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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.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing addresses ceremony in honour of Diamond Jubilee Union Day, takes salutes of honorary columns

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing delivered an address at the ceremony to honour Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022 and took the salute of columns of honour at the Grand Military Parade Ground in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The military columns which would march past the Senior General took the position in the parade ground where the Diamond Jubilee Union Day ceremony would be held.

At 7:30 am, the Senior General arrived at the dais of the ground. The artillery corps saluted the Senior General with a 21-gun fire together with the military columns and those present.

The Union Flag was conveyed from the city hall of Nay Pyi Taw to the parade ground by the decorated float. Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Maung Maung Naing handed over the flag to the Chairman of the organizing committee Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn who planted the flag in the silver bowl on the stage.

The military columns and those present saluted the State Flag and took the oaths.

The Senior General delivered an address in honour of Diamond Jubilee Union Day. (The address is separately reported on page-2.)

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State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing speaks on the grand occasion of honouring Diamond Jubilee Union Day at the Grand Military Parade Ground in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 February 2022.

The speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing on the occasion of honouring Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022

Distinguished guests and esteemed ethnic national people,

On the auspicious occasion of Diamond Jubilee Union Day, I extend greetings with a wish to all ethnic national brethren to be physically and mentally healthy and happy in prosperity.

First and foremost, **I'd like to express my delightedness and to take pride in observing the gala ceremony in honour of the significantly historic Diamond Jubilee Union Day together with all ethnic national people.**

As you know, our country was aggressively invaded by colonialists for more than one hundred years. During the 19th century, powerful countries aggressively invaded small countries in competitiveness, so Myanmar similar to other small countries fell under the rule of colonialists.

In looking back at the situation of Myanmar, it can be seen that the country has been standing tall as sovereign and firm territorial water and land nation with firm histories of nationals and the country for many thousands of years. It is obvious that all ethnic nationals have been living in the country through thick and thin based on the Union spirit along with the history of the country since yore. So also, they all joined hands in fighting against the colonialists in the independence struggles in the colonial era.

> I'd like to express my delightedness and to take pride in observing the gala ceremony in honour of the significantly historic Diamond Jubilee Union Day together with all ethnic national people.

In reviewing history, **whenever the ethnic nationalities could amicably build the united strength, the country showed off strong capabilities.** Nonetheless, whenever the ethnic nationalities lessened unity due to various reasons, the strength of the country was weak. Finally, all ethnic nationals faced the bitter experiences that the country fell under servitude.

Distinguished guests and esteemed ethnic national people,

In analyzing the three aggressive wars over Myanmar to be occupied by the colonialists, our forefathers did not easily give up on the colonialists. Everybody knew that they all waged against the colonialists with the patriotic spirit and the spirit to never surrender by holding any arms.

Despite unaffordable living under colonial rule, all our ethnic national people in unison with patriotic spirit and the nationalistic spirit could have striven for freedom from the servitude in various ways and means.

The worst brutality in the slavery life was wedging the instigation among the ethnic national brethren. Colonialists committed the long term existence of their governing by sowing various suspicions among the ethnic national people between the hilly and plain regions. They had been attempting to cause disintegration among the ethnic national people through the divide-and-rule policy and the instigation until they unavoidably granted Independence for Myanmar.

No matter what colonialists committed instigation in governance, **our forefathers regained Independence based on the patriotic spirit by fostering the Panglong Spirit and the Union Spirit.** Nonetheless, as the consequence of the colonialists' instigation has been existing among the ethnic national people till today, I'd like to notice that all the people need to take special care of protecting the country not to cause disintegration.

> In the democratic nature, it is necessary to follow the wish of the majority under the law whereas it is necessary to emphasize the wish of the minority. It is a democratic practice.

On 12 February 1947, the ethnic leaders led by General Aung San signed the Panglong Agreement with a firm vow to unanimously regain Independence without discrimination of hilly and plain regions. Such a significant day when the Panglong Agreement was signed was designated as Union Day, and now it turns 75 years in honour of Diamond Jubilee Union Day. **On the occasion of Diamond Jubilee Union Day, I'd like to urge all again to unitedly implement the further strengthening of the Union Spirit sowed by the ethnic national leaders and the perpetuation of the Union the ethnic national leaders inspired.**

Distinguished guests and esteemed ethnic national people,

In reviewing the changes in the international community, some powerful developed countries emphasized their national interests and committed various forms of conflicts and regional small wars among the developing small countries during the cold war period after the Second World War.

In consequence, territorial changes of countries happened on the world map. Some countries split into two parts and some large countries collapsed into pieces while many countries are still facing religious and racial conflicts as well as civil wars.

In the late cold war period, some big countries were influenced by developing countries as their stooges and puppets. They attempted to subjugate those small countries under their influence with internal and external conspiracies for racial and religious reasons in the initial stage and then democracy and human rights.

The countries formed under the Union system across the world need to take international lessons with a deep contemplation that if they cannot protect their unions in unison, they may face disintegration.

