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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.

Public rental housing projects in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay to complete in March

THE initial stage of the public rental housing project, being developed in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay will complete in March, according to the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation (MCEF).

To provide employment opportunities and livelihoods to low-income people through the construction sector, the 10,000-unit public rental housing project is being implemented in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay regions.

“So far, about 5,008 units have been undertaken on the initial stage. Currently, about 80 per cent of the construction project is completed in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay according to an official from MCEF. The first phase of the Nay Pyi Taw project will be completed by March. Next, the Mandalay project will also be completed. Yangon project will also be completed about 70 per cent by March,” he added.

The 10,000-unit Public Housing Project was first proposed by the Ministry of Construction in July 2020 and it was approved to



One of the public rental housing projects in progress. PHOTO: MOC

implement in August 2020.

The project to build 10,000 units for public rental housing project has been implemented in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay and there will be a total of 704 units and 44 buildings Dekkh-

inathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw; 6,288 units and 393 buildings in Dagon Myothit (South) and 3,008 units and 188 buildings in Patheingyi Township in Mandalay Region. The public rental housing project is being constructed by

the Urban and Housing Development Department, Ministry of Construction and three private construction entrepreneur associations — MCEF, Myanmar Licensed Contractors Association (MLCA) and Myanmar

Developer Association (MDA).

According to the statement of the Ministry, about 614 square feet of four units five-storey buildings are being constructed for each housing unit. —Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Law Translation Commission
Order No 1/2022

10th Waxing of Pyatho 1383 ME
11 January 2022

1. According to Section 12, the Law Translation Commission hereby announced the Myanmar version laws translated from the following enacted English version laws approved by the Law Translation Commission under Sub-Section (a) of Section 9 of the Translation Commission Law.
(a) The Land Customs Act
(b) The Legal Representatives Suits Act
(c) The Arbitration (Protocol and Convention) Act

2. These translated laws in Myanmar shall be effective, similar to the original scripts.

(Dr Thida Oo)
Chair
Law Translation Commission

11th press conference of State Administration Council's Information Team to be held

THE Information Team of the State Administration Council will hold the 11th press conference at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 1:00 pm on 14 January. Local and foreign media personnel are invited to the press conference. — MNA

11th press conference of Information Team to be broadcast live

11TH press conference of the Information Team of the State Administration Council will be broadcast live on Myanma Radio and Television (MRTV), MRTV News Channel, MWD Channel, MWD Variety Channel, MITV, MOI Website, MOI YouTube and MRTV Website, and aired live on Radio Myanmar Thazin FM, Mandalay FM, Pyinsawady FM, Shwe FM, Padamyar FM, Cherry FM and FM Bagan starting from 1:00 pm on 14 January, at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information. — MNA

More than 1,000 golden deer conserved in Kanbalu Chatthin wildlife sanctuary

THE wildlife sanctuary staff are patrolling and conserving over 1,000 golden deer from Chatthin wildlife sanctuary in Kanbalu district, Sagaing region, said U Win Naing, the warden of Chatthin Wildlife Sanctuary.

“There are about 1,006 golden deer in Chatthin wildlife sanctuary. We took the golden deer census in April, 2021. The deer census is annually collected in March and April. The number of deer population has increased this year than last year,” he added.

Chatthin wildlife sanctuary was established in 1941 to conserve and protect the dry

forest ecosystem and related biological species and to preserve one of the worlds’ endangered golden deer, found only in Myanmar. It has also been steadily protected since 1986.

“There were 1,042 golden deer left in 2020. The deer are conserved by patrolling with 17 staff,” U Win Naing clarified.

The Myanmar golden deer, habited in Chatthin wildlife sanctuary are also locally named as golden deer, Brow-antlered deer, Thamin Wah.

There were over 800 golden deer in 2018. The deer consume a variety of fruits such as my-

robalan, meronym and grass.

The staff are providing awareness to the residents near the wildlife sanctuary. Then, they are collecting the annual deer census.

Apart from the golden deer housed in the sanctuary, 111 tree species, 13 other mammal species and 241 bird species are identified and protected.

The Chatthin wildlife sanctuary has a total area of over 66,000 acres. There were 1,501 golden deer in 2012, 1,126 in 2013, 671 in 2004, 506 in 2015, 480 in 2016, 728 in 2017, 889 in 2018 and 1409 as of April 2019.

— Lu Lay/GNLM



Vaccine drive continues in various regions, states



Yankin locals get inoculated against Covid-19.

TATMADAW has been working together with doctors, health workers and volunteers to carry out COVID-19 immunization to the people over the age of 40 including monks, nuns, religious leaders, civil service personnel, prisoners, persons with disabilities, people with chronic diseases, ethnic armed forces, people in IDPs camps and students over the age of 12 in regions and states.

On 11 and 12 January, 4,689 people in Shan State (North), 1,269 people in Shan State (East), 4,241 people in Mon State and Kayin State, 2,320 people in Taninthayi Region, 2,887 people in Yangon Region, 42,553 people in Ayeyawady Region, 2,515 people in Rakhine State, 7,210 people in Mandalay Region, two monks and 850 people in Bago Region received the COVID-19 vaccine.

In addition, 256 students in Muse Township and Kyaukme Township, Shan State (North), 728 students in Ayeyawady Region and 628 students in Htantabin Township, Bago Region, were also vaccinated.

Officials from the respective regional commands encouraged and coordinated as necessary, it is reported. — MNA

151 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 12 January, total figure rises to 532,553

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 532,553 after 151 new cases were reported on 12 January 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 510,806 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,297 after 2 died.

COVID-19 vaccine is being injected to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 11-1-2022, a total of 21,159,233 people have been vaccinated. Of them, 16,996,808 people have been fully vaccinated and 4,162,425 people yet to get the second shots.—MNA

Building the country peaceful and prosperous through our united strength

The Tatmadaw is always serving the interests of the State and the ethnic people in accord with the duty and obligations entrusted by the Constitution. Our government will continuously cooperate with the ethnic people in harmony for further peace and stability of the State, prosperity and food sufficiency. "As unity will reflect the prosperity", I would like to urge all to participate in building the country peaceful and prosperous through our united strength.

(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)

Government of the People’s Republic of China donates US\$200,000 to Ministry of Border Affairs

THE Government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) donated US\$200,000 to the Ministry of Border Affairs yesterday morning to promote peace, implement Myanmar’s ceasefire, and improve the lives of people living along the Sino-Myanmar border.

Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Deputy Ministers Maj-Gen. Khun Thant Zaw Htoo and Brig-Gen Phyo Thant, officials from the Ministry, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai, and a delegation from the Embassy attended the ceremony.

First of all, the Chinese ambassador called for a ceasefire in Myanmar. He explained that

the donations from the People’s Republic of China were aimed at promoting peace and improving the lives of people living along the Sino-Myanmar border.

Afterwards, the Union Minister received US\$ 200,000 donated by the Chinese Ambassador on behalf of the Government of the People’s Republic of China and returned the certificate and gifts.

After that, Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung thanked for the donations and the two sides cordially discussed matters related to further cooperation in human resource development activities and the stability and development of border areas. —MNA



US\$200,000 assistance goes to the Ministry of Border Affairs.

Certificate of identity (CI) issued to migrant workers in Thailand



THE Certificate of Identity -CI has been granted to the undocumented Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand at five CI centres — Samut Sakhon, Samut Prakan, Chiang Mai,

Chonburi and Ranong districts in January, and a total of 783 people — 426 males and 357 females received their CIs.

The four-year CIs of undocumented migrant workers

granted between 3 March 2017 and 30 June 2018 expired starting 3 March 2021 accordingly to their respective due dates.

The Departments of Employment, Immigration and Health of Thailand open their counters at CI centres for the issuance of visas and work permits for the employees as per the COVID-19 health rules.

Those who apply for renewal of CIs have to submit their current CI number together with 310 baht — 300 baht for book and 10 baht for service fees and take out the receipts (SMS will be sent to mobile phone) bearing the name of the centre, appointment date, token no, and they must go to the CI centres on the assigned date without fail, fill up their personal data and copy their old CIs, ID cards, household lists and other documents issued by Thai Employment Department for new CIs.

Those who meet the requirements will receive extended CIs and Overseas Worker Identification Card-OWIC.

Although those who receive the new CIs and OWIC will have to apply for Visa and Work Permit, they do not need to apply if their Visa and Work Permit are still valid.

If the CIs are lost or damaged, they must apply at the respective CI centres together with the recommendation letter of the Thai police force and Myanmar Embassy, and they must pay 480 baht — 300 baht for CI and 180 baht for fine, according to the Department of Labour.

If the OWICs are lost or damaged, they must apply at

the respective CI centres together with the recommendation letter of the Thai police force and Myanmar Embassy, and they must pay 200 baht including fine.

