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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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## Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

# Italian grape variety produces successful yield in Yamethin Township

ITALIAN grape variety is successfully produced in Yamethin Township, Mandalay Region and the growers expect the price to smash record high.

"It is called Italy Shwewah Jade in our region. It is of foreign origin. The growers started the experimental plantation of Italian grapes. The variety is rare so the price is pretty good. At present, it fetches over K5,000 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes). The price usually goes up in summer. The price is likely to reach a fresh peak if the prevailing market price is that high," said U Myo, the grower-cum-producer.

This Italian grape is of better quality and taste compared to other local varieties. Moreover, it is suitable for commercial farming due to its high yield, a commercial-scale grower U Win Tint suggested.

"Last year, it was priced at around K2,500 per viss. This year, the price is expected to hike as this Italian grape has penetrated markets in Yangon and other big cities. Consumers can purchase other grape varieties (No.3 and BQ) all year-round. We still need to grasp market share for this variety in the domestic market. The grapes will be ready to be placed on the market in the coming month. The sweet flavour and great texture will attract buyers. A single plant can produce approximately 17 visses," he added.

Italian grape variety will flow into markets in February. The current market prices of grapes move in the range of K2,500 to K6,000 depending on the quality and different varieties (Italian grape, RG, Black Queen, No.3 and Chun). — Aik Thon/GNLM

Italian grape variety will flow into markets in February. The current market prices of grapes move in the range of K2,500 to K6,000 depending on the quality and different varieties (Italian grape, RG, Black Queen, No.3 and Chun). **PHOTO: AIK THON**

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# Republic of the Union of Myanmar
# State Administration Council
# The International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University (Amendment) Law
# State Administration Council Law No 2/2022

10th Waxing of Pyatho 1383 ME
11 January 2022

THE State Administration Council hereby promulgated this law under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

1. This law shall be called the Law Amending the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law.
2. Section 9 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall be substituted as follows: —
"9. The Ovadacariya Board of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University shall be formed as follows: —

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (a) | Chairman<br>The State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee | Chairman |
| (b) | Secretary<br>The State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee | Vice-Chairman |
| (c) | Two members of the Sangha assigned by the ministry under the agreement of the government among influential members of the Sangha across the nation | member |
| (d) | Six Vice-Chairmen<br>The State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee | member |
| (e) | Three members of the Sangha assigned by the ministry among members of the Central Governing Board of the State Pariyatti Sasana Universities | member |
| (f) | Rector<br>The State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon) | member |
| (g) | Rector<br>The State Pariyatti Sasana University (Mandalay) | member |
| (h) | Deans of Faculties<br>The International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University | member |
| (i) | Rector<br>The International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University | Secretary |
| (j) | Pro-Rector<br>The International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University | Joint-Secretary |

3. The word "under supervision" included in the Sub-Section (a) of Section 10 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall be deleted.
4. Section 12 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall be substituted as follows: —
"12. The meeting of the Ovadacariya Board shall be held
(a) once a year at a minimum under the rules.
(b) as an emergency if necessary."
5. Section 13 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall
(a) delete the word "and deans of faculties" in the Sub-Section (b)
(b) Sub-section (c) shall be inserted after Sub-Section (b) as follows: —

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| "(c) | Deans of Faculties<br>The International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University" | members of panel of patrons |

(c) Sub-sections (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i) and (j) shall be re-arranged in seniority as Sub-sections (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j) and (k).
6. Section 15 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall be substituted as follows: —
"15. The meeting of the council-
(a) shall be convened under the rules before the meeting of the Ovadacariya Board.
(b) shall be summoned and convened in other set times if necessary.
7. Sub-Section (w) of Section 16 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall be substituted as follows: —
"(w). Monks not involved in the organizational setup and not in-service layperson experts proposed by the University Academic Board and the University Management Board shall be appointed for academic matters through the meeting approval and allowance provided or contributed"
8. Title of Chapter VI of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall be substituted as follows: —
"Rector, Pro-Rector and other academic members of the Sangha"
9. Section 17 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall be substituted as follows: —
"17. (a) The ministry-
(i) shall appoint the Rector and the Pro-Rector (Academics) of the University under the agreement of the government in accord with the advice of the Ovadacariya Board after seeking the approval of the council.
(ii) shall appoint the Rector and the Pro-Rector (Academics) for 15 successive years from the appointment day.
(iii) shall extend appointment the Rector and the Pro-Rector (Academics) who had completed a tour of their duties under the agreement of the government depending on good health conditions and willingness of serving.
(b) The Rector and the Pro-Rector (Academics) shall resign from the posts of their own accord before the end of their service terms with letters of submission to the government through the ministry.
(c) If the Rector or the Pro-Rector (Academics) may face any reasons such as disqualification mentioned in the Section 18 or failure to dutifully discharge their assignments, the ministry shall terminate them from the duties under the agreement of the government and advice of the Obadacariya Board after taking the approval of the council.
(d) If the post of Rector or Pro-Rector (Academics) is vacant due to expiry of service term or resignation from the post or termination of duties or demise or any reason, the ministry shall appoint a new one in accord with the provision of Sub-Section (a).
10. The following section shall be inserted as Section 17-A, after Section 17 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law: —
"17-A. (a) The service term of the dean of faculty, professor and associate professor shall be 65 years of age.
(b) If the ministry wishes to extend the service terms for the dean of faculty and professors, the appointment of service terms of those members of the Sangha shall be extended depending on their good health conditions and keenness to continue their duties.
(c) If the post of the dean of faculty, professor or associate professor is vacant due to expiry of service term or resignation from the post or termination of duties or demise or any reason, the ministry shall appoint a new one in accord with the provisions."
11. At Section 18 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law—
(a) the word "doctoral degree" in the Sub-Section (b) shall be substituted with the word "any doctoral degree of Buddhist literature".
(b) Sub-Section (d) shall be substituted as follows: —
"(d) they shall pass at least two of following Pariyatti examinations -
(i) Sasanadhaja Dhammacariya or Sasanatakkasila Dhammacariya,
(ii) Sasanadhaja Siripavara Dhammacariya, Pali Paragu, MA (Buddha Dhamma) or Sasanatakkasila Maha Dhammacariya,
(iii) Sakkasiha Pariyatti Sasanahita Dhammacariya,
(iv) Cetiyangana Pariyatti Dhammacariya Ganavacaka."
(c) Paragraph 8 of Sub-Section (f) shall be substituted as follows: —
"(8)Attribute of Sovacassatta means that if one knows it was wrong, one admits or is flexible"
(d) Sub-Section (i) after Sub-Section (h) shall be inserted as follows: —
"(i) The Sayadaw shall have at least three-year experiences of professor or dean of faculties at the university."
12. Section 22 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University shall be deleted.
13. Sections 34 and 35 in the General of Chapter (X) of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall be inserted as follows: —
"34.The ministry-
(a) shall set rights and entitlements of the trainees who are learning at the university.
(b) shall set disciplines for the trainees who are learning at the university.
(c) shall set administrative ways to take action against the trainees in failure to follow the prescribed disciplines set under Sub-Section (b).
35. If the trainees learning at the university fail to follow the prescribed disciplines, they shall face action under the administrative ways.
14. Original Sections 34, 35 and 36 of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Law shall be re-arranged in seniority as Sections 36, 37 and 38.

I hereby signed it under Section 419 of the Constitution.

*Sd/Min Aung Hlaing*
*Senior General*
*Chairman*
*State Administration Council*

## All stakeholders and organizations are invited 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 the restoration of the peace this year. As it is mentioned in the fourth point 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)*

# MoEA opens Kachin state director office in Myitkyina

THE opening ceremony of the new state director's office of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs was held yesterday morning in Myitkyina, Kachin State. The ceremony was attended by Members of the State Administration Council Jeng Phang Naw Taung, U Moung Har, U Sai Lone Hsai and U Shwe Kyein, and Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Union Minister U Khin Yi, Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint, Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan, Commander of the Northern Command Brig-Gen Myat Thet Oo and officials.

The opening ceremony of the MoEA Kachin State director's office is held in Myitkyina yesterday.

After the opening ceremony, the SAC members and party observed books on ethnic literature and pamphlets, and the law books on ethnic rights displayed in the new office building. Afterwards, they met with members of the Kachin, Shan and Bamar ethnic literature and cultural associations at Manaw House inside the Manaw Ground in Myitkyina and provided cash assistance and souvenirs. Chairman of the Kachin Ethnic Traditional and Cultural Association U Lanu expressed words of thanks.

Cash assistance and gifts are presented at the event.

