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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.

The speech on one-year State responsibilities discharged by the State Administration Council delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

Today turns one year of our State Administration Council in discharging State responsibilities.

First and foremost, I disperse my wish to all ethnic nationals to be free from the COVID-19 pandemic and to have physical and mental wellbeing.

Esteemed ethnic national people,

I'd like to present the situations of Tatmadaw to take State responsibilities-

It is a general election in Myanmar to select representatives to the Pyithu Hluttaw, the Amyotha Hluttaw and region and state Hluttaw once in five years.

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Senior General highlights, "MRTV is the main pillar to the media sector of Myanmar for ensuring peace and stability of the State and socio-economic development of the people"

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views around the MRTV Diamond Jubilee Museum in Nay Pyi Taw on 1 February 2022.

THE MRTV, the State-owned media need to abide by the ethics for serving the interests of the State and the people in applying the media ways, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in launching the MRTV Diamond Jubilee Museum, the MRTV News Channel and the MRTV DTH system at the MRTV in Tatkon of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday afternoon in commemoration of the first anniversary of the SAC as a gesture of hailing Diamond Jubilee Union Day.

The Senior General pressed the button to open the MRTV Diamond Jubilee Museum.

The Senior General and attendees enjoyed a video clip on "towards the MRTV Diamond Jubilee Museum" at the mini-theatre of the museum.

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To build strength within the country!

1. In the first, our economy will be developed by our internal strength. We have abundant natural resources and human resources. We have weakness in the socio-economic development of the people as we have been relying on external products or import rather than our domestic production.
2. Secondly, we will build our political strength internally. Building a Union and multiparty democratic system based on democracy and federalism will certainly enhance our political strength.
3. Thirdly, the defence capability of the country should be strengthened with the participation of all ethnic national people. With united strength both in weals and woes, we all will build the defence capability of our country with modern military prowess (Army, Navy and Air).

(Excerpt from the speech made by the State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on one-year State responsibilities discharged by the State Administration Council)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 9/2022

1st Waxing of Tabodwe 1383 ME
1 February 2022

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Region and State Chief Ministers

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned the following persons as Chief Ministers shown against each Region and State under Section 419 of the Constitution.

1. U Zaw Myo Tin — Kayah State
2. U Soe Thein — Yangon Region

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 10/2022

1st Waxing of Tabodwe 1383 ME
1 February 2022

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Member of Anti-Corruption Commission

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned U Than Htut Thein to the duties of the member of the Anti-Corruption Commission under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

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

Anti-COVID devices imported daily

THE Ministry of Commerce is overseeing the importation of essential medical supplies plus anti-COVID devices that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, through trading posts, international airports and seaports.

A total of 54 tonnes of masks were imported through the 105th-Mile border trade zone and 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

Senior General highlights, "MRTV is the main pillar to the media sector ...

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presses the button to inaugurate the MRTV Diamond Jubilee Museum in Nay Pyi Taw on 1 February 2022.

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Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn presented an emblem to mark the opening of the museum to the Senior General.

The Senior General viewed scale models of the MRTV and towers, TV broadcasting machinery and vehicles, documentary photos on TV retransmission stations, musical instruments of the modern band, the 75-year Myanmar traditional orchestra, modern music band and musical instruments, ethnic musical instruments, gramophone record players and related equipment, classic music and books, and other machinery for TV broadcasting at the museum.

The Senior General launched the MRTV News Channel and MRTV DTH system at the auditorium of MRTV main building.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said that the Tatmadaw is shaping the country to be a fair, peaceful, developed nation while striving for a nationwide ceasefire and restoration of perpetual peace. The entire people need to understand the realities of destructive events based on riots and insurrection plans and collectively oppose them.

The MRTV being a media needs to encourage the people to have the knowledge about democracy and guide the educated youths to stand on the educational route.

Moreover, it is necessary to oppose the fake news, false news, hate speech and rumours which bring incitement to cause instability of the State and riots. And, the MRTV needs to present true information to the people.

The MRTV, the State-owned media need to abide by the ethics for serving the interests of the State and the people in applying the media ways.

At present, the diamond jubilee museum showcases scale models, TV broadcasting vehicles, machinery and equipment, gramophone records and tapes, and musical instruments in respective sectors.

In couple with the opening of the MRTV Diamond Jubilee Museum, the MRTV DTH system will be launched to regularly operate broadcasting of the MRTV News Channel. Today's launched MRTV News Channel will rapidly broadcast true news for the people to rebut fake news, false news, rumours and incitements which may bring danger to the country by some media breaking ethics. MRTV News Channel will feature the translated international news to the audiences for knowing knowledge about various events across the world.

The MRTV launched its broadcasting in the Analogue system in 1980 and applied a digital (DVB-T2) system in 2013. Now, it will improve the broadcasting facilities through a digital (DTH) system. So, the State-owned TV broadcasting will have the digitalization process in conformity with the current era as part of efforts to remove the illegal satellite dishes in the nation.

The Senior General looks into the gramophone records players and related equipment.

> As such, the MRTV is the main pillar to the media sector of Myanmar for ensuring peace and stability of the State and socio-economic development of the people. Moreover, it is a media playing a crucial role to nurture the new generation youth to have correct knowledge and thoughts in order to ensure peace, tranquillity and development of the future nation.

As such, the MRTV is the main pillar to the media sector of Myanmar for ensuring peace and stability of the State and socio-economic development of the people. Moreover, it is a media playing a crucial role to nurture the new generation youth to have correct knowledge and thoughts in order to ensure peace, tranquillity and development of the future nation. In addition, efforts must be made for ensuring a strong bridge among the government, the Tatmadaw and the people as much as possible.

Today is time to restore the perpetual peace across the nation to build the Union based on democracy and federalism the entire people aspire. Meanwhile, the government is striving for improvement of socio-economy such as transport, electrification, agriculture, livestock, education and health sectors with might and main to ensure peace and stability of the State, prosperous country and all-round development of the nation. Hence, the entire people need to cooperate with the tasks and the MRTV was urged to strive for serving the interests of the State and the citizens.

Then, the Senior General launched the MRTV News Channel and MRTV DTH system as a gesture of hailing the 1st anniversary of the State Administration Council.

Director-General U Ye Naing of MRTV presented an MRTV DTH receiver and a two-foot satellite dish to the Senior General.

The museum was set as a separate room in the main building of MRTV in Nay Pyi Taw (Tatkon). On 15 February 2021 coincided with the Diamond Jubilee anniversary of MRTV, the Senior General launched the museum. In accord with the guidance of the Senior General, the two-storey building was constructed as the museum to display scale models of buildings used by MRTV, machinery used for TV broadcasting, direct broadcast vehicles and other equipment at 40 booths in line with the prestige of the MTRV which experienced in successive eras. — MNA

The speech on one-year State responsibilities discharged ...

FROM PAGE-1

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw formed with those Hluttaw representatives and Defence Services personnel representatives elect vice-presidents and among them, President of the State. President formed the government and approved the appointment of the Chief Justice of the Union and the Judges of the Supreme Court. As heads and those who participated in the legislative, executive and judicial estates are directly or indirectly elected and assigned through the election, the multiparty democracy general election is the foundation of the democracy and political system of Myanmar. It is very important.

Hence, the election must be genuine and clean as well as able to express the people's desire. I have expressed my opinion to be a "**free and fair election**" related to the 2020 election 24 times at the ceremonies before and after the elections and issued the official press releases. Moreover, the statements were issued for 10,482,116 voting fraud (more than 10 million, which was one-fourth of all voters) scrutinized by the Tatmadaw as of 23 December.

As these voting frauds terribly cause the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy, the Tatmadaw and political parties legally requested the UEC, then the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and then the Government to solve the problem. Without daring to address the voting fraud, the attempts to convene the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 1 February 2021 were designed to forcefully seize the State responsibilities under Section 417 of the Constitution. Consequently, these may cause unprecedented difficulties on the path of democracy of the State. So, the State of Emergency was declared and State responsibilities were taken.

Esteemed ethnic nationals

After taking State responsibilities, our government has undertaken "the reconstitution of the Union Election Commission as the first point of the Five-Point Road Map and carried out the appropriate tasks, including the inspection of the voter lists under the law". In inspecting 315 townships where the election was held, a total of 11,305,390 voting frauds (more than 11.3 million), including casting votes by 4,648,270 persons (more than 4.6 million) without citizenship scrutiny cards, voting of 14,412 persons under 18 years old, 20,566 persons above 100 years, repeated voting of 3,891,611 persons for twice and thrice were found.

Our country has held multiparty democracy elections in 2010 and 2015. Some electoral complaints out of the elections were eased in solving the problems. In the 2020 election, relevant bodies and persons did not dare to address the worse voting frauds. These events caused lessening the emphasis on the exercises of just 10-year multiparty democracy of our country. These were very repulsive attempts. Hence, action is being taken against those who harmed the election under the existing laws. The government is striving for the implementation of the pledge to hold the election as much as possible after the State of Emergency. As it is the general election of the State, it is necessary to arrange casting votes conveniently not to lose the democratic rights. Among 330 townships across the nation, the 2020 election was held in 325 townships, the 2015 election in 323 townships and the 2020 election in 315 townships. In this regard, the number of townships where the election was held the least and it was boisterous dissatisfaction. Only when the election can be held in a peaceful and stable situation will the people cast votes freely. It will be a free and fair election. So, I'd like to urge all the ethnic national people to participate in the endeavours in peace and stability measures of the government.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

I'd like to continue the presentation about the government's political measures after taking State responsibilities:

After declaring the State of Emergency on 1 February 2021, I explained addressing the current political situations under the law to the Hluttaw representatives under monitoring at the Sibin Yeiktha in Nay Pyi Taw and allowed them to be released to their respective regions from 2 to 4 February. It was an act of giving them the right to do things under the law.

The State Administration Council was equally constituted with Tatmadaw members and civilians (including all ethnic nationals) in line with the democratic practices on 2 February. The administration bodies from the state/region level to township/ward/village level under the leadership of the civilians.

The National Unity and Peace Restoration Coordination Committee, the Work Committee and the Coordination Committee were formed to carry out the tasks to ensure national unity and perpetual peace. Our coordination committee has met NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations 16 times, non-NCA signatory EAOs nine times, political parties seven times and the religious leaders and peace negotiators two times, totalling 34.

Tatmadaw issued 20 statements for a ceasefire from 21 December 2018 to 28 February 2022. A joint declaration after the meeting with the Cambodian Prime Minister in early 2022 mentioned that the ceasefire will last for the end of this year.