For information on CI renewal processes, the people can contact the Labour Attaches – U Aung Ko Zaw (09 48845484), U Ye Lin Htet (0652206951), U Lin Myat (0652206952), U Pyae Phyo Aung (0652206953) and U Aung Aung (0990592352).

The people can also contact Samut Sakhon CI Centre (0652055960, 0652055961), Samut Prakan CI Centre (0652055964, 0652055965), Chiang Mai CI Centre (0652055968, 0652055969), Chonburi CI Centre (0652055962, 0652055963), and Ranong CI Centre (0652055966, 0652055967).—MNA

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

1. THE Ministry of Health is continuously conducting “COVID-19 Molecular Disease Surveillance”, and releasing information on the detection of SARS CoV-2 Omicron Variant from those who return by relief flights in a timely manner.
2. The two laboratory samples of the COVID-19 virus of the returnees were sent to the No (1) Defence Services General Hospital (1000-bed) on 12-1-2022 and the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron Variant was found in two laboratory samples.
3. Two 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

MoSWRR conducts gender, CEDAW, NSPAW, UNSCR 1325 online awareness training



THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement held the opening ceremony of Gender, CEDAW, NSPAW, UNSCR 1325 online Awareness Training for women’s organizations that are members of the Myanmar National Committee for Women’s (Affairs) yesterday morning.

The ceremony was attended by Union minister Dr Thet Thet Khine, the permanent secretary, directors-general, chairpersons and secretaries of the women’s organizations, and officials.

At the ceremony, the Union

minister said the Department of Social Welfare is carrying out extensive social services such as the development and protection of children, women, aged people, the persons with disabilities. As a women’s development project, a National Committee for the Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in Conflict and a Working Committee have been formed to implement the Joint Communique on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, she continued.

In addition, a law is being drafted to effectively prevent gender-based violence against women and young girls, and

arrangements are being made to establish one-stop centres, to make the helpline services accessible to all by not only the phone but also by messaging to Viber, Facebook Page Messenger, she added.

As for prevention and protection activities, 11 domestic vocational schools for women’s empowerment, two women’s development centres for women in need of care for various reasons, four women’s vocational schools and one women’s care and development centre have been opened.

As the trainees are members from various parts of My-

anmar, it is hoped that they will be able to cooperate more for the development of women, she said. She also urged the trainees to share all the knowledge they will learn in their community, to assist and educate women and girls who are being abused, and to work together to make the country with higher levels of women’s rights by considering gender issues in their workplaces.

The training will be conducted for two days from 12 January and it is reported that 36 trainees from the women’s organizations participated in the training. — MNA

Deputy Health Minister attends COVID-19 Disease Prevention, Control and Treatment Coordination Meeting

DEPUTY Minister for Health Dr Aye Tun met Medical Superintendent and Rector Dr Thida Hla, Department of Medical Research Director-General Professor Dr Zaw Than Tun, Rector of the University of Medicine-1, Dr Kyaw Shwe, Rector of the University of Medicine-2, Professor Dr Aye Aye Khin, Yangon Region Public Health and Medical Services Department Head Dr Tun Min, officials from Region Medical Services Department and Public Health Department and hospital administrators and attended a coordination meeting on accelerating medical services and COVID-19 disease prevention, treatment and control activities.

During the meeting, the deputy minister discussed the status of follow-up classes, the condition of the employ-

ees working in the workplace, and the educational conditions of the regular postgraduate courses.

He also discussed prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19 as Omicron Variant is discovered, the ability to check patient acceptance, Oxygen production and consumption conditions, and preparations of COVID-19 treatment centres.

To carry out systematic activities in order to restrict the movement of foreigners, and manage special events promptly were also focused and guidance was given to assess the availability of COVID-19 vaccines and increase coverage.

After that, the participants presented and discussed and the deputy minister provided necessary discussions. — MNA

MNHRC member inspects prisons, court detention centres in Kengtung, Tachilek

AN inspection team, led by U Kyaw Myint, a member of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC), visited Kengtung Prison and Kengtung Myoma Police Station and Court Detention Centres on 10 and 11 January and Tachilek Myoma Police Station and Court Detention Centres yesterday.

Under the provisions of the Commission Law, the MNHRC member met prisoners in groups to ensure that a prisoner has a minimum opportunity to live, eat and drink and whether there is health care plus prison supplies are complete. He also asked if they have access to the equipment they deserve and if they have been abused.

The MNHRC member also monitored the implementation of previous review recommendations.



During his visit, he also checked the conditions of the dormitories for prisoners, prisoners’ hospitals, library, kitchen, foodstuffs warehouse, water purifier, drinking water access and ponds, and quarantine dormitory.

The MNHRC member also

inspected whether the inside and outside toilets are clean and ongoing prevention process of COVID-19 disease.

The inspection and recommendations will be sent to the relevant authorities for necessary action during the inspection team’s visit. —MNA

Youth and literature festival organizing working committee holds coordination meeting

THE Ministry of Information held the coordination meeting of the Youth and Literature Festival Organizing Working Committee in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day yesterday afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw. The meeting was attended by Chairman of the Working Committee Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, Vice Chairmen of the committee: Deputy Minister for Education U Zaw Win, Deputy Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs U Myo Hlaing, Member of the Nay Pyi Taw Council U Myint Soe, Secretary and members of the working committee.

The festival will be held to widely reach the students across the country, in addition to those who come to the festival, said Deputy Minister U Ye Tint. He also urged the attendees to work together and



The coordination meeting on youth and literature festival for Diamond Jubilee Union Day in progress.

coordinate with each other in order to make the festival a success. The Vice-Chairmen discussed matters related to the invitation of students and staff families in Nay Pyi Taw and to make it enjoyable for students, the capacity of a showroom and

showtimes. The meeting also discussed arrangements for the successful holding of the festival.

The Ministry of Information will hold the Youth and Literature Festival to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee Union Day and the anniversary of the State Administration Council. The festival will be held daily from 29 to 30 January from 9:30 am to 5 pm at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw under the COVID-19 rules.

The festival will feature aeronautical demonstrations, displays of historical treaties, records, sports activities gallery, cartoon and photo gallery, exhibitions of the ministries, traffic control showroom by the Myanmar Police Force, puzzles, colouring, house building, group competitions and entertainments.— MNA

Newly found petrified wood inspected for ecotourism prospects in Kyaukpadaung Township



This fossil unearthed in Thanbo village was found 17 feet under the ground level and the length of this petrified wood cannot be confirmed yet as the digging has not finished. The petrified wood is estimated at six feet seven inches, for now.

A team led by U Myo Min Aung, assistant director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Bagan), accompanied by staff and officials from the NyaungU District Information and Public Relations Department went on a study tour to Thanbo village in Kyaukpadaung Township to check the fossils recently discovered and carry out feasibility

studies on the community-based tourism.

The pieces of petrified wood and iron smelting furnace were discovered in Thanbo village-tract, Kyaukpadaung Township, NyaungU District in Mandalay Region. The village administrator invited officials from the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism to observe the fos-

sils and production of traditional medicines in the village.

Petrified wood is commonly found in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Region and Thanbo village is one of the sites to collect pieces of petrified wood, the residents said.

This fossil unearthed in Thanbo village was found 17 feet under the ground level and the length of this petrified wood cannot be confirmed yet as the digging has not finished. The petrified wood is estimated at six feet and seven inches, for now, said U Maung Maung Soe, an administrator.

The administrator has collected approximately 100 primate fossils, yet the fossils of living beings have been found in seven pieces only, an expert guessed.

Those animal fossils discovered are horn, the jawbone of ele-

phant, tortoiseshell, the skeleton of cattle and the oldest primate which is similar to the earliest fossils found in Myaing Township, Pakokku District.

This village is next to the Koekway forest reserve on Popa Road, which is likely to be home to thousands of mammals and aquatic animals, U Maung Maung Soe explained.

During the Bagan Dynasty, a forest in Thanbo village was the main supplier of weapons so lots of furnaces were seen.

The village is relying on traditional medicines and they made herbal medicines collected by the Popa area. The villagers sell them to the visitors to Mount Popa.

The department suggests visitors drop in Thanbo village in Kyaukpadaung Township to observe petrified wood. — Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM



Illegal teak, wild animals, goods seized

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee takes strict action against illegal trade under the law. The Mayanchaung checkpoint seized K7,915,000 worth of electric kettles (390), shoes (580 pairs), electric pans (100) and hair

gel (580) in two Toyota HiAce cars together with other passengers on 11 January.

Similarly, the combined team of the Sagaing Region Forest Department also confiscated K20,000,000 worth of wildlife animals in Kalewa Township and seized K5,000,000 worth of one Toyota Alphard (unlicensed) in Kalay Township on 12 January.

Moreover, the Bago Region Forest Department raided the forest reserve yesterday in Bago, Toungoo and Thayawady districts according to a tip-off and confiscated K6,833,540 worth of various illegal timber (45.009 tonnes).