The SAC members and party, and the members of the ethnic associations had lunch together at Majwel Hall. Afterwards, they met staff and students of the No (1) and No (2) Border Area Ethnic Youth Development Training School, the Ministry of Border Affairs.

At the meeting, the Union Border Affairs Minister explained the situation of the training schools and the deputy director explained the training activities. SAC member Jeng Phang Naw Taung gave a keynote address and provided uniforms and stationery for staff and students.

Afterwards, they inspected the students exercising on the campus with fitness equipment, food situation at the dining hall, dormitories and the school library, and encouraged the students cordially.— MNA

## Information release on detection of SARS-CoV-2 Variant Omicron

1. The Ministry of Health is continuously conducting "COVID-19 Molecular Disease Surveillance", and releasing information on the detection of SARS CoV-2 Variant Omicron from those who return by relief flights in a timely manner.
2. The four laboratory samples of the COVID-19 virus of the returnees were sent to the National Health Laboratory and No (1) Defence Services General Hospital (1000-bed) on 9-1-2022 and the SARS-CoV-2 Variant Omicron was found in three laboratory samples.
3. Three Myanmar nationals had tested positive for Omicron as they returned from India by the relief flight.
4. The patients are admitted to designated hospitals for medical treatment and the passengers who returned together with them now undergo strict quarantine and lab tests.
5. Therefore, it is announced that the ministry is stepping up the COVID-19 disease monitoring and containing measures, including disease prevention, control and treatment activities.

*Ministry of Health*

# Public Notification on repair works as transmission lines to National Grid destroyed

1. THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy has released "Public request regarding lower electricity production rate of power plants," on 5 January 2022 regarding the declining power generation capacity of large power plants in the national grid, requesting the public to understand the inconvenience of reducing the normal load capacity, which is about 1,470 megawatts, in some areas. The request also stated that the Ministry is working on new projects to meet the electricity demand as soon as possible.

2. Although about 540 megawatts can be generated from gas-fired power plants as maintenance work on the Yadana Offshore project has already been completed, 230 kV Biluchaung (2) - Shwe Myo Power Line, which was destroyed for the fourth time on 3-1-2022, and the 230 kV Biluchaung (2) - Toungoo power line, which was destroyed for the fourth time on 18-12-2021, are being repaired under security. At 9:20 pm on 9 January 2022, 132 kV Biluchaung (2) - Tikyit Power Line was destroyed for the second time, and about 220 megawatts of electricity from Biluchaung Hydropower Plant could not be sent to the National Grid. In addition, due to rising gas prices, about 750 megawatts of LNG power plants have been shut down, for a total of about 970 megawatts, which will continue to be reduced and load balancing will have to continue.

3. Therefore, according to the load adjustment for the reduced power generation of about 970 MW, load reduction will continue **between 07:00 am and 11:00 am and from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm**, which is a time of high-power consumption. The public is requested to understand if there is any inconvenience and that the Ministry is working to repair the damaged towers as soon as possible, as well as new projects are being made to supply the required electricity as soon as possible.

*Ministry of Electricity and Energy*

# MoALI Union Minister inspects Kyaungsu river water pumping project

UNION Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo inspected the Kyaungsu river water pumping project in Thanatpin Township of Bago Region on 10 January.

During the visit, he discussed the effective use of water, proper water management, crops distribution and technical assistance to plant value-added crops.

He also added that the government is implementing seven river water pumping projects in this financial year to ensure access to water for agriculture using solar energy in order to save expenses in the long run.

The solar system is adopted for the Kyaungsu river water pumping project of the Bago Region and Kanni and Kanmalay river water pumping projects in the Magway Region. Moreover, the operations in Lat Pan Chay Paw and Ngathayauk of Mandalay Region and PS-II, PS-III and Kata-92 in Pyaw Village of Sagaing Region will complete in February. The switching to solar power for the remaining pumping projects will be also undertaken as per the FY.

Then, the Union minister and party went to Yenwe Dam constructed over Yenwe creek in Kyaukdaga Township and inspected the strength of the dam and natural disaster prevention measures.

The Union minister visited Wampong jetty in Tachilek Township together with the Shan State Chief Minister on 9 January.

During the visit, he inspected the Wampong jetty area development, land allocation, import and export processes of agriculture and livestock products of neighbouring countries to be in line with the existing law and preventive measures for crops and animal diseases. — MNA

# Government of the People's Republic of China donates one million doses of Sinovac vaccines to Myanmar-China border cities

THE handover ceremony of one million doses of Sinovac vaccines donated by the Government of the People's Republic of China to five Myanmar-China border cities in Myanmar was held at the Yunnan Centre for Disease Control and Prevention on 11 January.

At the ceremony, Mr Xiao Fenghuai, Deputy Commissioner of the Ministry of Commerce, Special Commissioner's Office in Kunming explained the reasons for donating vaccines and U Thaw Tar Aung, Consul-General of Myanmar in Kunming expressed words of appreciation for the donation.

Afterwards, Mr Hao Yishan, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Commerce of Yunnan Province briefed the donation and announced that one million doses of Sinovac vaccines will be transported to Myanmar via border posts on 11 January.

The donated one million doses of Sinovac vaccines will be distributed to five Myanmar-China border cities in Myanmar on 12 January. — MNA

# NUAC to reopen undergraduate (semester II) classes for 2019-2020 Academic Year on 17 January 2022

THE National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon) and the National University of Arts and Culture (Mandalay) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture have announced that the following undergraduate (semester II) classes for the 2019-2020 Academic Year will be reopened on 17 January 2022.

1. Second Year (Semester II) Undergraduate Course (Music, Dramatic Arts, Painting, Sculpture, Cinematography and Drama)
2. Third Year (Semester II) Undergraduate Course (Music, Dramatic Arts, Painting, Sculpture, Cinematography and Drama)

*National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon/Mandalay)*

# Over 300 households in three villages in Kangyidaunt Township get electricity

VILLAGE Electricity launching Ceremony was held in Shawgon Village, Palekumyauk Village and Anouksugyi Village of the Ayeyawady Region yesterday evening.

First, Chief Minister U Tin Maung Win of the Region and officials cut the ribbon to open the ceremony of electric power access for Shawgon Village.

Next, the chief minister and party continued to open electric lighting ceremonies in Palekumyauk Village and Anouksugyi Village.

Afterwards, the chief minister sprayed scented water on the opening signboard and paid a cordial call on family members from homes where electricity was available.

At present, a 100-kVA transformer has been installed for 1,100 houses in Shawgon Village, Kangyidaunt Township, and a 100-kVA transformer for 106 houses in Anouksugyi Village and a 50-kVA transformer for 119 houses in Palekumyauk Village have also been set up.

More than 300 households in these villages have access to 24-hour electricity from the National Grid, authorities said. — Hla Min Htut (IPRD)/GNLM

# More than 310,000 COVID-19 vaccines administered in NyaungU district

AS of the morning of 11 January, a total of 310,911 people have been vaccinated against the COVID-19 in NyaungU District, Mandalay Region, according to the District Administration Body.

There are 12 designated places to get the vaccines in Kyaukpadaung Township and another 12 in NyaungU Township.

A total of 145,834 people has been inoculated against the COVID-19 in NyaungU Township, including the first dose of Sinopharm vaccines for 88,530 people, the second dose of Sinovac vaccines for the 50,320 people, while the first dose of Sinovac vaccines for 3,730 people and the second shots of Sinovac vaccines for 3,254 people.

In Kyaukpadaung Township, 165,077 people have been jabbed against COVID-19, including the first dose of Sinopharm vaccines for 95,191 people, the second dose of Sinopharm vaccines for 60,247 people, the first dose of Sinovac vaccines for 5,294 people and the second dose of Sinovac vaccines for 4,345 people.

Therefore, a total of 310,911 people has been vaccinated in NyaungU and Kyaukpadaung townships.

U Toe Lwin, chairman of the NyaungU District Administration Body, said that the COVID-19 vaccination team was being sent to remote villages. — Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM

# MoC facilitates daily importation of anti-COVID-19 equipment

THE Ministry of Commerce is overseeing imports 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 border trading posts, international airports and seaports.

Anti-COVID-19 equipment was imported by one company using one vehicle. A total of three tonnes of masks were imported via the Chinshwehaw trade camp yesterday.

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

# 235 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 January, total figure rises to 532,402

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 532,402 after 235 new cases were reported on 11 January 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 510,472 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,295 after 2 died. —MNA

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**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 454237515
**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**
( +95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmnews@gmail.com
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

## Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email **aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm** with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish **"Letter to the Editor"** that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

# 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 causalities, 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*

# PDF terrorists kill 6 betel-leaf sellers, take K10 mln

ACCORDING to the report on the body of a man who died from landmine injuries at the Wetlet People's Hospital in Sagaing Region on 10 January, officials from the local police force investigated the case.