Distinguished guests and esteemed ethnic national people,

I'd like to point out that the Union spirit is of great importance and essential for the country based on the lesson taken from the international community and the actual situation of our country. Hence, all ethnic national people have to forge the Union Spirit for ensuring the perpetuation of the Union.

> ... all Union people to lend a helping hand to each other in line with the theme "The strength of the nation lies within" so as to emerge the Union based on democracy and federalism.

The Union Spirit is a firm concept for the whole Union as a family as well as a house. It is identified as a spirit to accept that all ethnic nationals are national brethren; they all are living in the same place in unison; they all are keen to unitedly solve problems of any others without evasion, and they all are residing in the country together in oneness without discrimination of hilly and plain regions.

Moreover, the spirit to defend the State and the noble, genuine patriotic spirit wishing to serve the interests of the State based on the spirit of adoring the national prestige and integrity and the nationalistic spirit can be defined as the Union Spirit.

Although there are eight major ethnic nationals in our country, more than 130 ethnic tribes are residing in the country. Some ethnicities are populous and some ethnicities are in the lesser population. Despite the existence of large and small states and different amounts of population and tribes, all ethnic nationals have equal rights and no one has the excessive right. **In the democratic nature, it is necessary to follow the wish of the majority under the law whereas it is necessary to emphasize the wish of the minority. It is a democratic practice.**

If all the people sow the suspicions and emphasize selfishness without unity among them, it will be very dangerous. Hence, I'd like to urge all to place emphasis on the Non-disintegration of the Union, the Non-disintegration of National Solidarity and the Perpetuation of Sovereignty.

> ... take a position on the NCA track for ensuring peace and stability and development of the State.

Distinguished guests and esteemed ethnic national people,

As strategically located in the Southeast Asian region, our country is of great importance in geo-politics. As the northern part of the country is teeming with snow-capped mountains, the central area with abundant cultivable plains, and the sea and islands in the southern part of the nation with favourable weather, fertile soil and water sources in addition to the sufficiency of food and natural resources, Myanmar is an invaluable country endowed with natural gifts.

Nowadays, some big countries interfere in the internal affairs of small countries for various reasons with attempts to be unstable and to disintegrate the unity in various ways and means.

Especially, it can be seen that those big countries pose coercion and pressure, criticism and sanctions against our country in the important role in the geopolitics for shaping our country as they like and to extend their influence in the region.

On one hand, as they attempt to sow the suspicions among the ethnic national people for causing disintegration, instability and delay in development, I'd like to urge **all Union people to lend a helping hand to each other in line with the theme "The strength of the nation lies within" so as to emerge the Union based on democracy and federalism.**

SEE PAGE-3

FROM PAGE-2

We all need to review the current situations without attachment and suspicion. Everybody knows that as some attempted to seize the State power by committing voter fraud in the election in November 2020, the Tatmadaw urged them to solve these inappropriate issues. But, they ignored it. So, the state of emergency was declared, and the Tatmadaw is taking responsibility for the State. The free and fair general election in the democratic system is of importance. If it was a correct, free and fair election, it is no reason to cause so. The forcibly seizing the State power in dishonesty brings consequences to current situations.

In the democratic system, it is necessary to accept different opinions and attitudes. But, the riots and terrorism such as murdering, setting fire and blowing up of mines causing sufferings to the ethnic national people are unacceptable. The Tatmadaw is discharging duty entrusted by the State Constitution for giving a helping hand to the State and the citizens when they face internal and external dangers and natural disasters.

Hence, I'd like to notice that it is time for terrorist groups, supporters and followers who commit illegal and unlawful perpetration triggered by electoral malpractices to understand the realities and amend the wrongdoings for the interests of the State and the people. Some ethnic armed organizations are invited to stop the acceptance, encouragement and cooperation in riots and terror acts and to **take a position on the NCA track for ensuring peace and stability and development of the State.** We have decided to accomplish the mission and vision however we face difficulties during the period we take responsibility.

The State Administration Council on duty is striving for ensuring peace and stability of the State, unity among all ethnic national people and development of their socio-economic life and building a Union based on democracy and federalism during the duty assigned period.

In building the Union we expect, **no matter how different the opinions of democracy and federalism is, we all need to notice that we have to choose the system to conform with our country.**

So, **our country arranges observance of the ceremony to mark the Diamond Jubilee Union Day on a grand scale as much as possible for ensuring a strong and dynamic Union Spirit. It is portraying the capability of the Union the people reside together under its shelter and security. It is shaping the nation-building endeavours but political stance. We all are striving for impressing the theme "We all are Myanmar".** Consequently, we are building a modern, developed democratic nation the entire ethnic national people aspire through the united strength.

Distinguished guests and esteemed ethnic national people,

On 4 January 2023, our country has regained the Independence for 75 years. **The internal armed conflicts triggered by the divide-and-rule policy of the colonialists brought a terrible loss to the development of the country and unity. Our resources, strengths and capability were lost in the conflicts. We all are responsible for avoiding losses anymore.** Hence, we all need to participate in ceasing the armed conflicts and restoring sustainably perpetual peace.