The officials take action against traffickers for the four commodities (K7,915,000) seized by the Mayanchaung checkpoint on 11 January



Seized illegal goods.

as per the procedures of the Customs Department, while the seizure of 82 wildlife animals (K20,000,000) under the Protection of Biodiversity and Conservation Area Law, one unlicensed car (K5,000,000) under the Export and Import Law and 45.009 tonnes of illegal timber (K6,833,540) under the procedures of the Forest Department. —MNA



Confiscated timber and rare animals.

Stimulant tablets worth K300 mln seized in Nawnghkio, Shan State

A total of 600,000 Stimulant tablets worth 300 million kyats were found and confiscated from a vehicle (Land Cruiser) near Oriental Tollgate in Nawnghkio Township, Shan State on the evening of 10 January.

A combined team consisting of the Anti-Narcotic Task Force searched the vehicle driven by Ye Min Aung (a) Ko Nge and Hlwan Moe (a) Ko Sai, and arrested them with the illegal drugs. According to the investigation, the seized psychotropic drugs were being transported from Shan State



(North) to Yangon Region. Both have been charged under the law and the related

suspects are being investigated, according to the Myanmar Police Force. — MNA

Four men rob money, gold wares with gun threat in Taze

FOUR men threatened with guns and looted money and gold wares in Taze Township, Sagaing Region.

The incident took place on 11 January at 4:30 pm when four men robbed a house owned by 77-year-old U Tin Shwe, a retired doctor in Maha Myaing Ward, and threatened to steal money and gold wares. According to the reports, security forces inspected U Tin Shwe's daughter, Ma Soe Soe, 47-year-old, who was inside the house when four men with guns came on motorcycles and asked if his father, Dr Tin Shwe, was there.

One iPhone 6 Plus owned by Ma Soe Soe along with

500,000 kyats, and 450,000 kyats upstairs of the house, four platinum rings, one diamond ring, one platinum necklace, one 3-colour necklace, one tri-colour ring (total value about K6,310,000), one bank book with the name of Dr Tin Shwe, one bank book with the name of Daw Khin Cho Thet, and another bank book with the name of May Myat Kyaw was robbed and the burglars fled on a motorcycle.

Security forces are continuing to crack down on the terrorists who robbed them of their money and gold wares with guns and are prosecuting them under the law. — MNA

Over 2,000 fires claim 105 lives, causing K33 billion losses in 2021

TOTAL incurred losses in fires across Myanmar last year were estimated at over K33 billion and fires claimed 105 lives, according to the Myanmar Fire Brigade.

In 2021, Myanmar recorded 81 fires in Kachin State, 19 in Kayah State, 33 in Kayin State, 38 in Chin State, 301 in Sagaing Region, 85 in Taninthayi Region, 71 in Nay Pyi Taw, 194 in Bago Region, 210 in Magway Region, 245 in Mandalay Region, 132 in Mon State, 64 in Rakhine State, 310 in Yangon Region, 173 in Shan State and 142 in Ayeyawady

Region, totalling 2,107 fires, leaving 151 injured and 105 dead.

In 2020, 75 people were killed and 220 were injured in 2,139 fires across the country, with an estimated loss of K6 billion.

Myanmar Fire Brigade has developed a 191 report phone application for fire to improve real-time performance for the prevention and protection procedures of the lives and properties of the people and trust in the fire service. People are encouraged to download the application and



Myanmar Fire Brigade has developed a 191 report phone application for fire to improve real-time performance for the prevention and protection procedures of the lives and properties of the people and trust in the fire service. PHOTO:KANU

work together with the Department of Fire Services in fire safety activity.

The Department of Fire Services aims to protect the lives and property of the people in the state and perform fire prevention, safety and rescue and service for environmental hazards.

The department enhanced its capacity and tried to meet the needs, with a fleet of Fire trucks and equipment made in Poland. Every person must help prevent fire. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

MSE branded ORD production to resume operations in July

MSE branded oral rehydration salt manufacturing and distribution business will resume its operations on 1 July under the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) between Salt farming Branch and a private company, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

The existing agreement will end on 30 June and it will extend

five years starting from 1 July 2022. The Salt Farming Branch under the Department of Mines has called for a closed bid.

The tender forms and guide book for tender evaluation are on sale at Yangon Region Salt Farming Branch, located at No 203-207, Myakhwanyo Street, Industrial Zone, Thakayta Township, within office hours between 3 and 28 January. Those

interested bidders can inquire for details through contact numbers 01 9547189, 01 9547190 and 09 8602436. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

The existing agreement will end on 30 June and it will extend five years starting from 1 July 2022. The Salt Farming Branch under the Department of Mines has called for a closed bid. **PHOTO: KO NAING**



MEODA to sequentially sell palm oil to retailers



The association has already distributed the edible oil to the consumers at a cheaper rate through wholesalers, retailers and mobile market trucks as of the last week of November last year.

MYANMAR Edible Oil Dealers' Association (MEODA) will chronologically sell the palm oil to the wholesalers and retailers.

The Ministry of Commerce, in coordination with MEODA, carried out a scheme to distribute edible oil at fairer rates. The total volume of edible oil that will be sold at very cheap rates is equivalent to the amount that the edible oil importers directly purchased the foreign currency from the Central Bank of Myanmar. The association will chronologically sell those palm oil to the wholesalers, retailers, mobile market truck operators and sub-associations in the different regions and states.

The sales lists will be posted at 104/106 buildings owned by the Department of Consum-

er Affairs, located on Strand Road, Ahlon Township.

Those who are entitled to purchase palm oil have to follow the prescribed rules to make payments and withdraw edible oil.

Additionally, those who failed to pay in the set period will no longer have access to buy the oil through the association, MEODA notified.

Those wholesalers and retailers can inquire about contact numbers (01-2314296, 09444437295) of the MEODA.

The association has already distributed the edible oil to the consumers at a cheaper rate through wholesalers, retailers and mobile market trucks as of the last week of November last year.

At present, the prices of palm oil slightly rose to K4,800

per viss (a viss is equal to 1.6 kilogrammes), following Kyat depreciation against the US dollar in the local forex market. A dollar is worth approximately K2,000 for now.

In 2021, more than 30,000 tonnes of palm oil, with an estimated value of US\$41 million that the CBM directly sold to the oil sectors during Kyat weakening in the forex market, have been sold at the subsidized price.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the self-sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported primarily from Malaysia and Indonesia.— NN/GNLM

Cabbage growers making handsome profits this year

THE growers from the villages in Wuntho and Kawlin townships, Sagaing Region are cultivating the crops using irrigated water from Daungmyu creek. Now, they are jubilant as they are earning handsome profits by growing the cabbage this year.

We have been engaging in the agricultural business for over 30 years. Last year, one cabbage was sold for K600. This year, the cabbage fetched K1,500 per one.

This year, about 2,000 cabbages plants have been cultivated. The cultivation of the cabbage plantation is a bit higher this year than last year due to the mounting price of fertilizers and pesticides. The cultivation costs are about K 70,000 per 2000 plants including fertilizers, pesticides and labour charges. Now, about 500 cabbages have been sold at the price of K1,500. If the

price of cabbages doesn't fall, the growers could make more profit, said U Myint Soe, the cabbage grower from Letpangyitaw village.

The cabbage seeds are growing with frames. After one month, the nursery cabbage plants are transplanted to the farmland and watered for three consecutive days to keep the plants alive.

The growers from the villages are growing other crops such as chilli, onion, tomato, okra, cabbage and Chinese kale. Nevertheless, they are growing a maximum of about a half-acre per person.

They are growing them yearly on a manageable scale and having the daily income from selling them. — Myint Tun Min (Kawlin)/GNLM



Last year, one cabbage was sold for K600. This year, the cabbage fetched K1,500 per one. **PHOTO: MYINT TUN MIN (KAWLIN)**

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.

Avoid violation of laws and moral ethics in the society

THERE is more than 300 million of the population who are suffering from an infection of COVID-19 pandemic across the world. With regard to infection of new variant Omicron, the number of infected people is higher and higher in some countries. For the time being, citizens of the United States of America become victims of COVID-19 day by day because of spending their valuable time to prevent the disease and accept vaccination.

Currently, the US is top on the chart of confirmed infected patients throughout the world, and more than 61 million people are infected by the pandemic. It is the top of the countries in mortality rate.

Meanwhile, Myanmar is beefing up the prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19 and constantly monitors the

moves of new variant viruses. Recently, some returnees by flight were found the symptoms of infected Omicron virus under the diagnostic functioning.

The preventive measures are being taken with special care in advance for responding to the more infectious rate of Omicron than Delta variant because if they Omicron infects in Myanmar, the healthcare burden of the country will be heavier.