To be able to do so, I made 17 tours of regions and states, gave instructions and guidance and coordinated measures on the long-term plans of the future. Ethnic national members of the State Administration Council joining hands with us have made 29 trips to respective areas for fulfilling the requirements of these areas.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

Our country is one of the Least Development Countries. Every nation is making efforts in its development. At the same time, we could not stop but endeavour to develop our country by utilizing the human resources and strengths of all ethnic nationals. If we stop other countries will go past our country. Thus, further priorities of our government are: -

Priority will be given to ensure the prosperity of the nation and food sufficiency as **two national tasks**.

As two political processes, we will strengthen the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy and build the Union based on democracy and federalism.

Concerning **measures on the sustainability of peace and sovereignty**, the year 2022 is of great importance. Coming 12th February will be Diamond Jubilee Union Day and the 4th January 2023 will be Diamond Jubilee Independence Day. As such, it is important to ensure the strengthening of the sovereignty of the State and the fruitful development of the nation. So, we would like to start new steps for the restoration of peace this year. As it has been mentioned in the Five-Point Road Map, I have expressed my wish to invite all relevant organizations to talk about peace in my New Year message of greetings in 2022. So, I'd like to add one more that we are always ready for peace.

Federalism is a concept to share the authority with regions, states, ethnics and national races in unison, and it is integration as well as sharing of rights. Political parties, including ethnic parties, are representing the people. Hence, they have diversities, and it is necessary to realize the Proportional Representation (PR) so as to have a wider scale of representation. No matter how different the concepts of federalism are, we have to select the political system in harmony with the country. It is necessary to implement the wish of the majority in democracy as well as to emphasize the wish of the minority. In sharing the three Powers, the power must be shared among the Union, regions and states under the Constitution to enable the regions and states to have the rights of self-administration under the Constitution.

Thanks to exercising the PR system, ethnic national people would have to get more representation at the legislative Hluttaw as well as would have rights of expression. Moreover, they have to enjoy the right of effectively serving the interests of their regions and ethnic nationals.

In building the Union based on democracy and federalism, the Union Election Commission held meetings with political parties and interested persons four times to exercise the Proportional Representation-PR for all ethnic nationals from regions and states to enjoy the equal term of rights.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

There were 4,648,270 voters without citizenship scrutiny cards in the 2020 election. Hence, the "Pankhinn" project is being implemented as an operation starting from 3 May 2021 to issue household registration and any identity to all (legal citizens) inclusive of the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law. Among 3,491,364 people (more than 3.4 million) to be registered, the cards have been issued to 1,905,843 people (about two million) till 21 January 2022, accounting for 55 per cent. The registration period will last for 18 months.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

Regarding foreign relations of our country:

Our government upholds the active independent and non-aligned foreign policy aimed at world peace and friendly relations with nations and the principles of peaceful coexistence among nations. It is clearly mentioned in Section 41 of the Constitution. I have been focusing on good international relations in the first one-year period. On my first trip, I attended the ASEAN Leader Summit held in Jakarta of Indonesia on 24 April 2021. As the second trip, I left for Russia for the 9th International Security Conference held in Russia from 20 to 27 June 2021 and the ceremony to confer the honorary professor of the Military Academy of Russia on me. Our Myanmar has friendly countries only but enemy countries. Even though the country is hostile to our country, we will strive for changing their mindsets and to enhance friendship as much as possible.

We decide to establish peaceful and friendly neighbouring relations to be perpetually tranquil and stable border regions in relations with the neighbouring countries. We will sustain further strengthening of good neighbouring relations which has been existed in successive eras.

In early this year, the meeting focused on the five-point consensus of the ASEAN Leader Meeting on the goodwill visit of the Cambodian Prime Minister to Myanmar. We discussed the suspension of terrorism by those involved in the terrorrist acts and enhancement of the peace process among ethnic armed organizations-EAOs. Moreover, we will accept the plan to cooperate in the provision of humanitarian aid of ASEAN. Hence, the visit brought good and significant results to the country. The joint declaration related to the visit has been released.

In holding talks with the ASEAN al-

ternate chair through videoconferencing on 26 January, we discussed the participation of Myanmar in the ASEAN, needs of ASEAN countries to do constructive cooperation, plans of Myanmar to do the best cooperation, sending of ASEAN special envoy to Myanmar and the visit of the UN Secretary-General's special envoy to Myanmar. I'd like to inform the people that we will cooperate with the international community without harming the sovereignty of the State, national interests and the future plans of the government.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

In respect of the situation of peace and stability measures before Tatmadaw has taken State responsibilities-

It was the situation opposing the UEC for its absence to address the voting frauds and requests of political parties to solve them. So, it was a time of political instability. As the request of 203 Hluttaw representatives to discuss the unfinished issues at the Second Hluttaw so as to solve the voting frauds under the Constitution was refused in accord with Section 84 of the Constitution, the legislative estate started deterioration and then the stability was lost through the disputes.

After Tatmadaw has taken State responsibilities,

The State of Emergency was politically declared, and State responsibilities were taken. From 1 to 3 February, no protest was staged across the nation. As of 4 February, 20 protesters staged the CDM activity by organizing departmental personnel who broke ethics in front of the University of Medicine in Mandalay.

On 5 February, those who had no right to standing as Hluttaw representatives formed an unlawful committee namely the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) and transformed the situations from the riots to the anarchic mobs. Security forces managed to control it with the least strength at the lowest level. The terrorist group CRPH named the 27 March as the Public Revolution Day and mobilized the occurrence of the terror attacks across the nation. It started terrorism to cause utter devastation. The unlawful CRPH formed the parallel government called NUG to provide assistance for terrorist attacks and to lead these movements.

Extremist NLD members and their followers utilize the youths to urge them to attend the military training in EAO areas such as KNU, KIA and KNPP areas. CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorist groups declared the acceleration of terrorist acts on 7 September and committed terrorist attacks as war crimes in some parts of Chin State, Magway Region, Sagaing Region and Kayah State. Those crime-committing terrorists staying among civilians perpetrate attacks. So the Tatmadaw, in difficulty, controlled the tasks not to harm the innocent people. Those terrorists commit attacks with the use of homemade mines and bombs on a wider scale with the training and assistance of some EAOs.

Due to acts of terrorists, a large number of public and government buildings, including 525 roads and bridges, 27 hospitals and clinics, 504 schools and educational buildings were destroyed across the nation from 1 February 2021 to 20 January 2022. With regard to casualties, 20 members of the Sangha and 95 government service personnel were dead in the incidents and civilians, including 153 government service personnel, were injured. There were 9,437 terrorist attacks the whole year with seizures of 5,606 assorted arms, 161,556 rounds of ammunition, 1,890 grenades and 11,424 homemade mines and bombs in addition to arresting 4,338 terrorists.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

I'd like to explain measures on the education sector.

Every country accepts that human resource is crucial for the sustainable development of the nation. The human resource depends on "knowledge". According to Section 28 of our Constitution (2008), the State shall implement the compulsory primary education system. Section 366 stipulates "Every citizen, in accord with the educational policy laid down by the Union: (a) has the right to education; and (b) shall be given basic education which the Union prescribed by law as compulsory".

According to our interim census enumerated in 2019, there were some 18.2 million adults above 25 years who missed the chance to learn the middle school education and lower level, which was one-third of the total population of the nation. Hence, emphasis is being placed on the enhancement of the education sector. There are 6,178 basic education high schools, 15,877 basic education middle schools, and 25,705 basic education primary schools, totalling 47,760 across the nation. These schools were closed due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. As now we can control the COVID-19 pandemic, schools have been reopened. In so doing, a total of 5,209 basic education high schools, 12,786 basic education middle schools and 21,247 basic education primary schools, totally of 39,242 have been reopened. At the opening of the schools, more than 80 per cent of the enrolled ones are attending the schools. As declared, we will hold the final examination in the last week of March and the first week of April. So, I'd like to inform the students and parents not to lose their rights in the delay of attending the schools. We are welcoming to all. Learning the education is not for the government but the improvement of their lives. In this regard, so-called NUG, CRPH and PDF terrorists commit incitements not to attend the schools, causing the offspring of the people uneducated and the nation and the people enslaved.

The government is striving for arranging the plans for all school-age children to finish the learning of KG+9 (middle school level). Only when they complete the KG+9 level can they change learning to vocational training. The KG+9 is just an educational aim of the government. As education is playing a key role in Myanmar's democracy and future of the nation, citizens need to emphasize not missing the chance of learning.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

I'd like to present measures of the health sector.

About the health sector, my policy is that "if one is healthy, one can work. If one is healthy, one can learn". As such, health is playing a pivotal role among the people. COVID-19 pandemic was found in our country on 23 March 2020. During the highest infection period in the third and fourth weeks of July, some 5,000 people on average were infected per day, accounting for 41 per cent. I adopted the policy that "Do it speedily and practically; nothing is more important than the human life". Our government performed prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19 in various ways day and night.

Led by myself, the meetings of the Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 were held 13 times to coordinate with region and state chief ministers through videoconferencing to arrange the necessary logistic measures. The COVID-19 control and response committee meetings were led by the Deputy Prime Minister three times a week to closely fulfil the requirements.

To cut off the chains of COVID-19 infection, a total of 119 townships were declared as stay-at-home locations. At present, all those townships have been removed from the list of stay-at-home programmes. Now, there is no township in the stay-at-home programme. Our government could overcome criticism and disturbances of the international community and destructionists. At present, the infectious percentage of COVID-19 is found around one per cent.

Regarding the spending of the fund of out prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, US$ 75 million was spent on the purchase of 15.4 million doses of vaccine from India, US$193.9 million on 29 million doses of vaccine from the People's Republic of China and US$7.74 million on 0.6 million doses from Russian, totalling US$276.64 million. A total of 9.2 million doses of vaccine worth US$63.5 million was accepted from China, 5.5 million doses worth US$35.5 million from India, 0.4 million doses worth US$5.16 million from Russia, and two million doses worth US$17 million from Sasakawa (Nippon Foundation), totalling 17.1 million doses of vaccines worth US$121.12 million. Moreover, Cambodia and Thailand also donated COVID-19 protective equipment. We acknowledged all and thanked them.