According to the investigation, Sithu Aung, son of U San Nyunt, a betel farmer in Ngwedwin village, Ayadaw Township, along with four other men and one woman, went to Mandalay by a light truck vehicle driven by Arkar Min, son of U Zaw Lwin to sell betel leaves on the morning of 10 January. At around 5:30 pm, on their way back home near the locally-known Tawat Magyibin bridge between Shwepangon village and Thamayoe village, PDF terrorists reportedly detonated a local-made landmine, forced them to get off the vehicle, shot them, and took K10 million from the sales of betel leaves.

Incident place.

After the mother of Sithu Aung had received the news, she went to the scene by a vehicle from the Shwepangon village social welfare association and found her son on the ground with gunshot wounds.

Although the other five people were found dead, the driver was not present at the scene.

Sithu Aung died of his injuries on the way to Wetlet People's Hospital and the driver arrived at the Ayadaw Township Hospital at around 7:30 pm. According to him, he fled by the vehicle when the terrorists left and arrived at the hospital through Kutokine village, Ayadaw.

It is reported that necessary investigations are underway so that action will be taken against those who are involved in the crime under the law, and the people are urged to work together by secretly informing any movement of the terrorists to the relevant authorities until they no longer stand. — MNA

# Illegal timber, foodstuffs seized at various checkpoints

UNDER the supervision of the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, effective action is being taken to prevent illegal trade under the law.

On 10 January, a combined inspection team of Thanlwin Bridge (Hpa-an) reportedly inspected and seized illegal foodstuffs worth K65,850,000, including 2,080 kilogrammes of frozen duck (estimated value of K3,900,000), 975 kilogrammes of frozen chicken (estimated value of K1,950,000) and one Yutong bus (estimated value of K60,000,000).

Similarly, combined teams from the Ayeyawady Region led by the Region Forest Department under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force inspected areas in Kyangin Township and a total of 1.6064 tonnes of teak logs (estimated value of K1,285,120) were seized on 10 January.

Similarly, under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force, led by the Bago Region Forest Department, illegal logging was inspected in the protected forests in Pyay and Thayawady districts and 12.9 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated value of K1,568,000) was seized.

According to the report, illegal logging is also being carried out in the protected forests in Toungoo and Pyay districts and Anti-illegal Trade Task Force, led by the Region Forest Department, and officials inspected the process.

A total of 8.132 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated value of K2,287,000) was arrested.

Thus, on 10 and 11 January, 22.63 tonnes of various types of timber seized (estimated value of K5,140,120) were confiscated in line with the procedures of the Forest Department.

A total of 3,055 kilogrammes of foodstuffs (estimated at K5,850,000) and one Yutong Bus (estimated at K60,000,000) were seized on 10 January, according to the Anti-illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA

# PDF terrorists attack Argon Gas truck

THE PDF terrorists opened fire at the truck that carried Argon Gas from Myawady of Kayin State to Mandalay yesterday evening.

The truck carrying 19 tonnes of Argon Gas was driven by U Tun Min Oo, accompanied by Ye Htoo Aung was attacked by the PDF terrorists when it arrived at about three kilometres from Tatangu Village of Kawkareik Township at about 4:30 pm and was slightly damaged in the attack.

Security forces investigated to arrest these terrorists as quickly as possible. — MNA

# Fuel price on gradual rise above K1,400 per litre

ALL types of fuel oil have been priced at above K1,400 per litre, indicating a steady increase in prices, according to Yangon petrol stations.

On 30 December 2021, the prices stood at K1,340 for Octane 92, K1,390 for Octane 95, K1,315 for diesel and K1,325 for premium diesel in Yangon, whereas it jumped to K1,445 for Octane 92, K1,495 for Octane 95, K1,440 for diesel and K1,450 for premium diesel on 11 January 2022. There is a price gap of over K100 per litre within two weeks, according to the local fuel oil market.

The fuel oil price is highly correlated with the exchange rate. At present, the exchange rate stands at around K2,000 in the local forex market.

When a dollar was valued at only K1,330 in early February last year, the fuel oil was estimated at K590 per litre for Octane 92, K610 for Octane 95, K590 for diesel and K605 for premium diesel in early February 2021 in the domestic retail market.

Consequently, in a bid to steer the dollar rally in the local forex market, the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold US$15 million at its auction market rate in January this year.

Additionally, the Ministry of Commerce in coordination with the Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association carried out a scheme to distribute fuel oil at fairer rates through the government-sponsored petrol station chains. The total volume of fuel oil that are sold at very cheap rates is equivalent to the amount that the oil importers directly purchased the foreign currency from the CBM. The oil has been distributed at the subsidized rate starting from 22 September.

The CBM has directly sold $53.4 million to the fuel oil sector so far.

Normally, Myanmar yearly imports six million tonnes of fuel oil from external markets, the Ministry of Commerce indicated. — NN/GNLM

The total volume of fuel oil that are sold at very cheap rates is equivalent to the amount that the oil importers directly purchased the foreign currency from the CBM. The oil has been distributed at the subsidized rate starting from 22 September.

# Growers expect better prices for onion

The onions are primarily grown in Mandalay, Magway and Yangon regions, Nay Pyi Taw and Shan State. **PHOTO: ZEYA HTET (MINBU)**

THE growers from Kanyay village, Minbu (Sagu) township, Magway region cultivate onion in their farmland and they are expecting a better price in the harvested time.

"A grower with 10 acres cost approximately K1 million for cultivation, including the cost of onion seeds. If the growers cultivate the nursery plant, it can be dug up and sold after three months. Each acre of onion farmland is yielded up to 5,000 visses. Nevertheless, the yielded are depending on the soil condition and the quality of the plants. The onion prices are unstable every year and the price is good when there is demand from foreign countries. Thus, the growers are cultivating the onion in the hope of getting a better price," said Daw Mya Kyi, an onion grower from Kanyay village.

Earlier, the onion was grown mostly in Shwetabin, Kyauktan, Yaymyat, Kanyay, Kontha and Sagu villages from Minbu (Sagu) township. Now, the growers are considering the onion plantation due to the rickety price of onion.

The onions are primarily grown in Mandalay, Magway and Yangon regions, Nay Pyi Taw and Shan State. — Zeya Htet (Minbu)/GNLM

## 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*

# Myanmar foreign trade tops $7.23 bln in half of mini-budget period

MYANMAR'S external trade in the first half of the six-month mini-budget 2021-2022 (October-March) period sank to US$7.23 billion, which shows a drastic drop of $693 million as against the year-ago period, the Ministry of Commerce's data showed.

The international trade stood at over $7.93 billion in the corresponding period of the financial year 2020-2021, according to data released by the ministry.

During October-December 2021 period, Myanmar's export was worth over $3.7 billion whereas, the country's import was relatively low at $3.53 billion.

The border trade dropped owing to the closure of the border post by the main trade partner China amid the coronavirus impacts. However, the maritime trade was registered a significant increase of $369.6 million.

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

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on reducing the trade deficit, export promotion, import substitution and market diversification.

The external trade stood at $29.58 billion in the 2020-2021 FY, as per the Commerce Ministry's statistics. — KK/GNLM

# 99 petrol-filling stations distribute diesel with special prices

The fuel oil at the fairer price is available at 99 petrol-filling stations in Yangon, Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Taw cities and Mon, Shan and Rakhine states and Sagaing, Bago, Magway and Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions. **PHOTO: KO NAING(BAGO)**

ABOUT 99 petrol-filling stations from regions and states are distributing the diesel with special price starting from 11 January, it is learnt.

The fuel oil at the fairer price is available at 99 petrol-filling stations in Yangon, Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Taw cities and Mon, Shan and Rakhine states and Sagaing, Bago, Magway and Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions.

The name and addresses of the stations will be listed on the Ministry of Commerce's website and those shops have to sell only at fixed prices.

Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association (MPTA), in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce has sold fuel at a fair price since 22 September, which is equivalent to the amount that the oil importers directly purchased the foreign currency from the Central Bank of Myanmar.

If the consumers find the shops that are not being sold at the fixed price, they are urged to report to the Working Committee on Ensuring the Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, dialling 09 664075683, 09 664596327, 09 687635943 and 09 676320816, to the Yangon Region Consumer Affairs Department – 01250270 and the Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association – 09421006794.

Normally, Myanmar yearly imports around six million tonnes of fuel oil from external markets, the Ministry of Commerce stated.—Ko Naing(Bago)/GNLM

12 JANUARY 2022
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR



# Create tobacco-free areas for brighter life of new generations

PARENTS of each family in the Myanmar society admonish their offspring to avoid the use of cigarettes as well as cheroots which may trigger abuse of narcotic drugs.