The authorities have disseminated information to entries and exits of the countries, waterway and aviation gates where travelling is restricted and passengers must accept medical tests. Moreover, the revised information has been distributed to embassies, UN agencies and international organizations.

Recently, a US diplomatic passport holder and a US embassy staff were taken by another US embassy staff and party from Sayar San Hotel in quarantine at their own will in order to take treatment by their own arrangement without any permission from the authorities concerned. Indeed, it was a case of violating the laws, without emphasis on preventive and control measures of COVID-19 and public healthcare services being undertaken by Myanmar people with utmost effort. Moreover, their acts were a violation of provisions in the Vienna Convention.

Confirmed patients of COVID-19 must take treatment at hospitals under the restrictions of the Ministry of Health. Diplomats need to follow the laws of Myanmar and moral ethics without harming the diplomatic rights as Myanmar is taking preventive measures of spreading the COVID-19 under the provisions of the WHO. Hence, diplomats need to show their excellent qualification in cooperation with the hosts in preventive, control and treatment measures of COVID-19 in Myanmar.

■ ■ ■

Repeated Covid boosters not a viable strategy: WHO

WHO experts warned Tuesday that repeating booster doses of the original Covid vaccines is not a viable strategy against emerging variants and called for new jabs that better protect against transmission.

AN EXPERT group created by the World Health Organization to assess the performance of Covid-19 vaccines said simply providing fresh jabs of existing Covid vaccines as new strains of the virus emerge was not the best way to fight the pandemic.

“A vaccination strategy based on repeated booster doses of the original vaccine composition is unlikely to be appropriate or sustainable,” the WHO Technical Advisory Group on Covid-19 Vaccine Composition (TAG-Co-VAC) said in a statement.

The group said there could be a need to update the existing vaccines to better target emerging Covid variants, like Omicron which has spread rapidly and has been detected in 149 countries so far.

And it called for the development of new jabs that not only protect people who contract Covid against falling seriously ill but also better prevent people from catching the virus in the first place.

Prevent infection

“Covid-19 vaccines that have high impact on prevention of infection and transmission, in addition to the prevention of severe disease and death, are needed and should be developed,” TAG-Co-VAC said.

This, it said, would help lower “community transmission and the need for stringent and broad-reaching public health and social measures.”

It also suggested that vaccine developers should strive to create jabs that “elicit immune responses that are broad, strong, and long-lasting in order to reduce the need for successive booster doses”.

According to the WHO, 331 candidate vaccines are currently being worked on around the world.

Until new vaccines have been developed, the group said, “the composition of current Covid-19 vaccines may need to be updated”.

This would “ensure that



People sit in a waiting area after receiving Covid-19 booster in Schiphol, near Amsterdam. **PHOTO: REMKO DE WAAL/ANP/AFP**

(they) continue to provide WHO-recommended levels of protection against infection and disease by VOCs (variants of concern), including Omicron and future variants.”

Just weeks after Omicron was first detected in southern

Africa, it is becoming increasingly clear that it is not only far more transmissible than previous variants, but also better at dodging some vaccine protections.

The WHO has so far given its stamp of approval to versions of eight different vaccines.

TAG-Co-VAC stressed that those vaccines provide a high level of protection against severe disease and death caused by the various variants of the virus.

It said preliminary data indicated the existing vaccines were less effective at preventing symp-

tomatic Covid disease in people who have contracted the Omicron variant.

But protection against severe disease, which is what the jabs were especially intended to do, “is more likely to be preserved”, it said.

‘Primary vaccination’ top priority

In the meantime, TAG-Co-VAC echoed the WHO stance that “the immediate priority for the world is accelerating access to the primary vaccination”.

The UN health agency has resisted the push in a growing number of countries to roll out blanket booster programmes in the battle against new concerning variants like Omicron.

The WHO says this makes no sense as many people in poorer nations are still waiting for a first jab, dramatically increasing the chance of new, more dangerous variants emerging.

SOURCE: AFP

Half of Europe on track to catch Omicron, world economy at risk

MORE than half of people in Europe will likely catch Omicron by March, the World Health Organization said Tuesday, as the World Bank warned the contagious variant could hamper global economic recovery.

Millions in China were locked down again, exactly two years after Beijing reported the first death from what was later confirmed to be coronavirus.

The highly transmissible Omicron strain has swept across countries, forcing governments to impose fresh measures and some rolling out vaccine booster shots.

But the WHO on Tuesday warned that repeating booster doses of the original Covid jabs was not a viable strategy against emerging variants.

The UN body called for new vaccines that better protect against transmission.

“A vaccination strategy based on repeated booster doses of the original vaccine composition is unlikely to be appropriate or sus-

tainable,” a WHO vaccine advisory group said.

With almost eight million recorded infections over the past seven days, Europe is currently reporting the largest number of

deaths and cases worldwide, according to an AFP tally.

Europe is at the epicentre of alarming new outbreaks and the WHO said Tuesday Omicron could infect half of all people in the re-

gion at current rates.

European ‘tidal wave’

The WHO’s regional director for Europe Hans Kluge described a “new west-to-east tidal wave



One WHO official spoke of a ‘west-to-east tidal wave sweeping across’ Europe. **PHOTO: AFP**

sweeping across” the region.

“The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) forecasts that more than 50 per cent of the population in the region will be infected with Omicron in the next six to eight weeks,” he added.

The WHO’s European region covers 53 countries and territories including several in Central Asia, and Kluge said 50 of them had Omicron cases.

Kluge however stressed “approved vaccines do continue to provide good protection against severe disease and death — including for Omicron”.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) said that the spread of Omicron was pushing Covid towards being an endemic disease that humanity could live with, even if it remained a pandemic for now.

‘Permanent scar on development’

The World Bank, meanwhile, predicted global economic growth will decelerate in 2022 as Omicron

risks exacerbating labour shortages and supply chain snarls.

In its latest Global Economic Prospects report, it cut its forecast for world economic growth this year to 4.1 per cent after the 5.5 per cent rebound last year.

World Bank President David Malpass said the pandemic could leave a “permanent scar on development” as poverty, nutrition and health indicators move in the wrong direction.

The warnings came exactly two years after the announcement of the first person dying of a virus only later identified as Covid — a 61-year-old man in Wuhan, China, where the illness was first detected. Since 11 January 2020, known fatalities in the pandemic have soared to nearly 5.5 million.

China largely tamed its initial outbreak using lockdowns, border closures and mass testing, but flare-ups in some major cities are testing that zero-Covid strategy just weeks before the Beijing Winter Olympics.

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 12 January 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 13 January 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State and isolated in remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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, Shan, Chin, Kayah States and isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthary Regions and Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 January 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 January 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 January 2022: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

A slight earthquake of magnitude (3.7) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (22) miles east-southeast of Mawlaik, latitude 23.58°N, longitude 94.75°E, depth (55) kilometers, about (51) miles southeast of Tamu seismological observatory was recorded at (15) hr (24) min (01) sec M.S.T on 12 January, 2022.

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Milestones in the State Administration Council's Tenth Month

BY **Kanaung**

(CONTINUED FROM
YESTERDAY)

The purpose of the Smart Village project was to enhance living standards and support green development, with the vision to narrow the development gap between urban and rural areas. The project will be extended to the regions and states. Co-operation with relevant sectors would be necessary, including sectors involving digital and IT technologies, technology transfer, financial services, vocational development, social welfare, social protection, and environmental conservation. Three pilots "smart village" projects will be implemented respectively in Pyinmana, Lewe and Tatfone townships of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

The Yangon City Development Committee's Urban Land Management Department announced that its regular services would recommence from 22 November and that its offices in all districts and townships would once again be open every working day for the convenience of the public.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation is continuing to develop the agricultural sector in regions and states. Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo met with agricultural officials in Kawthoung on 17 November. The meetings focused on the effective use of good quality seeds, the application of modern techniques, the distribution of local vegetables, the provision of extension services to small family farms and livestock projects, and safety training and the provision of skills training for the fisheries sector workers. On 24 November, the Ministry organized a meeting via video link on agricultural training and education for the development of human resources in the sector. To this end, preparations are underway to further develop agricultural education facilities in Nay Pyi Taw, Pyinmana, Patheingyi, and Heho. The meeting also emphasized the need to enhance applied research in the livestock sector and support the development of livestock businesses in the private sector.

On 26 November, at the 20th meeting of the National Seed-Related Committee, various experts in the Technical Working



The second-day session of the 47-member eighth State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee's Ninth Plenary Meeting in progress.

Groups and the Technical Seed Committee discussed the certification of new crop varieties that had been scrutinized in line with rules and procedures. The meeting discussed using online registration of seed varieties to reduce transaction costs and accelerate the process.

The Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Irrigation organized Citrus Fair 2021, with the opening ceremony on 27 November at the Nay Pyi Taw Yezin Agricultural Research Department. The fair aimed to enhance market and investment opportunities and to increase citrus fruit production to meet domestic demand and boost exports. Competitions were held, and business owners, farmers and experts participated in the discussions on various agricultural technologies and agricultural production development.

On 26 November, Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn and the party inspected the construction of the Community Centre in Taunggyi which is being implemented by the Department of Information and Public Relations under the BOT system. The Union Minister recalled how community centres had been implemented since 2015 by the Ministry of Information. Previous to this, the Department of Information and Public Relations had only been able to implement ordinary libraries that lent books. On the

other hand, community centres were intended not only for raising public awareness but also to address issues related to economic, health and social development. He said that community centres were where people come to study, obtain information, and discuss the development of the community. Once completed, community-based activities will be expanded. In line with directives set by the Prime Minister, community centres should aim for youth education and development. He highlighted the need to systematically upgrade library services to digital libraries, with the necessary provisions made in the budget.

Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn, accompanied by Shan State Chief Minister Dr Kyaw Tun and state ministers, and Chairman of the Danu Self-Administered Zone Administration Body U Arkar Lin, visited the construction of studios for TV programme production by a private company in Pindaya on 28 November. More than 800 acres of land are being used to build the necessary infrastructure for television and film production in the area. The Union Minister also visited the Danu Self-Administered Zone Information and Public Relations Department.

In honour of the upcoming Diamond Jubilee Union Day on 12 February 2022, the first competition of the "Happy Together Music Festival" was broadcast

live on MRTV on the night of 26 November. Contestants from regions and states are expected to participate in the singing competitions from 26 November 2021 to 11 February 2022. The festival aims to enhance friendship and harmony amongst ethnic national races in Myanmar and lift spirits and camaraderie through national-level competition.

To educate children, Myanmar's Sarpay Beikman Literature House (part of the Ministry of Information) has translated "Meet My Friends", from the original book published by the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO. This is an educational book for children to promote international understanding, and it highlights cultural differences among the people from 14 countries, their lifestyles, eating habits, games and festivals.

On 28 and 29 November, Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than inspected the Anti-Venom Production Division in Hmawby Township, the No (3) Plastic Industry, the No (3) Heavy Industry in Thayawady, the No (1) Garment Factory in Shwetaung and Corn Production Factory in Yanpai.

On 28 November, Union Minister for Construction U Shwe Lay inspected the completion of rural road upgrades in Taikkyi Township implemented by the Yangon Region Rural Road Development Department; the implementation of the Hlaing

River-Hlawga Hydropower Project; the installation of an underground water pipe ten feet deep and five feet in diameter in Hmawby Township along a section of the Yangon-Pyay highway; and works for the maintenance of No (4) Highway by the Yangon North District Highways Department. With a view to improving road safety, the Union Minister and his team also inspected the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay Expressway (Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw section) with regard to roadside trees, the mechanized levelling of terrain and the clearing of bushes.

The Myanmar government has been arranging around 170 relief flights to carry home Myanmar nationals stranded abroad during the COVID-19 crisis. On 25 November, a relief flight carried back Myanmar nationals and families stranded in Japan. Some 497 Myanmar nationals who were stranded for various reasons in Malaysia were also brought back to Myanmar by relief flights on 22, 24 and 25 November. On 29 November, the eightieth relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines brought 105 Myanmar nationals from Singapore back home, while six Myanmar citizens were repatriated from Jordan on 27 November. The Myanmar Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, has been arranging relief flights once a week and on 23 November, the 84th relief flight brought 75 passengers back to

Myanmar, including 48 Myanmar nationals.

Myanmar marked the 32nd anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (World Children's Day) on 20 November. The country also marked the sixteenth day of "Activism Against Violence Against Women" on 25 November, at an event organized by the Myanmar National Women's Affairs Committee. The UN Secretary-General has called for global action to bridge funding gaps and ensure essential services for survivors of violence during the COVID-19 crisis with "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (25 November to 10 December 2020)".

The COVID-19 Pandemic

Up to 30 November 2021, Myanmar reported 522,402 cumulative confirmed cases, 19,104 cumulative confirmed deaths, with a total of 5,605,747 tests conducted.

COVID-19 prevention and management measures continued to be successfully implemented, leading to a steady decline in test positivity rates throughout November. While the test positivity rate was around 4 per cent in late October (e.g., 4.4 per cent on 30 October), it continued to decrease (to 3 per cent in mid-November and 1.9 per cent on 30 November). The number of daily new cases fell significantly from a seven-day moving average of 5,756 cases on 24 July to a seven-day moving average of 472 cases on 30 November. Previously, 119 townships had been designated as "stay-at-home townships" to control and manage the third wave of COVID-19, but by 30 November, only 11 townships were categorized as such.

The fight against the pandemic has benefitted from a holistic approach led by the Ministry of Health and Tatmadaw medical corps and backed by community organizations, the private sector, and various government entities. The Ministry of Commerce expedites the import of medicines and equipment for combatting COVID-19 via air, sea and land routes, and the import details are made public. Returning Myanmar nationals, including migrant workers, are being welcomed by the authorities at airports, seaports and border crossing points. Tatmadaw medical teams systematically organize and provide medical check-ups and quarantine facilities as needed for the returning nationals.

The Government continued

successfully with the COVID-19 vaccination programme across the nation in respective regions and states, covering target groups prioritized by the Ministry of Health, despite challenges such as terrorist attacks. As of 30 November, 16,849,172 people have been vaccinated against COVID-19, comprising 11,858,598 people who have been vaccinated twice and 4,990,574 people who have received the first dose of the vaccine. This means a total of 28,707,770 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered to the Myanmar population.

To date, the steady progress in Myanmar's vaccination programme is based on vaccines purchased by Myanmar and the generous donations of vaccines and medical supplies from China, Russia, India and Cambodia. No vaccine has been received from the COVAX facility or its UN partners (WHO and UNICEF), although these UN partners have made various declarations on UN Country Team press releases.



Packages of Sinovac COVID-19 vaccines donated by the People's Republic of China are being unloaded from plane of Air China airlines at Yangon International Airport on 21 November 2021.

es. Myanmar is the poorest ASEAN member country, yet other countries in the region have been receiving vaccines through the multilateral COVAX facility.

On 30 November, the Ministry of Health held a coordination meeting on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment through video conferencing. Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win discussed the Omicron COVID-19 variant, classified as a SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern by the World Health Organization since 26 November, and the measures being taken to control it.

Citizens' Basic Needs

Since 22 September, the Ministry of Commerce and the Myanmar Petroleum Trade

Association have been collaborating to make fuel available at reasonable prices for the public. The oil importers directly purchase the foreign currency from the Central Bank of Myanmar, and the stations selling the fuel are listed on the website of the Ministry of Commerce.

The government has undertaken several initiatives to ensure basic food items for the public at a reasonable price. Chief Ministers and Commanders of the respective regions and states have been providing the necessary support to production activities in the agriculture, livestock and other sectors. Beginning from 9 November, the Ministry of Commerce and Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association imported palm oil at the Central Bank of Myanmar reference rate and sold it in different states and regions at a wholesale price of K4,240 per viss. The palm oil wholesalers will have to resell the oil at not more than 2 per cent of net profit at retail outlets.

including 138 graduate monks, were offered alms by donors.

The Ninth Plenary Session of the Eighth State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was held on 26 November in Yangon at the Maha Pasana Cave, Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill. Attending the ceremony were the members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee headed by Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bharmo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa, the Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko, and officials. Sayadaws of the relevant working subcommittees presented their respective activity reports. The meeting discussed religious affairs and educational matters.

Families of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) recited the five volumes of Maha Pathana Treatise for 11 days from 19 to 29 November, dedicating the recital to peace and well-being for all in the

government, ASEAN and UN publications, English books about Myanmar, and research papers.

The Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) organized the 101st Anniversary of National Victory Day in Yangon. At the ceremony, the message of the Chairman of the State Administration Council, Patron of the YMBA, Thado Siri Agga Maha Mingala Dhamma Zotika Dhaja Maha Thray Sithu Senior General Min Aung Hlaing was read out. The Chairman of the YMBA explained the history of National Victory Day and presented awards.

Conclusion

Ten months after the State Administration Council took office, and twenty months after the first cases of COVID-19 were officially confirmed on 23 March 2020 in Myanmar, it is worth comparing the progress achieved against the goals set in the Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council.

First, the Union Election Commission has been reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, have been largely implemented. The evidence collected showed indisputable and massive fraud and widespread manipulation of voter lists.

Second, measurable progress has been achieved in national efforts to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic, with the assistance of friendly countries.

Third, actions are being taken to speed up the economic recovery but there is still a long way to go due to the shutdown since 2020 and the uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its variants.

