARC rebel movement, President Ivan Duque said. “We have found 23 dead” in a rural area of the northeastern Arauca department, deputy defence minister Jairo Garcia said. Duque blamed his counterpart Nicolas Maduro for harbouring Colombian rebels on the Venezuelan side of the countries’ 2,200-kilometre (1,400 mile) border.—AFP ■

Haitian PM says was targeted in assassination attempt



Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry has been de-facto running the country since the July 2021 assassination of president Jovenel Moise. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

HAITIAN Prime Minister Ariel Henry told AFP in an interview Monday that he was targeted in an assassination attempt during weekend national day celebra-

tions. “An attempt has been made against me personally. My life has been put in the crosshairs,” said Henry, who has been de-facto

running the country since the July assassination of president Jovenel Moise.

Clashes between police and armed groups erupted on Saturday during official celebrations in the city of Gonaives, some 150 kilometres (90 miles) north of the capital Port-au-Prince, where Haiti’s declaration of independence was signed over 200 years ago. Photos provided to AFP by Henry’s office show a bullet impact mark on the windshield of his armoured vehicle.

The events come weeks after groups of citizens and members of armed gangs in Gonaives had violently expressed their opposition to Henry’s visiting their city.

“I knew I was taking a risk,” Henry told AFP in a telephone interview.—AFP ■



Hulks of destroyed American armoured vehicles are also on informal display on roads outside the city. PHOTO: AFP

Spoils of war: Taliban put victory over US on display

IN the governor’s compound of Afghanistan’s Ghazni province, a new historical exhibit is unveiled before a rapt audience of Taliban fighters — sections of blast walls from a former US military base.

One concrete slab is inscribed with the names and regiments of US troops who served in the province during America’s longest war.

Like soldiers throughout history, US troops regularly daubed their names on the walls of bases and fixed positions they occupied.

But now the towering block is on public display -- being used to bolster the Taliban’s narrative of toppling US-led forces after 20 years of fighting. “We have to show this so that Afghans, the world, and future generations know that we beat the Americans,” Taliban provincial culture chief Mullah Habibullah Mujahid told AFP. “Even if they called themselves the greatest power in the world.”

Taliban forces took the city of Ghazni — 150 kilometres (95

miles) south of Kabul – three days before the capital fell on 15 August. The region has 3,500 years of rich recorded history, and the Taliban are now busy writing the latest chapter with proof of their military triumph.

The propaganda push comes as Afghanistan’s new rulers struggle to evolve from an insurgency to a governing power in a country on the brink of economic collapse, with the UN estimating more than half the population is facing acute hunger.—AFP ■

All eyes on Newcastle for Premier League's January arms race

THREE months on since a controversial takeover by the Saudi sovereign wealth fund was given the green light by the Premier League, Newcastle have the chance to splash their new-found wealth in the January transfer window.

The Magpies are badly in need of reinforcements just to remain in the English top-flight after winning just one of their 19 games this season.

Newcastle's last two matches have even been postponed because they were unable to field a team with enough senior players due to coronavirus infections and a growing injury list that could dictate who arrives at St James' Park in the next 27 days.

Defenders are expected to be top of the shopping list



Three months on since a controversial takeover by the Saudi sovereign wealth fund was given the green light by the Premier League, Newcastle have the chance to splash their new-found wealth in the January transfer window. **PHOTO: AFP**

after Newcastle shipped a Premier League record 80 goals in 2021, 42 of which have come this season. England international right-back Kieran Trip-

pier is reportedly close to a £25 million (US\$34 million) move from Atletico Madrid with Lille centre-back Sven Botman also a target.—AFP ■

Wolves end Rangnick's honeymoon at Man Utd



Joao Moutinho (right) scored Wolves' winner in 1-0 victory at Manchester United. **PHOTO: PAUL ELLIS /AFP**

WOLVES ended Ralf Rangnick's unbeaten start as Manchester United interim manager on Monday as Joao Moutinho's strike earned a deserved 1-0 win at Old Trafford. A first home defeat to Wolves in 42 years leaves United still seventh in the Premier League table, four points adrift of the top four.

But it was another lacklustre performance that was just as concerning as the result for Rangnick as the Red Devils were thoroughly outplayed. An injury crisis at centre-back with captain

Harry Maguire, Victor Lindelof and Eric Bailly all missing, forced Rangnick to hand Phil Jones his first Premier League appearance in two years.

But the former England international was one of few United players to emerge with any credit from a ragged display that raises questions over their chances of qualifying for next season's Champions League. Cristiano Ronaldo was named United captain for just the second time in the absence of Maguire. In his new year message on social media,

Ronaldo said he was "not happy" with the state of affairs at United and that "we have to work harder; play better and deliver way more than we are delivering right now."

However, there was no sign of improvement as Ronaldo was kept quiet up against a number of his Portuguese international teammates. David De Gea was the difference between the sides when United won 1-0 at Molineux in August and the Spaniard was again his side's saviour with a finger tip save to turn Ruben Neves' volley over.—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
- (c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Osaka overcomes nerves to make winning return after long break

A nervous Naomi Osaka overcame a second set wobble to make a winning return Tuesday in her first match since taking an indefinite break after a tearful US Open exit in September.

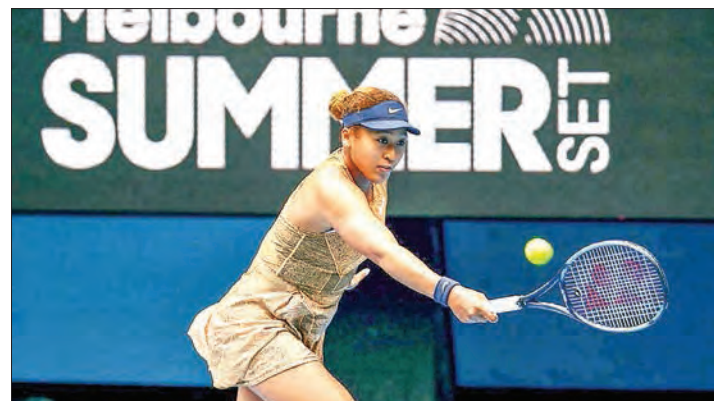
The four-time Grand Slam champion, who has slid to 13 in the rankings, admitted after her third-round defeat at Flushing Meadow that she was "dealing with some stuff" emotionally.

She had mostly laid low since before flying into Mel-

bourne last week to prepare for her Australian Open defence.

The Japanese superstar took the first step towards that goal at the Melbourne Summer Set tournament, but was nowhere near her best in beating France's 61st-ranked veteran Alize Cornet 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 on Rod Laver Arena.

"It always feel really good to come back here," Osaka told the crowd in her on-court interview. "It feels really nice to play in front of people."—AFP ■



Japan's Naomi Osaka made a winning start to the new season. **PHOTO: WILLIAM WEST /AFP**