The cost of transporting the vaccine was estimated at US$1.97 million and more than K246.531 million. A total of US$278.608 million and K246.532 million were spent on the purchase of the COVID-19 vaccine. The Department of Medical Services has expended more than K28 billion and the Department of Public Health spent K36 billion on the purchase of medicines and equipment required for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. Of K60.3 billion expended to upgrade hospitals used in COVID-19 prevention and treatment activities, K12.23 billion were used to purchase emergency oxygen supplies and related devices which are critical for COVID-19 patients. A total of K27.12 billion (K23.12 billion from the COVID-19 central committee and K4 billion from the Ministry of Health) were spent on the total cost of food for COVID-19 patients. Although the COVID-19 vaccination coverage was expected to be 50 per cent completed by December, 51 per cent have been administered, and to date, 53 per cent have been vaccinated.

There are 1,077 hospitals and 11,427 clinics in Myanmar. Of them, 765 hospitals and 7,430 clinics are operational. There are 14,678 doctors and 105,834 medical staff appointed nationwide. Some of them left their jobs due to political extremism irrespective of the lives and health of the people. Therefore, our government recognizes those healthcare workers who served their patients responsibly and faithfully without abandoning them amid the COVID-19 crisis. Members of the Tatmadaw Medical Corps also provided medical assistance at various hospitals and provided medical treatment to the civilians at various military hospitals. Also, retired health professionals and retired members of the Tatmadaw Medical Corps assisted in where necessary. The government awarded K10,944,545,000 (K10.94 billion) in recognition of their healthcare services to health workers.

Our government signed agreements on 31-7-2021 and 27-9-2021 to purchase the China-made Sinopharm vaccine in a ready-to-fill bulk system. Production will begin in February and about 10 million doses will be produced in 2022. As a result, the vaccine can cost at half the original price. At the end of the year 2021, Omicron, a new strain of COVID-19, was discovered from returnees abroad on 28 December 2021. As of 29-1-2022, 283 people were diagnosed with the Omicron variant. Therefore, it is important not to be careless about COVID-19 and adhere to the set rules of personal protection.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

I'd like to put forward measures on the economic sector before Tatmadaw takes over State responsibilities. During the first term of the democratic government, four economic policies were implemented, with significant reforms for people-centred development. In early 2013, US$5.956 billion in debt relief through talks with members of the Paris Club. The average GDP growth rate over the five years was 7.26 per cent, with foreign investment reaching US$11,628.1 million in foreign currencies ($11.63 billion) and an external trade deficit of $12,096.88 million (over 12.09 billion).

During the second five-year term of the democratic government, foreign investment authorization projects dropped to US$1.8 billion in the last financial year 2019-2020, with GDP growth averaging 3.38 per cent.

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The foreign investment amounted to $14,961.3 million in foreign currencies ($14.96 billion) with a trade deficit of US$12,614.17 million (over $12.61 billion).

After the military take-over,

International sanctions, domestic economic situation and foreign incitement have eroded trust in the banking sector and made it harder for the bank to operate, causing difficulties for businesspersons and traders to make payments and merchandise. Due to the depreciation of Myanmar Kyat amid the global COVID-19 outbreak, higher prices in transport and imports (fuel and raw materials) and a drop in demand occurred in the market.

To stabilize the exchange rate and to stock foreign currency required in the market, US$508.8 million was sold to importers of the fuel, edible oil, anti-COVID medical supplies, electric and telecommunication sectors through a special foreign exchange auction rate until 21-1-2022. From the financial year 2016-2017 to the first four months of the financial year 2020-2021, there was a trade deficit of US$12,614.17 million (over US$12.61 billion). During the term of our government, according to the Foreign Trade Statistics in the financial year 2020-2021, export value was US$15.36 billion and import value was US$14.69 billion. As the trade value had registered US$30.05 billion, the trade surplus was pegged at more than US$677 million.

In the first term of the democratic government, there was a total of K16,273 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2011-2012; K18,125 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2012-2013; K21,575 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2013-2014; K22,032 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2014-2015; K27,970 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2015-2016.

In the second term of the democratic government, there was a total of K28,861 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2016-2017; K34,698 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2017-2018; K35,550 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2018 (six-month); K40,749 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2018-2019; K47,636 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2019-2020; K52,488 billion in domestic and external debts in the financial year 2020-2021 (six-month).

Domestic and foreign debts have been increasing year by year, and in the long run, we shall need to consider debt resilience, and long-term measures are being taken to recover the declining national economy.

There is a great need for supporting local products to reduce imports and create job opportunities. For example, if the country's cement plants could work, they could produce more than just domestic sufficiency, however, US$73.610 million were spent on the import of 956,825 tonnes of cement in 2021. Despite the availability of raw materials such as limestone, iron, coal, and dolomites, which can be used to produce cement and steel, the lack of encouragement, support or effort to operate factories make us order them from abroad. We have also lost job opportunities in the country and our nationals have to work abroad. Citizens who are working in foreign countries have to live under the rules and regulations of those countries. They need to live in others' shadows. They need to work and live happily and safely under the umbrella of our country. Therefore, we need to support our domestic products. In our government term, we are working to reopen iron and steel plants, which were previously shut down. We will work to produce at least steel rods and steel coils used in construction. In 2021, the import of oil, including cooking palm oil, was 858,685.271 tonnes worth US$866.711 million. Therefore, we will work to ensure local oil security and to reduce imports from abroad.

Our country has an estimated population of 55 million. In terms of health, the minimum daily consumption of oil is 2.2 ticals per person, which is approximately eight visses of cooking oil per year, and 0.7 million tonnes of oil consumption in our country. As our country produces edible oil crops like groundnut, sesame, sunflower, soya-bean and palm oil our people are consuming oil more than the minimum amount. Over consuming oil will not only increase the cost individually but affect the individual health and national health as well. Therefore, awareness-raising campaigns are being conducted on the healthy consumption of edible oil to change food consumption and thereby to increase per capita income.

Similarly, I'd like to inform you about fuel consumption. There are over one million cars and six million motorcycles in our country. In 2021, over 4.12 million tonnes of fuel worth US$2,496.652 million were imported. This is due to the weak public transportation system in our country, so people have to rely on their vehicles. This issue needs to be addressed by promoting the use of public transport such as trains, buses, ships, and by reducing individual fuel consumption. Our government is also working to improve the services of public transport. I'd like to urge the public to contribute to the development of the nation by using their fuel consumption sparingly. For example, six million motorcycles could save 125,000 gallons by reducing fuel consumption by half a tin a day. Similarly, one million cars could save 125,000 gallons by reducing fuel consumption by half a bottle per day. At an average price of K6,000 per gallon, it can be reduced to K1.5 billion per day. We need to work together for this and the development of our country.

Access to electricity greatly contributes to the socio-economic development of the country. In our country, natural resources such as water, sun, and wind are existing. Although the cost of investing in the implementation of hydropower projects is high, and the cost can be accurately calculable, the returns are incalculable. In our country, except for the rainy areas, the sunny days in the whole country are 200 to 250 days per year. Therefore, if we could build sufficient solar power plants, it will be able to meet the electricity needs of the country. Although solar power energy is a huge investment for various reasons, the construction time is short and the cost savings are high. If we generate more hydropower, solar power and use low-level LED-based electrical appliances which require lower electricity consumption, it will reduce the amount of our need to import fuel.

The COVID-19 pandemic causes negative impacts upon the economic growth of many countries. In response to the pandemic, our country has also built the K200 billion COVID Fund to address the impacts on the country's economy from which business people can withdraw loans. The duration of the loan repayment has been extended to the next six months totalling one year now.

During the outbreak of the pandemic, the agriculture and livestock-based economies play a key role despite the decrease in some other business sectors.

Our country is an agricultural and livestock-based nation. There are about 70 per cent of rural people who operate agricultural and livestock breeding businesses. Therefore, it needs "pedigree, soil, water and technique", which are essentials to improve the production rate in the agricultural sector and we develop proper farmland by combining the natural fertilizer and chemical fertilizers to gain such good pedigrees and also arrange for water and proper farming techniques. Being an agricultural country, the country emphasizes local food security and higher export volume than before. The government also upgrades the regions/states agricultural schools into institutes and colleges to emerge the intellectuals, experts and skilled persons for modern farming industries.

In the Livestock Show and Contest to mark Diamond Jubilee Union Day organized in Nay Pyi Taw, the cattle, including goats and sheep, across the nation participated in the contest. We can see good pedigrees among the local, mixed and foreign categories.

When the food is rare in summer, the local products such as corn, maize, grass and hay and other animal feeds are produced well and if we expand that sector, it will bring benefits to the farmers. If we breed systematically, it will also benefit the country and so I would like to add that we should work hard to produce modern livestock breeding experts.

More than 70 per cent of Myanmar population are living in rural areas and the government has to apply effective ways to reduce the poverty and narrow the gap between the regions.

Supporting locally-made products, we made efforts to encourage local products and reduce imports that can be produced in the country. We reopen the businesses and we permit the imports of raw materials and the export for locally-made finished products without the need for an export licence under the relaxing programmes. And as there are delays in the sea route, we eased the import sector for border trade camps. Between 1 February to November 2021, we permitted 27 industries of 12 foreign investments worth US$3,552.396 million under the Myanmar Investment Law, while 37 industries of 12 local investors worth K332,966.380 million were granted.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

I'd like to highlight social affairs. Before Tatmadaw takes State responsibilities,

Religious organizations such as Ma Ba Tha, an organization for the protection of race and religion and other organizations that run religious affairs and Parahitas were demolished for various reasons. The pagodas and religious buildings were also closed under the reason of COVID-19 and the propaganda was spread as the State economy declined due to the monks.

Myanmar traditional cultures such as singing, dancing, composing and playing instruments are National Treasures. Previously, the combined dance with Myanmar traditional dance became popular and Myanma culture reached its dangerous level. The religious and cultural arenas were destroyed due to the dance wearing shoes on the terrace of the Shwedagon Pagoda. The moral values of young people regarding Myanma customs and traditions like being faithful to elders, respecting peers and sympathizing with younger ones are also destroyed using online media.

About 87 per cent of our population are Buddhists. During the term of the previous government, they restricted the religious training courses for young students and added the sex education lessons that affect Myanma culture. We need to protect religion from being confused with politics, and we need to conduct systematic measures in order to keep our religion clean and bright. It has infiltrated politicians to the point of concealing the true history and inciting hatred against the military among the youths.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,
After Tatmadaw took State responsibilities,

Tatmadaw reopened the pagodas, religious buildings of other religions, which were closed for the reason of COVID-19, to the public starting 8 February 2021 in line with the COVID-19 health rules. Depending on the conditions, we permitted the mass gathering and ceremonies following the rules.