Fourth, the Tatmadaw has unilaterally and repeatedly extended its ceasefire arrangements with ethnic armed organizations, in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. The current instability, however, is caused by armed terrorist attacks against Buddhist monks, civil servants, and communities by the PDF and NUG. No country can be expected to tolerate such a situation and accordingly, the Myanmar security forces are taking action against the terrorists.

Fifth, the Union Election Commission is undertaking further work to prepare for free and fair multiparty democratic elections in line with the 2008 Constitution.

Translated.

Wholesalers and retailers were urged to contact the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association. By 25 November, 5,545,980 visses of palm oil (equivalent to 9,062.05 tonnes) had been sold in Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing, Bago, Magway, and Taninthayi regions, Nay Pyi Taw, Shan State and Mon State.

Religious and Cultural Affairs

The 26th Maha Graduation Ceremony of the State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon/Mandalay) was held on 28 November in Mandalay. The graduating monks received degrees and took their religious oaths in the presence of the Chancellor of the State Pariyatti Sasana University. A total of 156 monks,

Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, the wife of Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, attended the ceremony.

From 1 November, the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture reopened the National Library at Nay Pyi Taw and the National Library at Yangon, which had been closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. The re-opening was accompanied by strict COVID-19 rules and regulations and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The National Libraries host large collections of digital books, magazines, manuscripts, historical and archaeological books, books published by the

Migratory birds flock to ponds in Bagan-NyaungU cultural zone

THE ponds in Bagan cultural heritage zone, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, became a stopover for the migratory birds this winter.

Bagan and Ngathayouk cities in NyaungU District are included in the tropical region, however, the highest rainfall in the area last year is approximately 46 inches, keeping the ponds across the Bagan-NyaungU cultural heritage zone full. The ponds have not dried out until winter and it became one of the destinations of the migratory birds, U Nay Win Maung, a resident said.

The ponds and lakes across the zone, including Alan Bagan, Ale, Laydaunt-

kan, Nyaunglatphat, Sulamani, Shwenanyintaw, Shwehtee, Magee, Kyaukyoe and other ponds for drinking water supply, are filled with water. Some migratory birds might stop over the ponds in Bagan before their final destinations to the freshwater lakes where there is abundant food, U Shwe Htay Aung, a warden of Lawkananda Wildlife Sanctuary pointed out.

Those ponds and lakes dried out in the previous years. This year, they stay full of water. The Black-headed Ibis, Glossy Ibis, common moorhen, Asian Openbill, Cormorant, blue whistling thrush, kingfisher and other resident



Winged tourists are seen at the Bagan-NyaungU World Heritage site. PHOTO KO HTEIN(KPD)

birds are found in the ponds. Moreover, some bird species can be identified only with bird watching telescope, U Nay Win Maung elaborated. —Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM



Officials welcome back Myanmar returnees at various land borders

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

On 11 January, a total of 57 returnees plus two monks — 24

males and 33 females – came back home through Chinshwehaw, Northern Shan State.

Healthcare officials from relevant public hospitals and members of the Tatmadaw Medical Corps conducted COVID-19 tests and provided quarantine entry documents for the returnees.

Next, instructions of the Ministry of Health were ex-

plained systematically and departmental officials provided necessary assistance.

The township administration bodies then escorted them to their respective places in passenger vehicles, and the infected people are kept in separate places to facilitate the necessary medical and administrative matters, officials said. —MNA

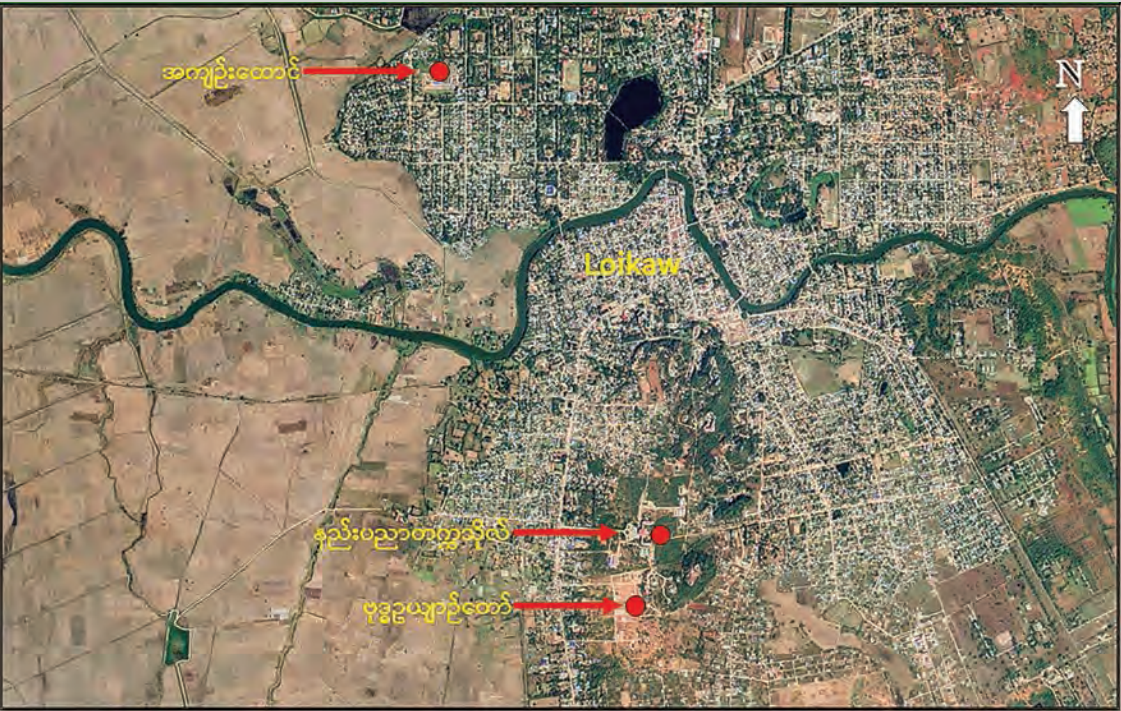
Returnees are warmly accepted.

KNPP, PDF terrorist groups commit war crimes in Kayah State

FOLLOWING a tip-off that the KNPP and PDF terrorists were taking positions at Government Technological University (GTU) and Buddha Park in Mong Lone Ward of Loikaw of Kayah State, security forces raided the places on 11 January.

The terrorists took positions in houses, governmental and religious buildings and used the human shields without letting locals move to safe places in the attacks. But the security forces tried their best with the least shots to their targets not to harm the innocent civilians who were applied as human shields.

In the clash, at noon of 11 January and yesterday morning, the KNPP and PDF terrorist groups launched attacks on Loikaw prison using heavy/small weapons from three places of the ward to hurt the prisoners and occur prison riot. Security forces conducted



counterattacks not to harm the inmates within the rights to defend themselves against the attacks. The engagement stopped in the evening of 11 January and yesterday noon, and terrorists

moved back to west and south-east of the location.

As soon as the terrorist groups and armed insurgents retreated, security forces counterattacked them using heavy

weapons and air supporting fire.

Moreover, the KNPP and PDF terrorist groups refilled their numbers using the fields and routes of Hmone Pyar,

Bardo and Phaya Phyu villages yesterday noon and so security forces launched air supporting fire and the terrorists retreated to the west and south.

In the attacks, some of the government buildings and dormitories of prison were damaged and no civilian was injured.

The KNPP and PDF terrorist groups took positions in religious buildings, educational buildings and houses that are not military targets, used locals as human shields without letting them move from the danger zone and intentionally attacked the countryside prisons with only hundreds of prisoners. Therefore, such doings violated war crimes according to the Geneva Convention and International Law, and the effective action will be taken against them for these war crimes under the Counter-Terrorism Law and other existing laws.—MNA

Cathay Pacific says crews spent 73,000 nights in quarantine in 2021

CATHAY Pacific has said its crews spent a combined total of 73,000 nights in quarantine last year as the airline struggles to keep flying through Hong Kong's strict zero-Covid controls.

The city government says the carrier faces possible legal action over an outbreak of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus that began with two aircrew breaking home quarantine rules and has forced a tightening of social distancing measures.

An ongoing government investigation is the latest setback for Cathay Pacific, which has been battered by the pandemic and seen rising anger from pilots and crew over Hong Kong's virus controls.

Chairman Patrick Healy sent a video message to all staff on Tuesday thanking them for the sacrifices they have made during measures that often leave them separated from families for weeks.

"What you have been through during the past two years is quite simply unparalleled," he said.

"Collectively our crew spent over 62,000 nights in quarantine hotels in 2021, in addition over 1,000 of you have spent more than 11,000 nights in Penny's Bay," he added, referring to Hong Kong's government quarantine camp.

Healy argued that a "tiny minority" of rule-breakers should not overshadow Cathay Pacific's contributions to Hong Kong and that he believed the airline's crew arrangements were in line with government policy.