The danger of narcotic drugs poses a terrible threat to global society. In Myanmar, a traditional saying goes 'cigarette starts abuse of narcotic drug'. It is true. The youths, the largest target group of the narcotic drug, started their life as drug addicts using cigarettes and cheroots.

Global countries are trying hard to minimize the number of drug addicts in various ways and means. As a cigarette is a basic factor to drug addiction, governments of global countries strive for eradicating the narcotic drugs as well as prohibiting the use of cigarettes under the limit.

> Not only parents but local authorities should strive for taking preventive measures of narcotic drugs, including smoking and consumption of tobacco, with farsightedness to nurture the youths with free from drugs in the society.

The Control of Smoking and Consumption of Tobacco Product Law enacted by Myanmar in 2006 aims to obtain a healthy living style of the public including children and youth by preventing the habit of smoking and consumption of tobacco products.

Abuse of narcotic drugs brings loss to the respective families. Hence, the governments ban the import of cigarette and narcotic drugs. Truly, the high rate of mortality is based on the use of cigarettes in infection of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world. As the pandemic directly affects the lungs of humans and other organs, those using the cigarette are not able to fight against the pandemic with full strength.

During the COVID-19 period, the use of cigarettes remarkably declined. As such, authorities and experts consider the best way to permanently decrease the use of cigarettes in society. They found that public health awareness to avoid cigarettes is much appropriate than the issuance of government orders.

Indeed, it is necessary to levy a higher tax rate on cigarette and tobacco products in Myanmar. To be able to restrict the abuse of tobacco to be used in the production of cigarettes and cheroots, the government needs to raise the health awareness for the people to implement the control of smoking and consumption of tobacco in time. As such, new generation youths will be free from the danger of narcotic drugs.

Not only parents but local authorities should strive for taking preventive measures of narcotic drugs, including smoking and consumption of tobacco, with farsightedness to nurture the youths with free from drugs in the society.

■ ■ ■

# Study finds COVID-19 Omicron variant neutralized by booster dose

*The new COVID-19 Omicron variant is more transmissible than the Delta variant. However, its biological characteristics are still relatively unknown.*

THE study about this variant has been published in the 'Nature Journal'.

In South Africa, the Omicron variant replaced the other viruses within a few weeks and led to a sharp increase in the number of cases diagnosed. Analyses in various countries indicate that the doubling time for cases is approximately 2 to 4 days. Omicron has been detected in dozens of countries, including France, and became dominant by the end of 2021.

New research has found that a booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine could produce sufficient antibodies to 'neutralize' the Omicron variant. **PHOTO: RNZ / ANGUS DREAVER, NICK MONRO / AFP**

### Sensitivity of Omicron

In a new study supported by the European Union's Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), scientists from the Institut Pasteur and the Vaccine Research Institute, in collaboration with KU Leuven (Leuven, Belgium), Orleans Regional Hospital, Hopital Europeen Georges Pompidou (AP-HP) and Inserm, studied the sensitivity of Omicron to antibodies compared with the currently dominant Delta variant. The aim of the study was to characterize the efficacy of therapeutic antibodies, as well as antibodies developed by individuals previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 or vaccinated, in neutralizing this new variant.

The scientists from KU Leuven isolated the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 from a nasal sample of a 32-year-old woman who developed moderate COVID-19 a few days after returning from Egypt. The isolated virus was immediately sent to scientists at the Institut Pasteur, where therapeutic monoclonal antibodies and serum samples from people who had been vaccinated or previously exposed to SARS-CoV-2 were used to study the sensitivity of the Omicron variant.

### Rapid neutralization assays

The scientists used rapid neutralization assays, developed by the Institut Pasteur's Virus and Immunity Unit, on the isolated sample of the Omicron virus. This collaborative multidisciplinary effort also involved the Institut Pasteur's virologists and specialists in the analysis of viral evolution and protein structure, together with teams from Orleans Regional Hospital and Hopital Europeen Georges Pompidou in Paris.

The scientists began by testing nine monoclonal antibodies used in clinical practice or currently in preclinical development. Six antibodies lost all antiviral activity, and the other three were 3 to 80 times less effective against Omicron than against Delta. The antibodies Bamlanivimab/Etesevimab (a combination developed by Lilly), Casirivimab/Imdevimab (a combination developed by Roche and known as Ronapreve), and Regdanvimab (developed by Celtrion) no longer had any antiviral effect against Omicron. The Tixagevimab/Cilgavimab combination (developed by AstraZeneca under the name Evusheld) was 80 times less effective against Omicron than against Delta.

### Highly transmissible variant

"We demonstrated that this highly transmissible variant has acquired significant resistance to antibodies. Most of the therapeutic monoclonal antibodies currently available against SARS-CoV-2 are inactive," commented Olivier Schwartz, co-last author of the study and Head of the Virus and Immunity Unit at the Institut Pasteur.

The scientists observed that the blood of patients previously infected with COVID-19, collected up to 12 months after symptoms, and that of individuals who had received two doses of the vaccine, taken five months after vaccination, barely neutralized the Omicron variant. But the sera of individuals who had received a booster dose of Pfizer, analyzed one month after vaccination, remained effective against Omicron.

Five to 31 times more antibodies were nevertheless required to neutralize Omicron, compared with Delta, in cell culture assays. These results help shed light on the continued efficacy of vaccines in protecting against severe forms of the disease.

"We now need to study the length of protection of the booster dose. The vaccines probably become less effective in offering protection against contracting the virus, but they should continue to protect against severe forms," explained Olivier Schwartz.

### Effectiveness of vaccines

"This study shows that the Omicron variant hampers the effectiveness of vaccines and monoclonal antibodies, but it also demonstrates the ability of European scientists to work together to identify challenges and potential solutions. While KU Leuven was able to describe the first case of Omicron infection in Europe using the Belgian genome surveillance system, our collaboration with the Institut Pasteur in Paris enabled us to carry out this study in record time.

There is still a great deal of work to do, but thanks to the support of the European Union's Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), we have clearly now reached a point where scientists from the best centres can work in synergy and move towards a better understanding and more effective management of the pandemic," commented Emmanuel Andre, co-last author of the study, a Professor of Medicine at KU Leuven (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) and Head of the National Reference Laboratory and the genome surveillance network for COVID-19 in Belgium.

The scientists concluded that the many mutations in the spike protein of the Omicron variant enabled it to largely evade the immune response. Ongoing research is being conducted to determine why this variant is more transmissible from one individual to the next and to analyze the long-term effectiveness of a booster dose.

***SOURCE: ANI***

# Pfizer expects Omicron vaccine to be ready in March

PFIZER expects a Covid-19 vaccine targeting the Omicron variant to be ready in March, the company's head said Monday.

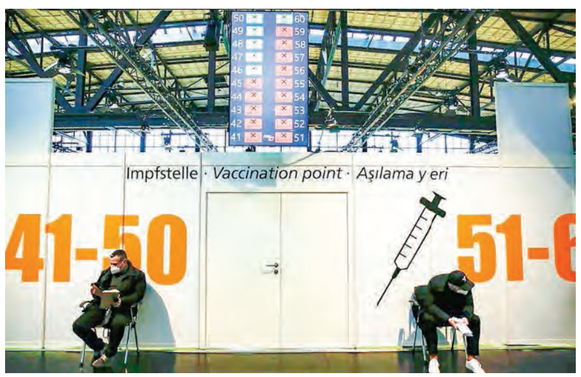
Pfizer Chief Executive Officer Albert Bourla told CNBC that Pfizer is already manufacturing doses due to keen interest from governments, as authorities contend with huge Covid-19 infection counts, including large numbers of "breakthrough" Omicron cases in vaccinated populations.

"This vaccine will be ready in March," Bourla told the network. "I don't know if we will need it. I don't know if and how it will be used." Bourla said the existing regime of two vaccine shots and a booster has provided "reasonable" protection against serious health effects from Omicron.

But a vaccine focused directly on the Omicron variant would also guard against breakthrough infections of a strain that has proven highly contagious, but has also resulted in many mild or asymptomatic cases.

In a separate interview with CNBC Monday, Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel said the company is developing a booster that could address Omicron and other emerging strains in the fall 2022.