The State Administration Council currently works hard in implementing State stability and genuine democracy in line with the five-point roadmap. It also released pardons for those who were prosecuted at the respective courts of the nation for participating in protests due to the incitements of CRPH and NUG terrorist groups and political extremists on humanitarian grounds, to ease the griefs of the public and participate in the building of nation on the significant days: a total of 47,879 inmates – 23,369 inmates on 12-2-2021, Union Day, 23,184 inmates on 17-4-2021, Myanmar New Year, 1,316 inmates on 18-10-2021, full moon day of Thadingyut and 10 inmates on 20-11-2021. The government will also arrange for those who do not destroy public security and State stability on certain significant days.

The day, 12 February 2022, is our Diamond Jubilee Union Day. The government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will celebrate Diamond Jubilee Union Day on a grand scale for all ethnic nationals with two points (1) to strengthen the Union Spirit and (2) to accelerate the peacemaking processes.

Our government will undertake three phases step by step — drafting the processes to strengthen the Union Spirit, forming the organizations consisting of ethnic nationals and implementing tasks practically.

We instituted the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs to protect the rights of ethnic nationals. We also arrange to hold the 23rd performing arts competitions Contest (singing, dancing, composing, instrument playing competition) in October 2022 to preserve the national characteristics following the culture and traditions of the ethnic people.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

I'd like to present further State responsibilities to be discharged according to the current situation of the country:-

-I have already clarified current political issues, security, economy, social affairs and future work plans of the country.

When the government declared State Emergency and took State responsibilities under Section 417 of the Constitution, we put all our hearts and souls into the State responsibilities but we encountered domestic/foreign interferences.

Esteemed ethnic nationals,

The strength of our country within us. We believe and rely on the internal strength of our country.

Our internal strength within our country can enhance our development tasks even though it is necessary to get external assistance.

In the first, our economy will be developed by our internal strength. We have abundant natural resources and human resources. We have weakness in the socio-economic development of the people as we have been relying on external products or import rather than our domestic production.

Secondly, we will build our political strength internally. Building a Union and multiparty democratic system based on democracy and federalism will certainly enhance our political strength.

Thirdly, the defence capability of the country should be strengthened with the participation of all ethnic national people. With united strength both in weals and woes, we all will build the defence capability of our country with modern military prowess (Army, Navy and Air).

I'd like to call for consideration and participation of all ethnic national people.

In concluding,

Full of responsibility and accountability, the Government will make its concerted efforts for the country and people.

The perpetuation of the country and defence services for the people and country is the greatest responsibility of the Tatmadaw.

I pledge a "genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system" and "building a Union based on democracy and federalism".

The Government is exerting efforts to implement its commitments. I called for the entire people to cooperate with us so as to achieve a better future for the country and people.

I reiterate our wishes for the good health and well-being of all ethnic nationals.

Thank You

National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar holds meeting 1/2022

(CONTINUED FROM YESTERDAY)

In the progress of vaccination, 60,596,400 doses of vaccine have been distributed to the Ministry of Health, the Tatmadaw and private organizations and 40,856,000 doses of vaccine have been given to the people till 29 January. A total of 18,792,099 persons have received vaccines twice, 3,271,802 persons once and 21,668 persons booster doses. So, more than 53 per cent of the people have received vaccines at least once. Myanmar plans to produce the Sinopharm vaccine through the Ready to Fill Bulk system. In February 2022, the production process will start. A plan is underway to manufacture 10 million doses of vaccine in 2022.

Omicron variant was found at foreign returnees on 28 December 2021. Till 28 January, a total of 283 patients with Omicron virus were found.

Efforts are being made to soonest remedy the businesses which faced loss in the COVID-19 through various ways and means. K166.6463 billion was disbursed to businesses for the resurgence of businesses to 6,334 companies and enterprises. The recovery committee allowed loans for 116 companies and enterprises on 28 January 2022 to provide financial assistance to artistes and media persons. Arrangements are being made to upgrade schools of agriculture in regions and states to colleges and institutes.

The State Administration Council on 17 February 2021 formed three committees related to peace. These were the National Unity and Peace Restoration Coordination Committee led by himself, the Work Committee led by the Vice-Senior General and the coordination committee led by Lt-Gen Yar Pyae. The Senior General recounted that he said his 2022 New Year message of greetings, saying that "We will start new steps for peace this year. As it has been expressed in the fourth point of the five-point road map, we invite all relevant organizations for peace talks."

Political parties and interested persons held four meetings with the UEC for implementing the Proportional Representation-PR for the creation of equal terms of rights to regions and states in building the Union based on democracy and federalism.

In implementing the nine objectives, political parties represent their supporter people.

The Senior General puts forward the report regarding the extension of State of Emergency at the meeting 1/2022 of the National Defence and Security Council in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 January.

There are some ethnic parties and region-wise parties. The PR system will be implemented for enabling the political parties to represent ethnic nationals. Three powers of sovereignty will be shared with regions and states to have the right of self-administration under the constitution.

The first trip of the State Administration Council Chairman was to attend the ASEAN Leader Meeting held in Jakarta of Indonesia on 24 April 2021. The second trip was bound to Russia to attend the 9th International Security Conference from 20 to 27 June 2021. The government decided to further cement the friendly relations with neighbouring countries which has been existing for successive eras.

In holding talks with the ASEAN alternate chair, both sides discussed the suspension of terrorism for holding talks, the difference between ethnic armed organizations and terrorists, the invitation to them to participate in the peace process in Myanmar. Moreover, both sides plan to cooperate in the provision of the humanitarian aid of ASEAN.

The working visit of the Cambodian Prime Minister on 7 and 8 January 2022 brought good results to Myanmar.

SEE PAGE-10

2 FEBRUARY 2022
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Lessen air pollution to create a healthy environment for people

AIR pollution is based on the emission of dangerous gases, including carbon dioxide, above the limited levels from industries and vehicles despite the development of industries and improvement of living standards of the people.

Moreover, the lessening of the forest areas, which are the factors to purify the atmosphere in which increasing volume of oxygen mostly emitted by trees occupies the spaces of carbon dioxide and other dangerous gases, is one of the basic factors to cause air pollution.

> In order to decline air pollution, factories and vehicles need to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide for enhancement of the public health conditions. On the other hand, all the entire people need to conserve the forests and trees which purify the atmosphere.

Ozone gas mist, carbon monoxide, sulpha dioxide and nitrogen dioxide cause air pollution in the atmosphere, according to the World Health Organization. These gases may be toxic to the bodies of humans.

As a result, such toxicity affects respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases, neurological and psychological diseases as well as eyes and skin disorders. Moreover, patients attacked by the above-mentioned emissions may suffer from asthma and lung cancer diseases.

Significantly, household air pollution may severely harm the health of the family members. Generally, most of the families in Myanmar use firewood for cooking, mosquito repellent and coils and joss sticks at their homes in addition to smoke of the cigarette. As a result, the bad smell from these smokes brings unhealthiness to the family members, especially to older persons and children.

Indeed, air pollution causes bad impacts on the natural environment as well as underground water and soil. Such an event may decline the growth rate of trees and the birthing of biodiversity species. Moreover, climate change such as changes in temperature and happening of greenhouse occurrences are based on air pollution.

Most of the worsening air pollution events can be seen in the populous major cities such as Yangon and Mandalay where a lot of factories and industries are mushrooming. Moreover, the rural areas where local people use firewood and charcoal for cooking face the disadvantages of household air pollution.

In order to decline air pollution, factories and vehicles need to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide for enhancement of the public health conditions. On the other hand, all the entire people need to conserve the forests and trees which purify the atmosphere.

At opportune times, local authorities need to raise public awareness of the disadvantage of air pollution and the important role of trees to generate oxygen which the people need daily. As such, the environment of the people especially the atmosphere will be free from the impacts of air pollution.

■ ■ ■

A Glimpse of the International Law

By U Khin Maung (A retired diplomat)

Activists organized a nationwide protest on 30 June 2018 to demand the Trump administration reunite families, and end family separation and detention at the border **PHOTO: AFP /FILE**

1. Please let me be honest. I am not an international law expert. The international law is so wide, so delicate and so demanding a subject that, I believe, only the highly qualified jurists and eminent scholars shall have all the credentials and the capabilities to write it, comprehensively, competently and convincingly. It is quite a task. Nevertheless, I hope you'll be good enough to let me present just a glimpse of international law from a law student's point of view. In saying "a law student's point of view", believe me, I really mean it in the literal sense of the phrase. And on this point, I think, you may wish to ask me; why do you, an oldie, a retired civil servant, consider yourself a law student? My answer is: simply because I am still giving my time to studying a few subjects I am interested in. And, of course, international law is a subject that I like to study for my own academic interest. Still, I think, you might wish to shoot me another question. Why, despite your age, do you keep on learning? Again, my answer is, because I believe that there is no end to the learning process; in other words, because I believe, "no educative process is, ever the end; it is always the beginning of more education, more learning, more living". Well, on the question of the process of learning, may I ask you, my dear reader, to have your opinion? What do you say? I wonder. Now, let's say something about the topic.

> Well, now, the sovereign equality of states: I firmly believe it is the cardinal principle of international law. With a view to reinvigorating the principles of international law, concerning friendly relations and cooperation among states in accordance with the UN Charter, the 25th session of the United Nations General Assembly solemnly proclaimed them under its resolution, GA 2625 (XXV).....

What is international law?

2. International law is the "law of nations" or a body of rules that govern inter-state relations. International law treats all states the same; no matter what they are – big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak. Hence the principle: equality before the law. States are subjects of international law. States are to follow and abide by international law and international law is not for the states to take into their own hands and abuse to their advantage. For being subjects of international law, states have international personalities. By virtue of this, states have rights to enjoy and duties to fulfil under international law. On the other hand, there is also a growing concept that under international law individuals and corporations, too, have rights and duties in certain situations. And yet there is another widely accepted view that, after all, it is the states that have to represent the individuals and corporations in their relations with their counterparts.

3. In the widest possible sense, international law may be classified into two kinds: customary international law and conventional international law. The customary international law is that type of law that is based upon the well-established age-old customs, traditions and certain rules of conduct, which the modern states have accepted to be binding on them and which they have also agreed as to their enforceability by appropriate means in case of their violations. Conventional international law is that branch of law, which takes as its source the agreements, decisions, and resolutions, reached upon and adopted by the international conventions and/or the multilateral treaties. For example, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, etc.