Following China's lead, Hong Kong maintains a strict zero-Covid strategy that has kept cases low but largely cut the international finance hub off from both the mainland and the rest of the world for the last two years.—AFP ■



Cathay's cabin crew and pilots have already been observing a series of rostering and health measures to minimize their exposure to the virus. PHOTO: AFP

New German central bank chief warns ECB to watch inflation

MONETARY policy in the eurozone needs to "be on its guard" in the face of record inflation, new Bundesbank President Joachim Nagel said Tuesday, placing himself in the institution's hawkish tradition.

"The risk right now is that inflation rates stay elevated for longer than currently expected," Nagel said at an event to mark the handover from his inflation-wary predecessor Jens Weidmann.

"In any case, monetary policy must be on its guard," said Nagel, who has spent 17 years at the Bundesbank, widely trusted in Germany for its commitment to economic stability. As a member of the European Central Bank's governing council, Nagel will be tasked with formulating the bank's response to soaring inflation in the eurozone, which stood at five percent in December, its highest-ever level and well above the ECB's two-per-cent target. At its last meeting in December, the 25-member policy-setting committee decided on a "step-by-step" reduction in the ECB's massive bond-buying programme, its main crisis-fighting tool. But concern has grown that the fast pace of price rises could persist as supply bottlenecks that have driven inflation show no sign of easing and geopolitical conflicts threaten to push energy costs higher.—AFP ■



A supermarket in Ahlen, Germany. The reopening of economies from lockdown has caused prices for goods and services to climb. PHOTO: AFP

Boeing deliveries rose in 2021 but still lag Airbus

BOEING delivered more than twice as many commercial planes in 2021 as the year earlier, but still lagged its archrival Airbus in the closely-watched industry benchmark, according to figures released Tuesday.

The US aviation giant, benefitting from the return of its 737 MAX jet in most leading markets, delivered 340 planes last year, up from 157 in 2020. But that level is still below Airbus' 611 deliveries in 2021. Deliveries are tied to company revenues and closely monitored by investors. The figures are the latest to point to Boeing's partial recovery from both the lengthy grounding of its 737 MAX model following two fatal crashes, and the downturn in the commercial plane business during Covid-19 that halted many new plane orders for more than a year.—AFP ■



The US aviation giant, benefitting from the return of its 737 MAX jet in most leading markets, delivered 340 planes last year, up from 157 in 2020. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Quebec seeks to tax the unvaxxed as Omicron

THE Canadian province of Quebec, struggling to control the Omicron variant, will impose a new health tax in the coming weeks on those who are not vaccinated against Covid-19.

"We are working on a health contribution for all the adults who are refusing to get vaccinated" because they represent a "financial burden for all Quebecois", said Quebec Premier Francois Legault. The 10 per cent of Quebecois who have not yet received any vaccine doses must not "harm" the 90 per cent who have, he said.—AFP ■

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NORBERG VOY.NO. (151S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK NORBERG VOY.NO. (151S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-1-2022 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCL 21

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCL 21 VOY. NO. (01/2022) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-1-2022 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301928

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

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

NEWS
IN BRIEFLandmark rape trial
of Greek sailing
coach begins

THE landmark trial of a Greek sailing coach accused of raping a minor opens in Athens on Wednesday, a year after an Olympic champion effectively launched the #MeToo movement there by speaking out about her experiences.

The 38-year-old suspect, who has so far not been named by authorities, allegedly raped an 11-year-old athlete in 2010.

The case is one of many that came to light after former Olympics sailing gold medal winner Sofia Bekatorou broke the taboo on speaking out on such matters in December 2020.

She said that she herself had been subjected to “sexual harassment and abuse” by a senior federation member after trials for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. She was 21 years old at the time.

Her revelations led to other women speaking up about being assaulted, and more than three years after it started in the United States, the #MeToo movement was born in Greece.—AFP ■

Calls in Denmark
for gay fathers to get
legal rights at birth

A petition in Denmark calling for two gay fathers to be granted equal parental rights for their child, on Monday received more than the 50,000 signatures required to be considered by parliament.

The text, presented last Friday, calls for the creation of new status, “co-paternity”. It would give a child and its non-biological father legal rights and obligations they would not otherwise have, including parental authority and inheritance rights.

More than 73,000 people had signed the petition by Monday afternoon, a strong show of support in such a short period of time. “Parenthood can currently be shared between a man and a woman, or between two women, but not two men,” Søren Kristensen Juliussen, who initiated the petition, told AFP. “Clearly, there’s a lack of justice.”

He and his husband welcomed their daughter Charlie in late November, via a surrogate.—AFP ■

European archaeologists back in Iraq after
years of war

AFTER war and insurgency kept them away from Iraq for decades, European archaeologists are making an enthusiastic return in search of millennia-old cultural treasures.

“Come and see!” shouted an overjoyed French researcher recently at a desert dig in Larsa, southern Iraq, where the team had unearthed a 4,000-year-old cuneiform inscription.

“When you find inscriptions like that, in situ, it’s moving,” said Dominique Charpin, professor of Mesopotamian civilisation at the College de France in Paris.

The inscription in Sumerian was engraved on a brick fired in the 19th century BC.

“To the god Shamash, his king Sin-iddinam, king of Larsa, king of Sumer and Akkad,” Charpin translated with ease.

Behind him, a dozen other European and Iraqi archaeol-



Members of a German-Iraqi archaeological expedition work on restoring the white temple of Anu in the Warka (ancient Uruk) site in Iraq’s Muthanna province, on 27 November 2021. **PHOTO: QASSEM AL-KAABI / AFP**

ogists kept at work in a cordoned-off area where they were digging.

They brushed off bricks and removed earth to clear what appeared to be the pier of a bridge

spanning an urban canal of Larsa, which was the capital of Mesopotamia just before Babylon, at the start of the second millennium BC.

“Larsa is one of the larg-

est sites in Iraq, it covers more than 200 hectares (500 acres),” said Regis Vallet, researcher at France’s National Centre for Scientific Research, heading the Franco-Iraqi mission.—AFP ■

Asian-owned shipbuilder in
Germany to file for bankruptcy

German-based cruise ship builder MV Werften said it will file for bankruptcy on Monday. **PHOTO: WERFTEN/AFP**

GERMAN-BASED cruise ship builder MV Werften said it will file for bankruptcy on Monday, as the coronavirus pandemic scuttled the subsidiary of Asian tourism and casino giant Genting.

“The bankruptcy petition should be submitted today,” a spokesman for MV Werften told AFP on Monday.

The struggling shipbuilder was taking the step after failing to secure funding for the completion of the “Global One” mega-liner, already 80 per cent of the way through construction, according to the company.

Designed to carry 5,000 passengers in 2,500 cabins, the huge ship had been due to leave the shipyard in 2021 — but the pandemic has knocked the company’s timetable off course and crimped its budget.

Around 600 million euros (\$679 million) is necessary to finance the completion of the vessel, for which the shipbuilder has been seeking support from the government.

The decision to declare bankruptcy came after lengthy discussions with officials in which the two sides “clearly have not found common ground”, the spokesman said.

The Global One ship sits in Wismar, one of MV Werften’s three shipyards along the Baltic coast of former eastern state Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, where it employs around 2,000 people.

In June, the state took a stake worth 60 million euros in the business and extended a 47-million-euro loan to the company.—AFP ■

Fact-checkers urge YouTube
to fight disinformation

MORE than 80 fact-checking organizations Wednesday urged online video platform YouTube to better combat disinformation, offering to help debunk false statements.

“Every day, we see that YouTube is one of the major conduits of online disinformation and misinformation worldwide,” said the groups spanning the globe, from Politifact and the Washington Post in the United States to the Kenya-based Africa Check.

Videos containing false information had gone “under the radar of YouTube’s policies, especially in non-English speaking countries”, they said in an open letter to YouTube chief Susan Wojcicki.

“We urge you to take ef-

fective action against disinformation and misinformation... and to do so with the world’s independent, non-partisan fact-checking organizations,” they added. “Our experience as fact-checkers together with academic evidence tells us that surfacing fact-checked information is more effective than deleting content.”

It also urged the platform to make sure its recommendation algorithm did not actively promote disinformation to its users. YouTube spokesperson Elena Hernandez defended the platform, saying that fact checking was a “crucial tool”, but just “one piece of a much larger puzzle to address the spread of misinformation”. — AFP ■



An exterior view of the YouTube Space in Los Angeles, California. YouTube Space LA is one of 10 facilities worldwide where content creators can produce video content, learn new skills, and collaborate with the YouTube community. **PHOTO: AFP**

NATO allies close ranks for Russia talks

THE United States and its European allies closed ranks as they prepared to meet Russian envoys Wednesday at NATO for talks to calm tensions on the Ukraine border, with both sides refusing to give ground.

Russia's massive troop build-up around already partially-occupied Ukraine has forced Washington to engage with Moscow to head off fears of an all-out military confrontation.