"We are discussing with public health leaders around the world to decide what we think is the best strategy for a potential booster for the fall of 2022," Bancel told the network. "We need to be careful to try to stay ahead of a virus and not behind the virus."— AFP




Two men wait for their vaccinations at Treptow Arena's vaccine center in Berlin, on 27 December 2020. **PHOTO: MARKUS SCHREIBER /AFP**

## Myanmar Gazette

### Appointment of Head of Service Organization

THE State Administration Council has appointed Colonel Thein Toe from the Ministry of Defence as Director-General of the Small-Scale Industries Department under the Ministry of Co-operatives and Rural Development on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

## Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 11 January, 2022)

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 12 January, 2022:** Weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region and Kayin, Mon States. Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

**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 scattered rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Chin States.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 January, 2022:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thunder showers Degree of certainty is (60%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 January, 2022:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thunder showers Degree of certainty is (60%).

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 January, 2022:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thunder showers Degree of certainty is (60%).

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# Milestones in the State Administration Council's Tenth Month

BY Kanaung

(CONTINUED FROM YESTERDAY)

The SAC members, Union ministers, deputy ministers and officials view around the Citrus Fair 2021 on 27 November 2021.

Myanmar officials attended the 57th Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in the East and South-East Asia (CCOP) Annual Session and the 77th CCOP Steering Committee Meeting organized via video link at CCOP headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand and Hanoi, Viet Nam from 23 to 25 November.

On 11 November, Cambodia hosted the 27th ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting together with the ASEAN-China Transport Ministers Meeting and the US-ASEAN Business Council (US-ABC) on the same day. A Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San attended the meetings together with the Transport Ministers of 10 ASEAN countries and China including the ASEAN Secretary-General and officials of US-ABC. Admiral Tin Aung San also attended the 19th ASEAN-Japan Transport Ministers Meeting and the 12th ASEAN-ROK Transport Ministers Meeting on 12 November.

Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than, in his capacity as Vice-President of Federation of Engineering Institutions of Asia and Pacific and Patron of Myanmar Engineering Council, joined the 13th Executive Board Meeting of Federation of Engineering Institutions of Asia and Pacific (FEIAP) which was virtually organized in Malaysia on 26 November.

Also, during November, Myanmar officials of the ministries concerned attended the Fourth World Media Summit hosted by China on 22 November; the 22nd ASEAN Federation of Accountants Conference co-hosted by Myanmar on 25 November, and the Virtual Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Destination Marketing Forum-2021 on 24 November.

Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Special Envoy of the Japanese Government for National Reconciliation in Myanmar and Chairman of Nippon Foundation of Japan arrived in Sittway of Rakhine State on 15 November. The Special Envoy and his team met with the displaced people living in Aungmye Bawdi Dhamma Yeiktha Alotawpyae Monastery and Otthalin Monastery and the Bengalis living in the IDP camp of Thetkaipyin Village and discussed food, living conditions and health issues. The Japanese Special Envoy also gave interviews to the media outlets regarding his visit to Myanmar.

## Response to Allegations

On 5 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a Communiqué regarding statements issued by certain governments on incidents in Chin State and north-western Myanmar. The Communiqué provided detailed records on the Thantlang incident where the Chin terrorist groups had attacked the security forces first and had burned down the town themselves. Only if those governments and embassies violating international diplomatic norms treat Myanmar with the same courtesy due to any sovereign government, can improve collaboration and engagement be expected. In this connection, the Ministry called on the embassies to respect the sovereignty and integrity of the host country as well as to observe and follow the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

On 19 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement rejecting the resolution "Situation of Human Rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar", which was adopted without a vote on 17 November 2021 at the Third Committee of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Ministry noted that the resolution did not reflect the Myanmar government's efforts to bring stability and rule of law for its people and that the resolution was based on unreliable sources and unfounded allegations by certain opposition groups, unlawful associations and terrorist and armed groups. The resolution further ignored the indiscriminate violence committed by the terrorist groups CRPH, NUG and PDF which killed over 1,300 innocent civilians including Sanghas (monks), teachers, medical workers, administrative staff and politicians from different political parties. The resolution emanated from the 2017 incidents in Northern Rakhine State when terrorist attacks were launched by ARSA aka Aqua Mul Mujahidin. Successive resolutions ignored the true facts, such as the hundreds from the Hindu communities who were subject to ARSA violence, and the return of over 700 displaced Bengalis to Myanmar under their own volition. As the resolution called for external mechanisms with no respect for Myanmar's sovereign integrity, Myanmar categorically rejected the resolution and dissociates itself from its adoption of it.

On 27 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement, noting that some countries including the United States of America had issued a joint statement on 26 November regarding the situation in Myanmar. The joint statement contained sweeping and groundless accusations against the Tatmadaw such as human rights violations and disproportionate use of force. The accusations are based on allegations emanating from groups who themselves are committing terrorist acts. The Myanmar security forces exercise utmost restraint and only use minimal and appropriate force when discharging their main duty of ensuring peace, stability, security and rule of law of the country. The failure of these countries to condemn and call for the cessation of terrorist activities by these terrorist groups, including the killings of innocent civilians, show the joint statement to be one-sided and biased.

On 26 November, the Information Team of the State Administration Council held its 10/2021 press conference. The team leader briefed the media that Myanmar had objected to the actions of some ASEAN member countries on matters of representation, including the participation in the ASEAN summit, which are inconsistent with the ASEAN Charter and Principles and against the purpose of ASEAN and the history of cooperation with ASEAN. He also provided the latest information on the reopening of schools, the proven support to PDF terrorist groups from NUG and CRPH, the capture of Phyo Zeya Thaw, a prominent NLD Hluttaw representative, who had orchestrated several terrorist attacks and murders in Yangon, the seizures of large quantities of firearms and explosives and the capture of several other terrorists, based on information resulting from Phyo Zeya Thaw's capture.

At the press conference, Commission member U Khin Maung Oo of the Union Election Commission (UEC) presented the UEC's work on the inspection of existing political party lists, consultations on the use of the proportional representation system, the review of laws and regulations, the actions taken against those who had committed illegal actions and voter fraud in connection with the 2020 multiparty democracy general elections.

## Consultations on the Electoral System

An electoral system or voting system is a set of rules that determine how elections and

referendums are conducted and how their results are determined. On 5 November, the UEC organized a consultation with representatives of political parties and other stakeholders to gather their views of the prospective electoral system for the next elections. During the consultation, participants discussed the proportional representation system. Following the motion of the National Development and Peace Party to dissolve its own party, which had been registered as a political party with the UEC, the party was removed from the political party registration list and dissolved on 16 November 2021.

## Efforts by Ministries and State Institutions

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo conducted a tour of investment companies in the Yangon Region, including a local industrial waste collection and disposal service company and TYTC Services Company Limited. With a view to finding solutions, the Union Minister discussed the various difficulties these companies were encountering after receiving permission from the Myanmar Investment Commission. The Union Minister also visited Colgate-Palmolive (Myanmar) Limited and observed the factory operations and production. During the visit to SC Auto (Myanmar) Co., Ltd, which assembles and manufactures passenger vehicles and provides repair and maintenance services, he discussed investment and business-related issues.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) issued Notification No.43/2021, which came into effect on 3 November 2021. The Notification stipulates that cash payments for the purchase, sales and transfer of basic goods, services or other types do not exceed K20 million per transaction. Where the amount due exceeds K20 million per transaction, the Notification states that digital payment methods, including mobile banking, internet banking, card payment, or account transfer, should be utilized.

On 14 November Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung attended the Ngapali Beach Early Cold Season Festival. On 15 November, the Union Minister attended the Travel Season Opening Ceremonies for Ngwehsaung Beach held at Yamonna Oo Resort, and for Chaungtha Beach held at Azura Hotel. All events were held in line with the COVID-19 prevention guidelines. The Union Minister emphasized challenges that the hotel and tourism sector would need to address, such as waste disposal, air pollution and landscape changes caused by the construction of buildings. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has established health and safety protocols to provide safe services to tourists and staff from the hotel and tourism industry.

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak brought about the temporary closing of the Myanmar-China border for the import and export of goods, at Muse (Mang Wein checkpoint), Kyinsankyawt and Kyukok-Pangsai border crossings in April and July 2021. Kyinsankyawt and Chinshwehaw trading posts were reopened on 26 November.

Union Minister for Commerce Dr Pwint San met with the Myanmar commercial attaches working in 13 foreign countries to promote trade and export Myanmar products on 23 November. At the meeting, the Union minister discussed issues such as collaboration with relevant government departments and organizations in the respective countries, trade and investment cooperation, market availability, identification of new markets, quality of goods and products, and food security situations.