The role of international law in today's world

4. With the increasing popularity and worldwide application of Information and Communication Technology-ICT — the world is being regarded as a single community or a global village. And in this global village of ours, we come to have swifter, easier and more convenient contacts and communications with each other, states with states; peoples with peoples. Thus, states become more and more interdependent and interactive. As such, each state has obviously become "a member in the family of nations". So, in this ICT age, I think, international law has come to have a more active and important role to play as it becomes central to the international community concerns. In this connection, I think, "the doctrine of incorporation" should be explained in brief- "the doctrine of incorporation" is the principle recognized by many states that the international law is part of i.e. incorporated into the laws of the land. Consequently, the courts take judicial notice of it. The constitutions of a number of states expressly provide for the adoption of the generally accepted principles of international law as part of the law of the land.

5. Well, now, the sovereign equality of states: I firmly believe it is the cardinal principle of international law. With a view to reinvigorating the principles of international law, concerning friendly relations and cooperation among states in accordance with the UN Charter, the 25th session of the United Nations General Assembly solemnly proclaimed them under its resolution, GA 2625 (XXV). It was simply called General Assembly Declaration. The principles thus proclaimed include inter alia the following: -

The principle concerning the duty not to intervene in matters which fall within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.

The duty of states to cooperate with one another.

The principle of equal rights and self-determination of the peoples.

The principle of sovereign equality of states.

On the principle of sovereign equality of states, the Declaration stressed that: -

States enjoy sovereign equality. They have equal rights and duties and they are equal members of the international community, notwithstanding differences of an economic, political or other nature. In particular, sovereign equality includes the following elements: -

(1) All states are juridically equal.
(2) Each state enjoys the rights inherent in full sovereignty.
(3) Each state has the duty to respect the personality of other states.
(4) The territorial integrity and political independence of the state are inviolable.
(5) Each state has the right to freely choose and develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems.
(6) Each state has the duty to comply fully and in good faith with its international obligations and to live in peace with other states.

6. The General Assembly Declaration also proclaimed that the principles of the UN Charter should constitute the basic principles of international law. It further appealed to all states to be guided by these principles in their international conduct and to develop their mutual relations on the basis of their strict observance.

7. Well, the aforementioned are just a gist of the principles of the international law proclaimed by the General Assembly Declaration – GA2625 (XXV). But all these principles, if I may have to express my own opinion, should not remain mere solemn proclamations in the UN resolution, nor mere splendid words recorded in UN documents. Each and every principle should be strictly and unreservedly followed and observed by all states in good faith. Moreover, I would also like to say, if a law or a principle is to be followed, it must be followed "not only to the letter of the law but also to the spirit as well". Then, states shall treat each other with mutual respect and the rule of law shall prevail in inter-state relations. And then and only then, I think, the undesirable tendencies of "some countries to sit in judgement over others, and the big to bully the small, the rich to oppress the poor, and the strong to lord it over the weak" shall disappear from this earth once and for all. I hope you'll agree with me. What do you say, my dear reader?

Sources:
The International law, a treatise by L. Oppenheim.
Diplomatic Handbook, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
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National Objectives of Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022

(1) All ethnic nationals to safeguard non-disintegration of the Union, national unity and sovereignty forever
(2) To perpetually ensure strengthening dynamic Union Spirit which is a genuine patriotic spirit
(3) To further strive for the perpetual existence of the country through strong and united strength of all ethnic national brethren
(4) To build the Union based on democracy and federalism in the realization of genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy
(5) To equalize development of all regions and states while making efforts for the enhancement of health, education and job opportunities of the ethnic nationals

Motto of 75th Anniversary Union Day 2022

*** Unity is strength: Ethnic nationals join hands as strengths of the Union**

861 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 1 February, total figure rises to 536,393

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 536,393 after 861 new cases were reported on 1 February 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 513,416 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at 19,310 without casualties for nine consecutive days. However, the positivity rate becomes high.—MNA

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 1 February 2022)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay of Bengal and generally fair elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.
FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 2 February 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Kachin State and isolated in Upper Sagaing Region. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region and Northern Shan, Chin States and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.
STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.
OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin State.
FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 February 2022: Generally fair weather.
FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 February 2022: Generally fair weather.
FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 February 2022: Generally fair weather.

National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar holds meeting 1/2022

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The joint declaration was released for the visit. Both sides discussed the participation of Myanmar in ASEAN, constructive attitude of ASEAN countries, efforts of Myanmar for the best cooperation, sending of ASEAN special envoy to Myanmar and the plan of UNSG's special envoy to Myanmar. The government decided to cooperate with the international community without harming the sovereignty of the State and future tasks. The Senior General also highlighted the implementation of the economic objectives in operating livestock and agriculture tasks.

Concerning rural development, the Senior General said: "More than 70 per cent of some 55 million population of the nation are rural people, and 30.2 per cent of whom are at the lower level of the poverty rate. The rural areas are suffering from the impacts of poverty. Hence, the government steadfastly strives for using effective ways to alleviate the poverty rate of rural people and narrow the development gap between urban and rural areas so as to improve the socio-economic status of the people. The government is undertaking the implementation of emerald green village project in regions and states for the development of rural areas, digging of lakes and sinking underground water in rural areas, upgrade of 80 per cent of rural roads to be all-season use ones in 2030 under the rural road development strategy, community-based rural vocational development projects, rural manufacturing roads, bridges and rural housings."

The Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development was formed on 17 June 2021 for improving the socio-economic life of rural people and enabling them to socio-economic infrastructures and services. Moreover, districts will be extended in appropriate areas of regions and states in addition to the existing 75 districts for giving effective services to the people in the administrative mechanism.

In connection with the international cooperation, 17 economic issues were proposed to be prioritized when Cambodia takes the ASEAN alternate chair in 2022. These will be set as a living document. Cambodia is planning to submit a proposal on the financial sector. Moreover, 138 tasks under the prioritized programmes will be implemented in 2022 in shaping the ASEAN Economic Community 2025. A total of 33 agreements, MoUs and others were signed to enhance the cooperation with China and Myanmar during the visits of the Chinese President in 2020. Although Myanmar-Japan cooperation projects were suspended due to the outbreak of COVId-19, emphasis is being placed on the return of Japanese to Myanmar for resuming the projects, smooth process of arrivals, and loans for agriculture, livestock, education, health and human resources. Preparations are being made to hold the Myanmar-Russian business matching.

During the period from 1 February to November 2021, a foreign investment worth US$3.55 billion was approved for 27 businesses from 12 sectors and K332.96 billion of citizen's investments for 37 businesses of 12 sectors.

Concerning the strong and dynamic Union spirit for implementation of the social objective, the Senior General pledged to organize the Diamond Jubilee Union Day on a grand scale

In realizing the preservation of national cultural characters and following the customs of all ethnic nationals, a plan is underway to resume the 23rd Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competitions in October 2022 to preserve the traditional culture.

Regarding health and fitness of the entire nationals and uplift of education qualification, emphasis is being placed on educational investment. It was found that about 18.2 million of the population could learn middle education and lower level according to the interim census in 2019. There are 6.178 basic education high schools, 15,877 middle schools and 25,705 primary schools, totalling 47,760 in the entire nation. Among them, 39,242 schools have been reopened from the closure of them in the outbreak of COVID-19. Some schools could not be reopened due to CDM activities of some education staff and terror attacks. Now, 4,225,887 students at different levels are attending the schools. A total of 297,904 basic education teachers are serving their duties, and the government will honour them as much as possible. The government is striving for school-age children to complete learning of KG+9 level. Only when the students complete the KG+9 education, can they change learning of vocational training and then to high school education and higher education.

In eradicating the narcotic drugs, drug traffickers target the schools. The authorities seized narcotic drugs and related materials worth more than K9.727 billion in 6,444 cases and arrested 9,249 female and male suspects from 1 February 2021 to 21 January 2022.

In respect of continuous discharging the State duty according to the current situation of the nation, the Senior General said he has briefly submitted the presentation on current political, security, economic and social affairs of the State and future plans. The government faced internal and external disturbances despite serving the duties of the State under Section 417 of the Constitution as much as possible after politically declaring the State of Emergency. In reviewing the current situations, the wish of internal/external saboteurs and their supporter persons and organizations leads to the utter devastation of Myanmar rather than democracy. Currently, terror attacks and destruction happen in some parts of Chin State and the Sagaing Region. And, it is necessary to appoint ward and village administrators in some townships of the nation. So, there remain many tasks in future to convene the free and fair multiparty democracy general election under Section 429 of the Constitution. So, the Senior General said that he would like to submit the report to extend six more months to extend the State of Emergency under the political trend in accord with Section 425 of the Constitution. During the period, emphasis will especially be placed on peace and stability of the State, security of public life, and peace issue. Only when the entire people cooperate in the tasks, will the people's desire "genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy" reach the right track.

The government full of responsibility and accountability pledged to make utmost efforts for serving the interests of the State and the people. The Senior General granted all for implementation of the "genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy" and "building the Union based on democracy and federalism". All the people were urged to participate in shaping a good future for the State and the people.

Then, Pro Tem President U Myint Swe started discussions on a six-month extension of the State of Emergency in accord with Section 425 of the Constitution and the members of the Council participated in the discussions and agreed on it.

In his supplementary discussions, the Senior General said, "In the past period, we controlled the conflicts with least bleeding and the least grudge. Especially, I honestly admit that we could not totally protect most of the people. It is because members of the Myanmar Police Force and Tatmadaw members were deployed in necessary sites across the nation. Terror acts are happening in some townships of Kayah and Chin states and Sagaing region. We are controlling these events as much as possible. Officials from the administrative bodies were assassinated. These events happened in 109 townships of regions and states 272 times and 282 persons were assassinated. Moreover, educational staff and health staff were killed. In this regard, they killed 30 teachers and set fire to schools 504 times. They committed killing health staff and attacked them. It is necessary to take an adequate for effective managing education and health care services for socio-economic development of the people. So, Council members need to consider them. I thanked them for their support. But, the workload will be rather heavier. Now, we could control the COVID-19 but we found the Omicron variant. So, we have to take special care of the disease. Hence, it is necessary to control living disciplines and manage the prevention and treatment measures and fulfilling of necessary equipment, medicines and materials for controlling the disease. So, we have to strive for ongoing tasks with utmost effort. It will cost a large sum of money for the projects. So, we have to uplift the State economy. We have to produce sufficient agriculture and livestock products, foodstuff and personal goods at home. So, the policy was not totally imported these products abroad. The period after February was concerned with the government of the State Administration Council. As we strictly managed all export and import measures, we could show some US$640 million of trade surplus. Currently, we have US$99 million of trade surplus till January. It is sure to have the trade surplus in February. Primarily, if farmers and rural people increase the production of goods, we are ready to export them to neighbouring countries' markets. China, Bangladesh and India are our markets for agriculture and livestock products. They are our large market. By fulfilling the needs of farmers, if they have good income and good businesses, their socio-economic life will improve. So, they can learn. They have just the least reasons for missing the chance of learning due to lack of money. On the other hand, the country will have income and tax. So, I emphasize the internal economy. In this regard, foreign countries criticized me. We extremely encourage internal businesses. I think it may be destructive acts. But, our National Defence and Security Council needs to know that we are building internal strength. The strength of the nation lies within. It cannot be found anywhere. We have to seek internal strength. I'd like to report that I will try to build the internal economic strength, internal political strength and internal defence strength in the limited time."