But, after an initial round of US-Russia talks in Geneva on Monday proved inconclusive, the next round of dialogue was to move on Wednesday to NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Ahead of the meeting, US negotiator Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman rallied Western allies, some of whom were worried they might be sidelined.

"It's too early to tell whether the Russians are serious about the path to diplomacy or not, or if they're prepared to negotiate seriously — we are," White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Tuesday.

US President Joe Biden's



NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg gave a press conference with the Ukrainian foreign minister after their bilateral meeting at the European Union headquarters in Brussels on 16 December 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

spokeswoman insisted: "NATO'S relationship with Ukraine is a matter only for Ukraine and the 30 NATO allies, not for other countries to determine."

But Washington's European allies are keen not to be sidelined, as President Vladimir Putin's Kremlin seeks to roll back what it sees as the West's post-Cold-War encroachment on its turf.

"There's no reason to be optimistic," a senior European

diplomat told AFP. "But the Russians are seriously engaged on the diplomatic track."

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday reiterated his demand that France and Germany host a new international summit between Moscow and Kyiv to end the conflict.

The French presidency said the Kremlin had agreed for France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine to hold such talks "by the end of January".—AFP ■

S.Africa parliament fire suspect charged with terrorism



Accused: Zandile Christmas Mafe at the Magistrate Court in Cape Town on Tuesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

A man suspected of starting a fire that gutted South Africa's parliament made a second court appearance on Tuesday to face a new charge of terrorism, in addition to robbery and arson charges.

Zandile Christmas Mafe, 49, was arrested around the parliament complex in Cape Town after the fire broke out

on 2 January and appeared in court three days later.

Magistrate Zamekile Mbalo granted prosecutors a month's delay to determine Mafe's mental state and "if he is fit for trial" following a diagnosis that he was schizophrenic.

Mafe was initially charged with breaking into parliament,

arson and intention to steal property, including laptops, crockery and documents.

Prosecutors said the additional terrorism charge was introduced after investigators viewed CCTV footage from parliament on Monday.

The new charge said the "accused is guilty" of contravening laws on the "protection of constitutional democracy against terrorist and related activities", according to a court document.

"The accused did unlawfully and intentionally deliver, place, discharge or detonate an explosive, or other lethal device in... parliament building with the purpose... of causing extensive damage," it said, without giving further details.

The blaze broke out before dawn on 2 January, spreading to the National Assembly, the roof of which collapsed.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

France, US, Algeria pile pressure on sanctions-hit Mali

PRESSURE on Mali's junta increased Tuesday as France and the United States underlined their support for the West African bloc ECOWAS, which has slapped sanctions on the country over delayed elections following two coups.

In a sharp escalation after months of diplomatic tensions, leaders from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on Sunday agreed to shutter borders with the Sahel state and impose a trade embargo.

The move came after Mali's interim government last month proposed staying in power for up to five years before staging elections — despite international demands that it respect a promise to hold elections on 27 February. As well as shutting borders and imposing a trade embargo, ECOWAS also agreed to halt financial aid to Mali and freeze its assets at the Central Bank of West African States.—AFP ■

A year on from Argentine abortion law, change is slow

A year ago Argentina joined the limited ranks of Latin American countries to have legalized abortion, but while that gave hope to millions of women, changing mentalities, practices and infrastructure has proved more difficult.

"In small villages you go for an ultrasound in the morning and in the afternoon the baker congratulates you on your pregnancy," Monik Rodriguez, 33, told AFP. Ropdriguez, who has three children, runs a service accompanying women who want to have an abortion in Salta, a conservative Catholic province in the South American country.

Away from the big city of Buenos Aires, where women erupted in celebration when the law was approved, many in more remote and conservative areas of Argentina face the same stigma as before. "There are still things that need to come out of hiding," said Rodriguez, who can take up to 125 telephone calls a month as part of the project launched by the Women's Strength civil association.—AFP ■

Cambodia's landmine-sniffing rat hero dies

A landmine-hunting rat that was awarded a gold medal for heroism for clearing ordnance from the Cambodian countryside has died, his charity said Tuesday.

Magawa, a giant African pouched rat originally from Tanzania, helped clear mines from about 225,000 square metres of land — the equivalent of 42 football pitches — over the course of his career.

After detecting more than 100 landmines and other explosives, Magawa retired in June last year.

Magawa passed away "peacefully" this weekend at the age of eight, the Belgian charity APOPO, which trained him, said in a statement.

"All of us at APOPO are feeling the loss of Magawa and we are grateful for the incredible work he's done," the group said.

APOPO said Magawa was in good health and spent most of last week playing with his



A landmine-hunting rat that was awarded a gold medal for heroism for clearing ordnance from the Cambodian countryside has died, his charity said Tuesday. **PHOTO: APOPO/AFP**

usual enthusiasm. But towards the weekend "he started to slow down, napping more and showing less interest in food in his last days," the charity said.

APOPO trained Magawa to detect the chemical compounds in explosives by rewarding him with tasty treats — his favourites being bananas and peanuts. He would alert deminers by scratching the earth after using "his amazing sense of smell".— 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.

MFF selects final squad for AFC Women's Cup

THE Myanmar women's team has selected 23 finalists for the final round of the 2022 AFC Women's Cup, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

Myanmar Women's Team head coach U Tin Myint Aung conducted special training for 27 preliminary players and released 23 finalists on 12 January.

Team manager Daw Myat Myat Oo, Coach U Tin Myint Aung, Assistant Coaches U Khin Maung Htwe, Daw Thuzar Htwe and U Bo Bo Aung, Goal Coach

U Yin Min Aung, Team Physician Dr Yu Nanda Tun, Media Officer U Aung Thaw Phyo, Video Analyst U Myat Soe Thu, Security Officer Daw Su Pyae Sone Aung, goalkeepers May Zin Nwe, Zu Latt Nadi, and Khine Zar Win, Defenders Aye Aye Moe, Chit Chit, Khin Myo Win, Phyu Phyu Win, Zun Yu Ya Oo, Nant Zu Zu Htet, Ei Ei Kyaw, and Khin Than Wai, Defenders Thin Thin Yu, Khin Mo Mo Tun, Khin Mar Lar Tun, Win Win, Naw and Htet Htet Wai, Strikers Win Theingi Tun,

San Thaw Thaw, Khin Moe Wai, Myat Noe Khin, July Kyaw, Hnin Pwint Aye and Nu Nu will be on the team list.

The Myanmar women's team includes most of the players who assisted to qualify the Asian Cup, with only four changes.

The final round of the 2022 AFC Women's Cup will be held in India from 20 January to 6 February, with a total of 12 teams competing.

Host India is included in Group A with China, China Tai-



Myanmar team players celebrate after the winning goal in an international match. PHOTO: MFF

pei, and Iran while three ASEAN teams: Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia are placed in Group B with world-class team Australia.

Myanmar is included in the tough Group C together with Asian powerhouse Japan, South Korea and ASEAN star Viet Nam. —Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Muguruza 'manages anxiety' to make winning start to season



Garbine Muguruza made a winning start to her season. PHOTO: AFP

AUSTRALIAN Open third seed Garbine Muguruza made a confident start to her season with a straight-sets win over battling Ekaterina Alexandro-

va on Wednesday at the Sydney Classic.

The Spanish world number three, who had a first-round bye in Sydney, withstood a fightback

from the 40th-ranked Russian in the second set to win 6-1, 7-6 (7/4).

Muguruza will now play another Russian, Daria Kasatkina, in the quarter-finals after she upset Belgian Elise Mertens 6-3, 6-4.

Muguruza, a former world number one and two-time Grand Slam champion, will be one of the main contenders for next week's Australian Open.

Her best result at Melbourne Park was in 2020, when she finished runner-up to surprise winner Sofia Kenin.

Playing her first match since winning the WTA Finals in November, the 28-year-old Muguruza said she was encouraged by the way she had stayed strong when facing five set points in the second set.— AFP ■

Spurs boss Conte holds 'productive' meeting over new signings

ANTONIO Conte hopes a "productive" meeting with Tottenham's hierarchy has laid the groundwork for the club to make signings during the January transfer window.

Conte laid out his views on how Tottenham's squad can be improved during talks with chairman Daniel Levy and director of football Fabio Paratici.

The Italian has been in charge of the north London club since November and believes changes are needed to lift Tottenham to the level of Manchester City, Liverpool and Chelsea.

Tottenham are currently sixth in the Premier League, 20 points behind leaders City, and were outplayed by his former club Chelsea in a 2-0 League Cup semi-final first

leg defeat last week. Speaking ahead of Wednesday's second leg showdown with Chelsea, Conte said: "It was a good meeting. A good meeting because the owner and Paratici, they started together this season from the start. — AFP ■



Tottenham manager Antonio Conte. PHOTO: DANIEL LEAL/AFP