At the second meeting (2/2021) of the Working Committee on Geological Parks held on 24 November, it was proposed that 15 "geosites" in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Region, would be established within the Popa Region National Geopark in Myanmar. These "geosites" are sites of special interest (internationally defined as sites geological or geomorphological interest. or of conservation interest). Since 2017, Myanmar media had been reporting that the Popa region would be submitted to UNESCO to be nominated for "UNESCO Geopark" status. However, much work is needed before submission to UNESCO. Myanmar and Popa do not yet appear as a candidate on the UNESCO nominations list for 2021. This is a goal well worth pursuing since designation as a world-class geopark would boost tourism and the well-being and livelihoods of local communities in the region.

Union Minister for Border Affairs Lieutenant-General Tun Tun Naung and officials inspected training schools in Ayeyawady Region from 26 to 28 November. In the aftermath of the Nargis Cyclone in 2008, the Ministry of Border Affairs had set up ethnic youth development training schools (one each in Bogale and Maubin), women's vocational training schools (one each in Pathein and Labutta), and one vocational school in Labutta. These schools have been operating since then and providing local ethnic youth and young women with essential training in basic education and vocational courses.

The Union Civil Service Board is working to select qualified candidates who wish to apply for vacant positions in various ministries. The Central Institute of Civil Service for Upper Myanmar and Central Institute of Civil Service for Lower Myanmar have been opening management training courses and advanced diploma courses in civil service management.

The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Technology are appointing new teachers for universities, colleges, and basic education schools. New teachers are being provided with training this month. On 11 November, Union Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe met with newly appointed teachers at Toungoo University and Toungoo Education Degree College.

Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Myo Thein Kyaw undertook an inspection tour to Mandalay Technological University, Myanmar Information and Technological University, Technological University (Yadanabon Cyber City), Mandalay University of Computer Studies, and Government Technical Institute (PyinOoLwin) from 24 to 26 November. During his tour, the Union Minister addressed issues such as the teaching-learning environment, especially information communication technology teaching-learning, human resources improvement, and enhanced collaboration and coordination with international universities.

The Ministry of Education has announced that applications for the 2022 Matriculation Examinations must be submitted between 15 and 30 December 2021. Those applying for these examinations as external candidates were urged to buy the application forms at the respective township education offices and ensure timely submission of the forms.

On 12 November, the Ministry of Labour held a coordination meeting on the issue of Myanmar migrant workers. At the meeting, Union Minister for Labour U Myint Kyaing, the Vice-Chairman of the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation and the officials concerned underscored the need to implement or adhere to laws, rules and regulations issued by the government when sending workers abroad. The meeting also discussed the preparations for ensuring timely resolution of labour issues (if any) between employers and migrant workers and expediting the repatriation of returning migrant workers.

In the third week of November, the Union Minister for Construction gave instructions for the project implementers to strictly follow the Myanmar Investment Commission laws in implementing the Taungthaman Thitsar Rural Resort project in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region.

The Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development is undertaking coordination and monitoring the implementation of the "Smart Village" in the second week of November. The project is planned to be expanded to other regions and states, and it will be implemented in three villages Pyinmana Township, Lewe Township, and Tatkon Township.

On 24 November, Union Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Hla Moe led a coordination meeting on the implementation of Smart Village.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The Union Election Commission meets the representatives of political parties in Yangon on 5 November 2021.

NEWS IN BRIEF

## In Cuba, queueing for hours 'just to be able to eat'

CUBANS are no strangers to queuing for everything from bread to toothpaste, often standing for hours under a blazing sun with no access to a toilet or drinking water, and always with the fear of leaving empty-handed.

It is a daily ordeal Cubans have endured for about 60 years of communist rule, now worsened by the coronavirus pandemic, a steep economic downturn and tightened US sanctions.

"I spent almost all night here just to buy something. It is not easy, it is a big sacrifice just to be able to eat," shopper Edelvis Miranda, 47, told AFP at a market in Havana last week. The homemaker had taken her place in the queue at about 1:00 am, and finally left around 11 hours later, just before noon. "It was worth it, because I found everything. Now some rest, and then back to the queue again," she said on her way home with two liters of oil, two packets of chicken, some minced meat and detergent.

Cuba recorded an official inflation rate of 70 per cent in 2021, when the economy recovered a modest two per cent after an 11-per-cent drop in 2020, signaling the nation's worst economic crisis in almost three decades.—AFP ■

## Bitcoin slides below US$40,000, lowest for 3.5 months

BITCOIN slid below US$40,000 on Monday, falling to its lowest level since the end of September as the world's leading cryptocurrency showed no end to its volatility.

Bitcoin dropped to US$39,663.18, down from a record high of above US$66,000 in October.

After taking a tumble Monday, it recovered some ground, rising to US$41,198.

Its recent decline meanwhile continues to drag down other cryptocurrencies. "The main culprit behind the slump in crypto prices is the Fed's decision to withdraw massive liquidity, which has been pumped into markets since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic," Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst at Avatrade, said.— AFP ■

# Japan presses Indonesia to lift coal export ban

JAPANESE industry minister Koichi Hagiuda pressed his Indonesian counterpart in Jakarta on Monday to lift Indonesia's one-month ban on coal exports imposed 1 January to prioritize fuel supply to its domestic coal-fired power plants, people familiar with their talks said.

Amid growing concerns about potential shortages in Japan and other countries that rely on Indonesian coal, energy minister Arifin Tasrif held out hope the exports could soon be resumed. "We hope that in the next few days, we can get clarity," he was quoted as saying during their meeting.

Hagiuda asked that Indonesia understand the need to resolve the issue, saying Japanese companies have been bewildered by the ban. He also referred to a letter sent by the Japanese Embassy in Jakarta to the Indonesian government calling for the ban to be scrapped. Also in the meeting, the ministers agreed to promote the use of ammonia in generating power in the Southeast Asian country in an effort to cut its carbon dioxide emissions, especially as Jakarta aims to go carbon free by 2060.

Japan's industry minister Koichi Hagiuda (L) and Indonesian energy minister Arifin Tasrif sign a memorandum on cooperation over power generation on 10 January 2022, in Jakarta. **PHOTO: THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES/ KYODO**

The two signed a memorandum on cooperation over power generation that mixes coal with ammonia, a substance that does not emit $CO_2$ when burned.

Japan has leading technology for the type of power generation. Hagiuda and Arifin also agreed to push forward cooperation in the fields of carbon recycling and $CO_2$ underground storage technologies as well as utilization of hydrogen. "We would like to advance cooperation, with the government and the private sector working as one," said Hagiuda.

He said Japanese businesses are already conducting surveys needed in introducing power generation using ammonia in Indonesia, where coal-fired power generation makes up about 60 per cent of the power generation mix.—Kyodo ■

# Air France-KLM adds biofuel surcharge to plane tickets

Sustainable fuel allows airlines to reduce carbon emissions by 75 per cent compared with kerosene. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

AIR France-KLM said Monday it would add a surcharge of up to 12 euros ($13,50) on its tickets to try to offset the cost of using more expensive sustainable aviation fuel.

Air France said that the fuel levy would be added to tickets from 10 January.

Travellers in economy class will pay between one and four euros more while those in business class will pay between 1.5 euros and 12 euros, depending on the distance to their destination, it said in a message to its clients.

Air France's Dutch partner KLM and low-cost subsidiary Transavia will also implement the surcharge on flights departing from France and the Netherlands, the company announced, adding that it replaces between 0.5 per cent and one per cent of the kerosene it uses with the sustainable alternative.

Sustainable aviation fuel or SAF is chiefly made from used cooking oil or from forestry or agricultural waste.

It allows airlines to reduce carbon emissions by 75 per cent compared with kerosene over the lifecycle of the fuel.

Jet fuel currently accounts for between 20 and 30 per cent of airlines' costs.

Take-up of SAF, which is between four and eight times more expensive, has been slow.

Current production levels fall far below what would be required to power the world's aircraft fleet.

In 2019, sustainable fuel represented less than 0.1 per cent of the 360 billion litres of fuel used by the aviation industry.—AFP ■

# EU, US widen Nicaragua sanctions as Ortega begins new term

DANIEL Ortega was sworn in Monday as Nicaragua's president for a fourth straight term as the EU and US tightened sanctions over impugned elections held in November with all his challengers in jail.

"Yes, I swear," said strongman Ortega as he and his wife Rosario Murillo, who was re-elected vice-president, were sworn in at a ceremony attended by the presidents of Cuba and Venezuela and envoys from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea and Syria, among others.

Even before the event got under way, the European Union announced fresh sanctions against individuals it accuses of "undermining democracy" and human rights abuses in Nicaragua, including Ortega's daughter and a son — both working as presidential advisors.

Others sanctioned "in view of the worsening situation in Nicaragua" were senior officials of the country's police force and electoral body, said the EU.