Afterwards, Pro Tem President U Myint Swe said everybody knows that the country improves to some extent due to systematic management and all-round endeavours in the time of the State Administration Council amid various difficulties. Success has been achieved in exporting domestic products. According to the reports of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, the country gained development amid difficulties thanks to the efforts of all council members. If the country does not have internal and external destructive elements, the country will have more success. Hence, according to the discussions of all attendees to the meeting, it was informed to the National Defence and Security Council for extending six more months of the declared State of Emergency, and the meeting 1/2022 came to a close. — MNA

Plan underway to provide land compensation for Seikkyi Khanaungto bridge project

A plan is underway to provide the land compensation to the landowners whose land were involved in the project areas to implement the Seikkyi Khanaungto bridge linked between Dala and Seikkyi Khanaungto townships in the Yangon region.

Currently, the Seikkyi Khanaungto Township Land Compensation Committee has announced that they are providing the land compensation to the landowners of plots No 285-291, No 297-305, No 398-402, No 437-453, No 479-487, No 496-500, No 564-574 from No 2 ward in the project area.

Besides, the committee has also requested that the landowners need to send the original document of the land to the township general administration department.

"They will provide the land compensation to the 65 area plot of land. These are plots of land that have been set by the housing department. The lands, which were confiscated, will be scrutinized before giving the compensation. Each land will be worth at K11 million. Those lands are from Seikkyi Khanaungto township," said an official from Seikkyi Khanaungto township general administration department.

"There is only about K10 acres plot of lands in Dala-Twantay areas. Those lands are owned by the farmers. We heard that the authorities will pay around K10 million per acre for compensation. We don't hear any objection voice from our Dala side," said U Tin Aung, a resident from Dala Township.

Twantay Canal crossing bridge connecting Seikkyi Khanaungto township with Dala township will be a two-lane reinforced bridge. It will be 2,542 feet long with a 740-metre long and 10-metre-wide main bridge. The estimated cost of the project is K 28 billion. The Bridge Construction Task Force from the Ministry of Construction constructed the bridges in the 2019-2020 financial year. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

Fish caught in Myanmar sea drops to less than 20 per cent

ALTHOUGH fishes were caught abundantly in the early fishing opening season, the fish caught dropped to less than 20 per cent in December and January, said an official from Myanmar Marine Fish Farmers Association.

"Normally, the fishes are caught plentifully in August, September and October. But the volume of fish caught was reduced at the end of November, December and January. It has reduced by less than 20 per cent. The fish price has increased by 10 per cent due to less supply of catching fish. The diesel price has also increased to K360,000 from K270,000, he added.

The catching fish in the Myanmar sea is different yearly, depending upon climate change. The entrepreneurs can be affected if the fish caught is still plunged in February and March.

"The fish price has mounted significantly because of the less supply of the fishes. In the monsoon period, the workers are hired. There is also a lot of the fish loaded and unloaded labours in the jetty. We don't have much time because the fishing season will end up in March," he added.

The Fisheries Department amended the fish hatching season for 2022 in April, May and June. When the fish spawning season comes, there will be a shortage of job opportunities for the fishermen. Hence, the fish spawning season for 2020 would be more convenient to prevent the lack of jobs for the fishermen.

The fish industry has been struggling due to lesser fish being caught in the Myanmar sea. — Ko Naing (Bago)/GNLM

The fish industry has been struggling due to lesser fish being caught in the Myanmar sea. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timber, vehicle, commodities, workplace equipment seized

Confiscated timbers in Bago Region.

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

The Customs Department inspected Yangon International Airport (warehouse) on 28 January and seized undocumented goods, including tyres worth K19,070,000. Officials took action under the Customs Law.

Similarly, the Kachin State Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force made inspections on 30 January and found 10 vehicles and one backhoe passing near Nammon village of Monhyin township without any permission. The commodities were confiscated for further investigation and 47,430 gallons of fuel worth of K326,742,000 were seized and taken action under the Customs Law.

On 31 January, Mon State Customs Department seized K4,000,000 worth of shoes and tyres in a vehicle at Mayanchaung cheekpoint and also took action under the Customs Law.

Moreover, Kayin State Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force confiscated 15 32-inch TVs and five washing machines worth K4,250,000 at Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) joint inspection station yesterday and took action under the Customs Law.

The Bago Region Forest Department also seized K5,191,950 worth of illegal timbers in the forest reserves of Bago and Toungoo districts on the same day and actions were taken in line with the Forest Law.

The inspection team led by Myanmar Police Force seized a 10-wheel Nissan diesel light truck (unregistered) worth K20,000,000 in Sagaing Region and took action under the Export and Import Law.

Thus, a total of eight arrests (estimated value of K379,253,950) were made from 28 January to 1 February, stated the committee. — MNA

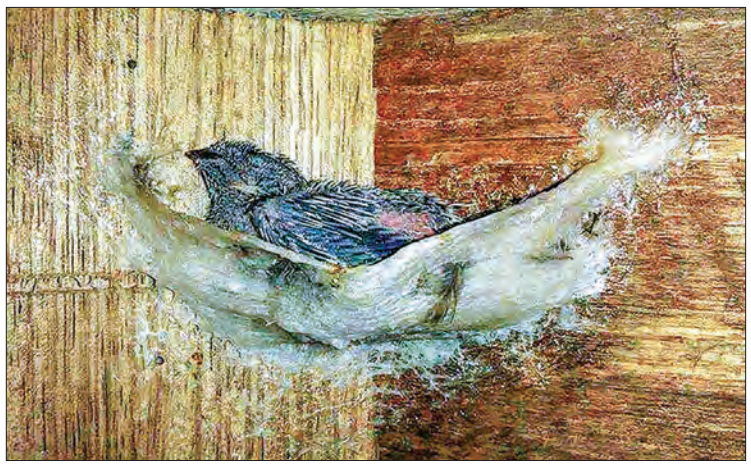
Seized commodities in Kayin State.

Forest Department calls for competitive bidding to harvest edible bird nests

THE Forest Department under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation called for competitive bidding to seek a three-year working permit for harvesting the edible bird nests which were out of stock during the spike of COVID-19 cases in Myanmar.

"The islands of Myeik Archipelago in Taninthayi coastal region are habitats of swiftlets. The Forest Department has been managing those islands for years. Earlier, it granted the work permit once a year. Starting from 2020, the department gave green light to this business once every three years," said an official of Taninthayi Region Forest Department.

The winner of the auction for harvesting the bird nests on the islands of Taninthayi Region can collect the edible bird nests between the 2021-2022 financial year and 2023-2024FY. Bidding will commence soon. The islands to harvest the edible bird nests are located in Dawei, Myeik and Kawthoung districts. According to open tendering rules and regulations, an individual businessperson must handle the work. Edible-nest swiftlets dwell in the Southeast Asian coastal region and they can be found in Taninthayi Region. The work permit is changed from a yearly basis to once every three years for the sustainable production of bird nests. The edible bird nests production businesses boomed in the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year, the market saw an exorbitant price of bird nests.



Two types of nests are sold at the market: those from islands and those collected from breeding houses. **PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)**

Moreover, with the price of edible birds' nests rising, the number of breeders of edible nest swiftlets has increased in Myeik Township.

Edible nest swiftlets are induced into making nests using bird-noise techniques at houses along the Strand Road in Myeik. This breeding business has become popular in the region, and many breeders are thriving, said breeders. Two types of nests are sold at the market: those from islands and those collected from breeding houses. — Ko Naing(Bago)/GNLM

Myanmar, China signs SPS protocol agreement for maize export

According to the agreement, Myanmar can export maize grains to China through maritime route and border channels. This agreement will boost the legitimate agro trading between Myanmar and China and bring about the interest of the growers.

MINISTRY of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) signed an agreement on 31 January 2022 regarding SPS Protocol (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Protocol) for biosecurity, for Myanmar to legally ship maize to China on a trial run.

The SPS protocol is a must for legitimate export to China, the main trade partner of agricultural products with Myanmar.

According to the agreement, Myanmar can export maize grains to China through maritime route and border channels. This agreement will boost the legitimate agro trading between Myanmar and China and bring about the interest of the growers.

MoALI and GACC officials signed the agreement to meet SPS protocol requirements on exports of rice and broken rice in January 2020 during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Myanmar, along with the fruitful negotiation of the live cattle trade.

At present, the establishment of an animal quarantine station is underway in the respective border posts to continue the live cattle trade. One station has been set up in Kutkai Township.

Furthermore, a series of negotiations between MoALI and Chinese counterparts are being undertaken for soybean, cassava and sweet potato. Additionally, SPS measures for pineapple, avocado, pomelo, lime and areca nuts are still under negotiation for now.

Myanmar conveyed agricultural products, livestock and fisheries worth of US$5.427 billion to China in the 2020-2021 financial year. — MNA

Strong demand drives up butter bean prices to double

THE price of newly harvested butter beans has risen twice on the back of strong domestic and foreign demand in recent days, Mandalay bean traders said.

Madaya and Singu townships are the largest suppliers of butter beans. Last year, the opening price of the bean season was K80,000 per three-basket bag of butter bean, whereas it significantly soared to K110,000-170,000 per bag depending on the size, according to Soe Win Myint depot.

"The price reached a five-year record high at the beginning of the harvest season this year. Domestic consumers also highly demand the bean at the moment. Chinese traders also started purchasing them. The bean is yearly shipped to China, India, Japan and Europe. They are cultivated in winter and harvested between January and March. The demand is growing year over year," Soe Win Myint depot owner elaborated.

The butter beans are primarily grown in the central regions of Myanmar, mostly found in Minbu, Sinbyukyun and Salin in Magway Region, Mahlaing, Taungtha and Natogyi in Mandalay and Gangaw, Kalay, Kalewa, Shwebo and Kabaw valley areas in Sagaing Region. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)

Import price elevates palm oil price to over K5,000 per viss

THE price of palm oil edged up to K5,000 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) at present, following the increase in imported oil price, according to Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association.

The prevailing price of imported palm oil stands at US$1,450 per tonne, whereas it fetched only $1,360 per tonne in early January, indicating an increase of $90 per tonne within a month. Tracking the price hike of imported oil, the price of palm oil rises tremendously to K5,150 per viss.

The Central Bank of Myanmar sold US$77 million to the edible oil sector to distribute the oil at subsidized prices.

Between 15 September 2021 and 13 January 2022, the Central Bank of Myanmar sold $77 million multiple times to the oil importers at the reference rates of K1,753-1,820. Of them, $74 million worth of over 57,000 tonnes of palm oil has been imported so far. More than 53,000 tonnes of palm oil have been distributed. Over 3,900 tonnes are left for sales, said an official of the Consumer Affairs Department.

The retail price of oil is K4,500 per viss at present. The edible oil is distributed with the mobile market trucks in coordination with the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association.

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. — NN/GNLM

Traditional UK sweet factory enjoys global sugar rush

EDWARD Gray sweet factory in central England evokes a bygone age where brass cauldrons steam with molten sugar and workers wrestle with huge chunks of gooey treacle, but its handmade produce now enjoys a global demand.

The company -- also known as "Teddy Grays" -- dates back to 1826 when John Gray went house-to-house in a horse and cart buying homemade sweets, before selling them to retailers.

But it was his son Edward, an entrepreneur in the mould of Willy Wonka and Colonel Sanders, who built the business's name.

The small factory in Dudley now makes around five tonnes of boiled sweets a week, with products including rhubarb and custard, pineapple rock, strawberries and cream, pear drops, toffee and chocolate-coated coconut ice.

But the jewel in the crown is its "Herbal Tablet", a menthol sweet that it claims has provided relief from "cold nights and mornings" for more than 100 years.—AFP ■

India to launch state-backed 'digital rupee', tax crypto

INDIA will introduce a state-backed "digital rupee" and impose a 30 per cent tax on profits from virtual currencies, the government announced Tuesday.

The plans are a blow to one of the world's fastest-growing cryptocurrency markets, which has remained unregulated despite burgeoning local trading platforms and glitzy celebrity endorsements.

They make India the latest major emerging economy to rein in the sector, after China went even further in outlawing all cryptocurrency transactions last September.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled her budget to parliament. **PHOTO: AFP**

"There has been a phenomenal increase in transactions in virtual digital assets," finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman told parliament, adding that the growth necessitated a proper tax framework.

Profits made trading cryptocurrencies and other digital assets will be taxed at 30 per cent, while any losses from digital transactions will not be granted offsets against other income.

A one-per cent tax will be deducted at the source for all digital asset transactions above an as-yet-unspecified threshold.

Sitharaman also said the central bank would introduce a "digital rupee", based on blockchain technology, by the end of March 2023.

"Introduction of central bank digital currency will give a big boost to (the) digital economy. Digital currency will also lead to a more efficient and cheaper currency management system," she said.—AFP ■

New York Times buys 'Wordle'

THE New York Times announced Monday it had bought Wordle, a phenomenon played by millions just four months after the game burst onto the Internet, for an "undisclosed price in the low seven figures".

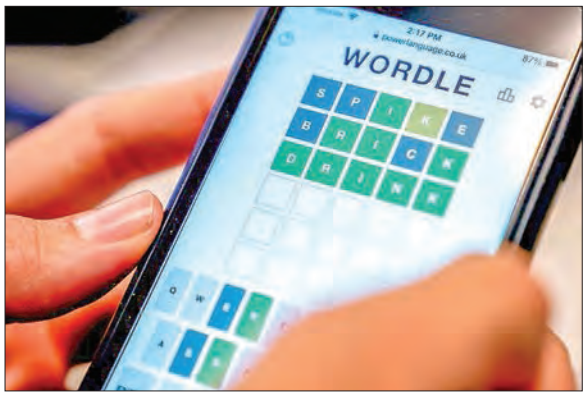
Created by engineer Josh Wardle, the game consists of guessing one five-letter word per day in just six tries.

According to The New York Times, the game — which was launched in October — had only 90 players in early November.

By early January, there were more than 300,000 — and now millions play it daily, fuelled in part by the ease of sharing spoiler-free results on social media.

"The game has done what so few games have done — it has captured our collective imagination and brought us all a little closer together," said Jonathan Knight, general manager of New York Times Games, in a statement.

"I've long admired The Times's approach to the quality of their games and the respect with which they treat their players," Wardle said in the statement. "Their values are aligned with mine on these matters and I'm thrilled that they will be stewards of the game moving forward."—AFP ■



Wordle had only 90 players when it launched in November 2021 – but is played daily by millions just three months later. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

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Dated **2nd February 2022** lmm@kcyangon.com

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Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon.
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Dated **2nd February 2022** ams@kcyangon.com

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V KANG PING VOY.NO. (033N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KANG PING VOY.NO. (033N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (184W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (184W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** 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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan finds piece of missing F-15, searching for crew

JAPANESE aircraft and boats were searching Tuesday for two crew from a fighter jet that is believed to have crashed after taking off a day earlier, a government spokesman said.

Part of the F-15 jet has been found, but authorities are still searching for the two people on board, top government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters.

The jet, which was on a training mission, disappeared from radar shortly after it took off late Monday afternoon, Matsuno said. It disappeared about five kilometres (three miles) west-northwest of the Komatsu airbase in central Ishikawa region, off the Sea of Japan.

"As part of the fuselage of the fighter jet was discovered in the area, the fighter jet is believed to have crashed," Matsuno said.—AFP ■

Italy dismisses case against marines over India murder

A Rome judge on Monday dismissed a murder investigation into two Italian marines who killed two fishermen in Kerala in 2012, months after the case was dropped by India's top court.

In a statement, Italian Defence Minister Lorenzo Guerini welcomed the "positive outcome" for Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre.

News agencies said it followed an assessment by prosecutors last month that there was not enough evidence for a trial.

"This brings to an end a years-long event during which the defence ministry has never left the two marines and their families on their own," Guerini said.

Girone and Latorre shot dead the unarmed fishermen off the southern Indian coast in February 2012 while protecting an Italian oil tanker as part of an anti-piracy mission.

After a legal saga that has dogged relations between Rome and New Delhi for almost a decade, India in April 2021 accepted a compensation offer of 100 million rupees ($1.4 million, 1.1 million euros).—AFP ■

British PM Johnson in Ukraine Tuesday for talks on Russia

BORIS Johnson travels to Kyiv Tuesday for talks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, as tensions with Russia rise and the British prime minister battles the biggest crisis of his premiership.

"It is the right of every Ukrainian to determine how they are governed. As a friend and a democratic partner, the UK will continue to uphold Ukraine's sovereignty in the face of those who seek to destroy it," Johnson said in a statement.

"We urge Russia to step back and engage in dialogue to find a diplomatic resolution and avoid further bloodshed," he added.

The trip comes as Johnson's position continues to hang in the balance, with police investigating reports of lockdown-breaching parties held at his London residence and office during Covid lockdowns.

Ukraine received a batch of anti-tank missiles provided by the UK. **PHOTO: THE DRIVE/AFP**

The prime minister apologised on Monday after a report by a senior civil servant criticized his government for "failures of leadership and judgment" over the rule-breaking.

The affair — dubbed "partygate" — has cost Johnson the support of MPs from his Conservative party, sparked public outrage and led to opposition calls for his resignation.

Intensified diplomacy

Fears of an imminent Russian incursion in Ukraine have grown in recent days, despite denials from Moscow and pleas from Zelensky to avoid panic over a massive Russian military build-up on the border.—AFP ■

US judge rejects plea deals for murderers of Black jogger

A demonstrator holds a picture of Ahmaud Arbery outside the courthouse in Brunswick, Georgia. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

A US judge on Monday rejected plea deals from two white men convicted of murdering a Black jogger in Georgia after relatives of the victim vehemently objected to the agreements.

Travis McMichael, his father Gregory McMichael and their neighbour, William Bryan, were sentenced to life in prison in January for the February 2020 murder of 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery.

The three men also face federal hate crimes charges of violating Arbery's civil rights.

Federal prosecutors said in court filings that they had reached agreements with the McMichaels under which they would plead guilty and would serve the first 30 years of their life sentences in a federal prison rather than a state facility.

The plea deals were subject to court approval, however, and US District Judge Lisa Wood rejected them on Monday after listening to impassioned appeals from several of Arbery's relatives.

Lee Merritt, an attorney for Arbery's mother, Wanda Cooper Jones, denounced the plea deals ahead of the hearing as a "betrayal" of the Arbery family.

In a statement, Cooper Jones said she has "made it clear at every possible moment that I do not agree to offer these men a plea deal of any kind."—AFP ■

Swedish film festival puts audiences under hypnosis

TO add another dimension to the cinematic experience, Scandinavia's largest film festival introduced 20 minutes of hypnosis ahead of the featured movies.

"We have built this hypnotic cinema to experiment with the film experience, to challenge our ideas about how to watch a film," Jonas Holmberg, director of the Gothenburg Film Festival in southwest Sweden, said.

The first experimental session took place on Sunday evening in front of just a few dozen people — due to Covid-19 restrictions.

In lieu of trailers the audience got a live session with hypnotist Fredrik Praesto, before a viewing of "Land of Dreams", by the Iranian-American director Shirin Neshat.

Standing on stage in front of a large hypnotic spiral, Praesto began with physical exercises – such as asking audience members to bringing their hands together as if they were magnets and to close their eyes.—AFP ■

Fredrik Praesto and his hypnotic spiral at the Gothenburg Film Festival. **PHOTO: VALERIIA ALTAREVA GOTEBORG FILM FESTIVAL/AFP**

Putin to host EU ally Orban amid Ukraine crisis

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin will host talks Tuesday with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has taken a softer line on the Ukraine crisis than NATO and the EU, with Hungary a member of both.

The Kremlin said the leaders will discuss trade and energy as well as "the current problems of ensuring European security," an allusion to the standoff between Russia and the West over Ukraine.