In Washington, the US Treasury placed sanctions on six regime officials, including two generals, the defence minister, the head of the Supreme Electoral Council and officials of the telecommunications regulator, who allegedly ran a social media troll farm to help Ortega.—AFP ■

A vendor arranges T-shirts with the image of Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice-President Rosario Murillo, in Managua on 10 January when Ortega starts his fourth term. **PHOTO: AFP**

# Chongqing airport sees record int'l cargo, mail throughput

THE international cargo and mail throughput of Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality totalled 220,000 tonnes in 2021, up nearly 50 per cent year on year, the airport said Tuesday.

This marks the first time that the figure has passed the 200,000-tonne milestone, maintaining the airport's top place in the western region in terms of international cargo and mail throughput.

The airport handled nearly 35.8 million passenger trips and more than 477,000 tonnes of cargo in 2021, up 2.4 per cent and 15.9 per cent year on year, respectively.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the airport launched five new international freight transport routes, expanding its reach to cities including Yekaterinburg, Brussels, Bangalore, Tokyo, and Dhaka last year.—Xinhua ■

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the airport launched five new international freight transport routes, expanding its reach to cities including Yekaterinburg, Brussels, Bangalore, Tokyo, and Dhaka last year. Workers unload materials from a cargo plane at the Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality . **PHOTO: XINHUA/XIONG QI**

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

**M.V CTP FORTUNE VOY.NO. (236N)**

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CTP FORTUNE VOY.NO. (236N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-1-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department**
**Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

**M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING**

# Poet Maya Angelou becomes first Black woman to appear on US coin

New 25-cent pieces with Maya Angelou have been minted and are going into circulation. **PHOTO: THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY/AFP/FILE**

POET and activist Maya Angelou has become the first Black woman to appear on the US quarter, in a new version of the coin unveiled by the US Mint on Monday.

Angelou, author of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," will also be the first figure commemorated through the American Women Quarters Programme, which was signed into law in January 2021.

The US Mint "has begun shipping the first coins" with Angelou's likeness on the American quarter, a 25-cent piece, according to a press release from the agency.

"It is my honour to present our nation's first circulating coins dedicated to celebrating American women and their contributions to American history," said Mint Deputy Director Ventris Gibson.—AFP ■

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No. 192, Kabar Aye Pagoda Road, Bahan, Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Phone: 09266068060

NEWS IN BRIEF

## Xinjiang anti-terror general to lead China's Hong Kong garrison

A general who led China's anti-terrorism special forces in Xinjiang has been promoted to head the People's Liberation Army in Hong Kong, state media has reported. China has been accused by Washington of genocide in Xinjiang, a far-western region where human rights campaigners say authorities have detained vast numbers of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in camps and are stamping out their culture. The Hong Kong appointment comes as Beijing remoulds the international business hub in its own authoritarian image after huge and sometimes violent democracy protests in 2019. Chinese President Xi Jinping appointed Major-General Peng Jingtang, deputy chief of staff of the People's Armed Police, as the Hong Kong garrison's commander, China's official Xinhua news agency announced Sunday.—AFP ■

## 'No path ahead but the sea': Lebanese join migrant flow to EU

If he wasn't making good money smuggling irregular migrants to the European Union by sea, Ibrahim himself might have joined the growing exodus from crisis-hit Lebanon.

"If I didn't work in this profession, I would have left, just like so many other people," said the 42-year-old trafficker, who asked to use a pseudonym when he spoke to AFP in the northern city of Tripoli.

"Maybe I would have turned to someone to smuggle me out," he said, his face hidden by an anti-Covid surgical mask and a hoodie.

Lebanon, in the throes of a brutal economic crisis, is no longer just a launchpad for Syrian refugees and other foreign migrants.

Its own desperate citizens now also risk drowning in the Mediterranean in their quest for a better life.

Ibrahim argues that, while having smuggled around 100 Lebanese nationals to Europe since 2019 makes him no angel, there is virtue in helping his compatriots.—AFP ■

# Iraq Shiite divide makes forging government tough task

Iraqi lawmakers attend the inaugural session of parliament — analysts warn there are still several hard steps ahead before the formation of a new government. **PHOTO: IRAQI PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS OFFICE/AFP/FILE**

THREE tense months after legislative elections, Iraq's parliament has finally held its inaugural session — but opening debates swiftly descended into furious arguments between Shiite factions.

In multi-confessional and multi-ethnic Iraq, the formation of governments has involved complex negotiations ever since the 2003 US-led invasion toppled dictator Saddam Hussein.

Parliament only met for the first time since the 10 October vote on Sunday, after Iraq's top court rejected a complaint of electoral irregularities filed by the Shiite and pro-Iran Hashed al-Shaabi, a former paramilitary alliance.

Political analysts warn there are still several hard steps ahead before the formation of a new government. Iraq is trying to emerge from almost two decades of conflict but is mired in corruption, economic crisis, and with threats of violence lingering.

### What sparked anger at opening?

The newly-elected members of parliament met for a swearing-in ceremony and to elect their speaker, but debate soon turned ugly. Videos filmed by MPs showing lawmakers becoming verbally aggressive with each other, highlighting divisions between Shiite groupings. Iraq's post-election period has been marred by high tensions, violence and allegations of vote fraud. One of parliament's first tasks must be to elect the country's president, who will then name a prime minister tasked with forming a new government.—AFP ■

A highlight of the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002 saw Queen guitarist Brian May play on the top of Buckingham Palace. **PHOTO: POOL WPA/AFP**

# Puddings and pageantry for Queen's Platinum Jubilee

POMP, pageantry and puddings will form the centrepiece of celebrations to mark Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years on the throne, Buckingham Palace announced on Monday.

The 95-year-old monarch's Platinum Jubilee begins on 6 February — the date in 1952 when she became queen after the death of her father, King George VI.

Britain's longest-serving monarch will be the only queen or king in the country's long history to have ruled for 70 years.

Buckingham Palace officials unveiled a series of events to mark the occasion and reflect the Queen's call for the celebrations to promote a mood of national unity. Topping festivities that reflect national passions is a competition to create a new Jubilee pudding, with the winner chosen by judges including the palace head chef. The head of state will also be presented with a digital map showing every tree planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative. The Queen and her eldest son and heir, Prince Charles, planted their own tree on the royal estate in Balmoral, northeast Scotland, last October.

The main celebrations will be held over a four-day long weekend, kicking off with public holidays on Thursday 2 June and Friday 3 June.—AFP ■

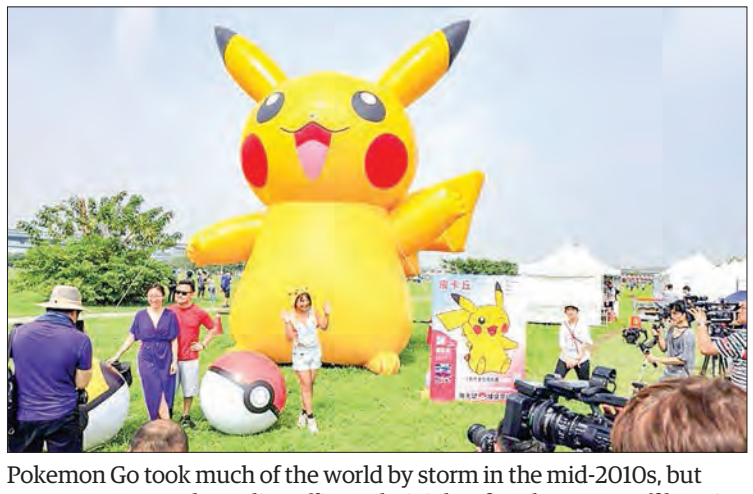
# US cops ditched robbery call for Pokemon Go hunt

TWO US police officers who went off to hunt for Pokemon instead of responding to a robbery have been fired.

Louis Lozano and Eric Mitchell cruised the streets searching for fantastic creatures in the augmented reality smartphone game, documents show, bagging a relatively rare Snorlax, as well as a difficult-to-trap Togetic — but no criminals.

In-car recording of their conversation revealed that they had heard the call for help at the Los Angeles department store, but decided instead to drive off.

"Officer Mitchell alerted Lozano that 'Snorlax' 'just popped up'," legal documents relating to their dismissal show. "For approximately the next 20 minutes, the (recording) captured petitioners discussing Pokemon as they drove to different locations where the virtual creatures apparently appeared on their mobile phones." The Los Angeles police officers snagged the Snorlax and then turned their attention to a Togetic — which proved to be a little tricky to subdue.—AFP ■



Pokemon Go took much of the world by storm in the mid-2010s, but cost two Los Angeles police officers their jobs after they went off hunting creatures instead of respeonding to a robbery. **PHOTO: AFP**

# Kazakhstan president says 'attempted coup' defeated

KAZAKHSTAN'S President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said Monday his country had defeated an attempted coup d'etat during historic violence last week, blaming militants from Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Middle East for the unrest.

He also insisted that Russian-led troops called in to help quell the unrest were in the country to only protect strategic facilities and would go home "soon".

The Central Asian country is reeling in the wake of the worst violence in its recent history, but life in Kazakhstan's largest city Almaty appeared to be returning to normal Monday as the nation observed a day of mourning for dozens killed.

Tokayev said Monday in a video conference with leaders from several ex-Soviet countries that "armed militants" had used the backdrop of protests — which began with rallies over a fuel price hike — to try to seize power.

"It was an attempted coup d'etat," he said.

Speaking with European Council President Charles Michel later Monday, Tokayev said militants from Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Middle East were behind the unrest.

Kazakhstan and neighbouring Moscow have repeatedly blamed the unrest on forces outside the country, without offering evidence.

In a separate call Monday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi discussed Kazakhstan, stressing "their concern about the intervention of external forces", Moscow said.

The ministers said "foreign mercenaries" were involved "in attacks on civilians and law enforcement officials, the seizure of state institutions and other facilities", according to the Russian foreign ministry.

Russian military vehicles cross an airfield in Almaty.
**PHOTO: HANDOUT/AFP**

### No 'colour revolutions'

Almaty, the country's main city and former capital, had been nearly completely offline since Wednesday. Local and foreign websites were accessible again Monday morning but connections were far from stable. —AFP ■

European Parliament President David Sassoli, who died Tuesday, was a former Italian television journalist who turned to politics in 2009. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE**

# David Sassoli: from TV journalist to EU parliament chief

EUROPEAN Parliament President David Sassoli, who died Tuesday at the age of 65, was a former television journalist who turned to politics a decade earlier as a centre-left MEP.

Elected in 2019 as president, a role similar to that of speaker in a national parliament, his two-and-a-half-year mandate was dominated by the coronavirus pandemic.

Good-natured Sassoli earned the parliament's respect with his sense of organization, the attention his team paid to teleworking, a remote voting system and his ability to resist French pressure to bring elected officials back to Strasbourg.

In a sign of solidarity during the pandemic, he made the deserted parliamentary premises, available to prepare meals for families in need and to test for Covid.

Health was his own Achilles heel, having recovered from leukaemia.

A heavy smoker, Sassoli was hospitalized in September 2021 due to pneumonia, which kept him away from parliament for several weeks.

On 26 December he was hospitalized again with "a serious complication due to a dysfunction of the immune system", according to his spokesman.

Born in Florence on 30 May 1956, Sassoli studied political science before starting work as a newspaper and news agency journalist. The father of two began working for national broadcaster RAI in 1992, rising through the ranks to become a familiar face for millions of Italians, presenting the evening news on the main channel, of which he also became deputy-director.—AFP ■

# North Korea fires second suspected missile in less than a week

NORTH Korea fired a suspected ballistic missile into the sea, South Korea's military said Tuesday, ratcheting up tensions less than a week after Pyongyang reported testing a hypersonic missile.

The early-morning launch came as the UN Security Council met in New York to discuss last week's test of what Pyongyang called a hypersonic missile, although Seoul has cast doubt on that claim.

After an emergency meeting, South Korea's national security council expressed "strong regret over the launch", according to a statement from the president's office.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters that it was "extremely regrettable that North Korea continues to launch missiles".

There were no immediate reports of damage to Japanese aircraft or vessels, according to government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno.

"(The suspected missile) is estimated to have flown approximately up to 700 kilometres and landed outside of Japan's exclusive economic zone," he said.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it had been fired from land at around 7:27 am local time (2227 GMT on Monday).

Pyongyang's second test in a week came after six countries, including the United States and Japan, urged North Korea Monday to cease "destabilizing actions" ahead of a UN Security Council closed-door meeting. France, Britain, Ireland and Albania joined the call for North Korea to "engage in meaningful dialogue towards our shared goal of complete denuclearization".—AFP ■

North Korea has launched its second suspected ballistic missile in a week. **PHOTO: AFP**

# 20 years on, US must close 'ugly' Guantanamo chapter: UN experts

TWO decades after the first detainees arrived at Guantanamo Bay, a group of UN experts on Monday urged Washington to finally close the site of "unrelenting human rights violations".

More than a dozen independent UN rights experts voiced outrage that the military prison in Cuba created after the September 2001 attacks to house detainees in the US "war on terror" was still operating.

They described the detention centre run by the US Navy, first opened to detainees on 10 January 2002, as a site of "unparallelled notoriety" and a "stain" on Washington's stated commitment to the rule of law.

"Twenty years of practising arbitrary detention without trial accompanied by torture or ill treatment is simply unacceptable for any government, particularly a government which has a stated claim to protecting human rights," they said in a statement.—AFP ■

# AFC Cup ASEAN Zone Group matches to be held in June

THE 2022 AFC Cup ASEAN Group matches in which Myanmar teams are participating, will be held in June.

Two Myanmar clubs, Shan United and Hanthawady United, will compete in the tournament.

Previously, Hanthawady had to start from the qualifiers but for now, the team got a chance to play in the group stage.

Timor-Leste and Brunei have lost their competition chance due to a lack of club licences.

Therefore, in the next AFC Cup, Myanmar clubs Shan United and Hanthawady will have to start from the group stage.

In addition to the AFC Cup group stage, Shan United have been qualified for the Asian Champions League semi-finals.

In 2021, the last match of the Myanmar National League could not be held, so defending champion of 2020, Shan United, and the runner-up Hanthawady were allowed to compete in the ASEAN tourney.

Both teams qualified for the 2021 Asian Championships but withdrew.

The ASEAN Zone Group Games will be held from 24 to 30 June. The drawing of lots for the 2022 AFC Cup will take place on 17 January. — Ko Nyi Lay/ GNLM

# Man Utd ride luck to get some FA Cup relief

Super Scot: Scott McTominay (top) scored the winner as Manchester United beat Aston Villa 1-0. **PHOTO: PAUL ELLIS/ AFP**

MANCHESTER United rode their luck to reach the FA Cup fourth round with a 1-0 win over Aston Villa on Monday thanks to Scott McTominay's early goal.

The Scottish international headed home after just eight minutes, but Villa were left to rue a host of missed chances and a controversial VAR review that ruled out an equalizer from Danny Ings in the second half.

United interim manager Ralf Rangnick desperately needed a response to a week of unrest in the United camp that followed a dismal performance in losing 1-0 at home to Wolves. One big decision was taken out of the German's hands as Cristiano Ronaldo was not fit. United got the start they needed to settle the nerves as Fred's perfect cross picked out McTominay to power in a downward header.

However, all of the shortcomings that have dogged a shambolic season under two managers for the Red Devils were soon revealed as Villa dominated the game. Ollie Watkins failed to turn home a corner at the back post, Emiliano Buendia's drive across goal just evaded Ings and David de Gea produced a stunning save to deny John McGinn as the visitors passed up a hat-trick of chances in quick succession. — AFP ■

# New Newcastle United owners face legal action

FORMER Newcastle United owner Mike Ashley has launched legal action against financier Amanda Staveley, one of the key figures in the recent Saudi-led takeover of the English Premier League club.

A document seen by AFP shows that retail tycoon Ashley's St James Holdings has lodged a claim at the High Court in London, although no reason for the action, also brought against Staveley's husband Mehrdad Ghodoussi, was specified.

Reports said relations soured between Ashley and Staveley ahead of the takeover in October — the struggling football club in northeast England was sold to a Saudi-led consortium for £305 million ($414 million). The consortium comprises the Saudi Public Investment Fund, Staveley's PCP Capital Partners and billionaire brothers David and Simon Reuben.—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.

# Tearful Sabalenka's serve melts down in Australian Open warm-up disaster

WORLD number two Aryna Sabalenka's Australian Open preparations were in tatters on Tuesday when she self-destructed for the second week in a row and was almost unable to serve at an Adelaide warm-up event.

A week after her delivery deserted her at the first of two Adelaide lead-in tournaments, Sabalenka suffered the same fate as she was stunned in three sets by world number 93 Rebecca Peterson 5-7, 6-1, 7-5.

Sabalenka dished up 21 double faults and was reduced to serving underarm in the second and third sets in a desperate effort to get the ball into play.

She took so much pace off her first serves that at one stage they were barely clearing the net. The 23-year-old Belarusian became distressed in the third set and, after being asked by the umpire whether she was all right, broke down in tears during her next service game.—AFP ■

World number two Aryna Sabalenka's form has deserted her ahead of next week's Australian Open. **PHOTO: AFP**