Orban has said he will seek an agreement to increase Hungary's gas imports from Russia at a time when some in Europe accuse Russia of orchestrating an energy crisis with the aim of putting pressure on European countries.

Hungary's opposition parties released a joint statement at the weekend calling on Orban to cancel his trip, which it said was "contrary to our national interests."

The Hungarian opposition said that, by meeting with Putin, Orban "indirectly encourages the Russian president to further escalate the current tense situation."

US President Joe Biden has accused Russia of plans to invade Ukraine imminently with its troops massed on the border and warned of severe economic sanctions if it does.

The trip is also likely to sit uncomfortably with Hungary's closest European Union allies, most notably Poland.

Warsaw has presented a united front with Budapest against Brussels on issues like the rule of law, but has long resented Orban's ties with Putin.

On the same day of Orban's Moscow visit, his close Polish ally Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki will travel to Kyiv to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is backed by the West.

The meeting comes with Washington warning Russia against taking military action against Ukraine. **PHOTO: AFP**

'Peace and de-escalation'

At a meeting of European conservatives organised by the Spanish far-right in Madrid over the weekend and also attended by Morawiecki, Orban said that Ukraine was a "very important issue" for those in Central Europe.—AFP ■

Trials to resume for Nicaragua government opponents: prosecution

CRIMINAL trials will resume this week for 46 opponents of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's government, including seven presidential hopefuls precluded from contesting November elections, the prosecutor's office said Monday. The accused, political prisoners in the eyes of rights groups, face charges of "undermining national integrity" and money laundering.

Public trials will be held from Tuesday, the prosecutor's office in a statement in which it labeled the accused — political leaders, students, journalists, businessmen and activists — as "criminals." Several trials had begun in September, but were halted with no explanation.

The accused were detained between July and December last year, most of them in the months leading up to Ortega's reelection to a fourth, consecutive term in November elections dismissed as a "farce" by the United States, European Union and others.

President of the Nicaraguan National Assembly, Gustavo Porras (L), raises the hand of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega (C) as he is sworn in as president for a fourth straight term next to his wife and vice-president Rosario Murillo (R), during the inauguration ceremony in Managua on 10 January 2022. **PHOTO: VENEZUELAN PRESIDENCY/**

They will be tried for "undermining national integrity (and) for having received resources from foreign sources to commit the crimes of laundering money, property and assets," said the prosecutor's office.

Last month, the UN rights body urged Managua to free people who had been arbitrarily detained and to stop prosecutions and harassment of political opponents, journalists and human rights defenders.

"All people arbitrarily detained should be immediately released and have their civil and political rights fully restored," said Nada al-Nashif, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

UN agency says gaps in Belarus flight rerouting probe

The UN aviation agency on Monday extended its investigation into a bomb warning aboard a Ryanair flight last May, citing gaps and inconsistencies in Belarus's account of its rerouting of the aircraft.

The flight from Greece to Lithuania on 23 May 2021 was forced to land in Minsk, where Belarusian authorities arrested two passengers, journalist Roman Protasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega.

After reviewing a report on the International Civil Aviation Organization's fact-finding investigation of the incident, the agency's 36-member board "requested the ICAO investigation team to continue its work."

In a statement, the Montreal-based agency said the ICAO Council "expressed concern at the gaps in information provided by Belarus and the inconsistences contained in the evidence available at the time of the investigation in relation to crucial aspects of the factual reconstruction of the events."—AFP ■

Colombia demands removal from 'hunger hotspots' list

COLOMBIA took umbrage Monday at being included in a report by UN agencies on 20 "hunger hotspots", demanding to be removed from the list of countries considered at risk of "acute food insecurity."

The report published last week by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme said that "7.3 million Colombians are food insecure and in need of food assistance in 2022."

Other countries on the list included South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Madagascar and Yemen.—AFP ■

An Ukrainian soldier watches through spyglass on the frontline with the Russia-backed separatists near Verkhnetoretskoye village, in the Donetsk region on 31 January 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

US tells families of govt employees in Belarus to leave

THE United States told the families of its government employees in Belarus to leave the country, the State Department said Monday, as fears grow of a Russian invasion of neighboring Ukraine.

The order came hours after Washington and Moscow clashed over Ukraine at the UN Security Council, and after Washington threatened to slap sanctions on wealthy Russian oligarchs if the ex-Soviet state is attacked.

The US also accused Russia Monday of planning to build its military force in its ally Belarus to 30,000 within weeks. The State Department "ordered the departure of family members of U.S. government employees" from Belarus, it said in a travel advisory issued Monday.

It also warned Americans not to travel to Belarus "due to the arbitrary enforcement of laws, the risk of detention, and unusual and concerning Russian military buildup along Belarus' border with Ukraine."—AFP ■

Myanmar sports team to compete in SEA Games, Asian Games

MYANMAR sports teams will compete in two international tourneys including the Southeast Asian and Asian Games this year.

The SEA Games, the highest sporting event in Southeast Asia, has been rescheduled for this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the SEA Games and the Asian Games will be held for the first time in 2022 amidst the COVID-19.

The 31st SEA Games, postponed by the epidemic, will be held in Vietnam from 12 to 23 May, and the 19th Asian Games will be held in Hangzhou, China from 10 to 25 September.

The 31st SEA Games will feature 40 sports, and the Myanmar team has previously planned to compete in 18 sports but is working to add more sports.

Myanmar sports teams have been training since the beginning of last year, and some sports teams are on overseas training trips.

The Asian Games will feature 40 sports but no sport has been selected yet by Myanmar teams.

The SEA Games are held every two years and the Asian Games are held every four years.

The Myanmar teams won four gold medals, 18 silver and 52 bronze medals in the last Philippine Games in 2019 and two bronze medals in the 2018 Asian Games. — Ko Nyi Lay /GNLM

Beijing Olympics venues could be 50 per cent full, official says

A senior Olympics official said Tuesday that venues at the Beijing Winter Games could be up to 50 per cent full, countering fears that Covid-19 would lead to a second consecutive Games without spectators.

Last year's Tokyo Summer Olympics took place largely behind closed doors and Chinese organizers decided not to sell tickets for the Beijing Games because of fears about the virus.

But Christophe Dubi, Olympic Games Executive Director at the International Olympic Committee, said he hoped venues in China would be filled to between 30 and 50 per cent.

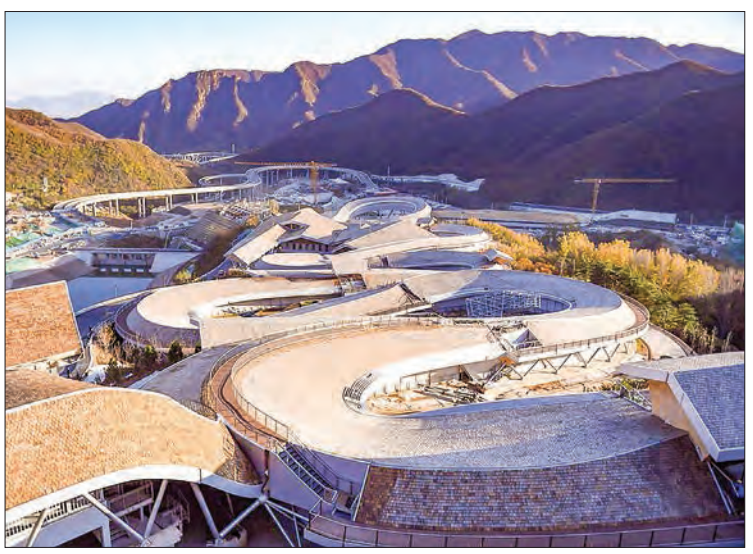

Photo taken on 18 October 2020 shows the National Sliding Centre in Yanqing Zone for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, Beijing, capital of China. **PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHANG CHENLIN**

"In terms of capacity we are not there yet, because it has to be fine-tuned at a venue-by-venue basis, but I'd say if we have one person out of three (available spots) or out of two, that would already be a good result," Dubi said in an interview on the official Beijing Games' website.

"It could also depend on whether it is outdoors or indoors. But the great thing is that we are going to have spectators," he added. Dubi said the spectators would not be restricted to Chinese nationals — foreigners living in China have also been invited. — AFP ■

Lo Celso secures Villarreal loan from Tottenham

TOTTENHAM midfielder Giovani Lo Celso has joined Villarreal on loan until the end of the season, the clubs announced on Monday.

Villarreal will also have an option to buy Lo Celso, who failed to impress Spurs coach Antonio Conte.

The 25-year-old has made only nine appearances in the Premier League this season and has largely disappointed since joining Tottenham from Real Betis in 2019.

Spurs paid around 30 million euros ($33.7 million) for Lo Celso, who played 84 times for the club in total and scored eight goals. He enjoyed some promising spells of form but injuries and inconsistency meant the Argentinian never really cemented his place in the team, even before Conte's arrival.

Conte left Lo Celso out of the squad for a 2-0 defeat by Chelsea earlier this month and when asked about the midfielder's future after the game, he said: "I selected the players for this game and this question is one for the club to answer."

Lo Celso had already expressed his dissatisfaction on Instagram by posting that he was in "100 per cent good physical condition" ahead of the fixture.

Villarreal said in a statement that Lo Celso will join up with his new teammates after Argentina's World Cup qualifier against Colombia on Wednesday.

The club described Lo Celso as a player with "great technical qualities… who has a prodigious left foot and is a specialist in the last pass. His handling of the ball, his vision of the game and his good ball kick make him a very complete midfielder".—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.

Alli, Van de Beek arrivals launch Lampard era at Everton

Donny van de Beek has joined Everton on loan from Manchester United. **PHOTO: IAN KINGTON/ AFP**

DELE Alli and Donny van de Beek joined Everton's bid to beat Premier League relegation on transfer deadline day after Frank Lampard was unveiled as the club's new manager.

Alli has joined on a permanent deal from Tottenham after a disappointing few years under four different managers in north London.

Lampard was appointed as Everton's seventh manager in six years on a two-and-a-half year contract on Monday.

Chelsea's all-time leading goalscorer has been out of the game for a year since being sacked by the London club last January.

He is tasked with keeping the Toffees in the top flight. They are four points above the relegation zone after a run of one win in 14 league games.

Targeting Alli was reportedly one of Lampard's demands to take the job.

The England international's career has declined over the past four seasons since he burst onto the scene as one of Europe's most promising attacking midfielders under Mauricio Pochettino. Alli had started just two Premier League games since Antonio Conte took charge of Tottenham in November.—AFP ■