To do so, we, the government and the Tatmadaw **gave two offers that are unprecedented in the history of the Myanmar peace process. The first one is to implement the one-sided ceasefire and the second is to extend an invitation to all to the peace talks without pre-limitation leading to the restoration of perpetual peace.** The Tatmadaw one-sidedly implements the ceasefire from 21 December 2018 to the end of 2022. On 6 February this year, the State Administration Council released a statement on "the invitation to the perpetual peace and the Diamond Jubilee Union Day ceremony."

> ... no matter how different the opinions of democracy and federalism is, we all need to notice that we have to choose the system to conform with our country.

It is best to solve the proposals that the Tatmadaw should implement the one-sided ceasefire if it wishes to restore peace, and the government and the Tatmadaw should not pre-restrict the talks with ethnic armed organizations. Everybody can see that it is an unprecedented endeavour in the peace process and the peacekeeping history of global countries. I'd like to urge **all ethnic armed organizations and the entire ethnic people to grasp the opportunity.**

It can be seen that the political parties, civil society organizations and religious associations wishing to see good results of the State expressed their welcome and support to the statement. **The ceremony is being attended by seven NCA signatories and four non-NCA signatories.** So, the government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar thanks all organizations for their efforts to serve the interests of the ethnic national people. We all will march forward to the goal of peace through the democratic process based on the dialogue to seek solutions. I'd like to further extend the invitation to all stakeholders for their participation.

Distinguished guests and esteemed ethnic national people,

The prevention of COVID-19 is of importance in enhancing the health and fitness of the entire nation. As nothing is more important than human life, we contacted various countries for seeking the vaccines, and then arranged vaccination for more than 50 per cent of the population of the nation at the end of December 2021. The actual mindset of Myanmar such as a will to help, donate and cooperate much affected the prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to friendly countries for their encouragement and help, efforts of health staff and participation of the entire people, infection of the pandemic is under control at present. Hence, I'd like to express my thanks to all for their participation. Moreover, the people must have nutritious foods and healthy daily life to increase the life expectancy of the country.

Regarding the enhancement of educational qualification of the entire nation, it is necessary to encourage learning education for raising the percentage of students and the literacy rate of the country. By nurturing the children to come out a larger number of educated persons with skills and knowledge, the development of the nation must be undertaken through the strength of the people.

Handing good literary legacy to new generation youths can help implement their individual ambitions as well as contribute to the development of the country.

As today's youths are to take responsibility for the State, the correctness of their attitudes, concepts and works are very important. It is necessary to nurture the youths to have capabilities and to become reliably good and able persons. We all should give encouragement to them to improve the education standard of the State, and those youths should be under teaching for actually having the knowledge.

> ... gave two offers that are unprecedented in the history of the Myanmar peace process. The first one is to implement the one-sided ceasefire and the second is to extend an invitation to all to the peace talks without pre-limitation leading to the restoration of perpetual peace.

Currently, not only basic education schools but universities, degree colleges and colleges are open under the restrictions of COVID-19 in order to develop the human resources of the State.

Arrangements are being made to teach applied subjects to the youths for fulfilling the needs of respective regions, extend lecturing the law and economic subjects at the universities which are important for building the disciplined democratic country in the future, and upgrade the teaching of agriculture and livestock sciences for ensuring food sufficiency in the future.

The government is striving for easing the loss of socio-economic lives of the ethnic national people during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and soonest developing their socio-economic lives in the post-COVID-19 period. Likewise, we all need to enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthening all-around development in other sectors of the economy. We will invite international investments, encourage local businesses and create job opportunities.

Distinguished guests and esteemed ethnic national people,

The strength of the country lies within. We rely on internal strength. Based on the actual situations, we need foreign aid but most of the issues can be implemented through internal strength. To be able to build the strength of the Union-

- **Our country has abundant natural resources and human resources. As encouragement emphasizes import goods but production at home, improvement of socio-economy of the people gains lesser development. For the first point, we will enhance the local economy through internal strength.**
- **In line with the theme "The strength of the nation lies within", for the second point, we will raise the capability for internal politics. If we build the Union based on democracy and federalism as well as the multiparty democracy, the politics will be strong.**
- **For the third point, it is necessary to raise the defence capability with the participation of entire ethnic people. We all will build the State defence capability with the modern, capable army, navy and air force through the united strength.**

I'd like to urge all ethnic national people to participate in these missions for uplifting the prestige of the nation.

Distinguished guests and esteemed ethnic national people,

In conclusion, in accord with the national objectives of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day which falls today, as follows-

1. All ethnic nationals to safeguard the non-disintegration of the Union, national unity and sovereignty forever

2. To perpetually ensure strengthening and 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 the ethnic national brethren

4. To build the Union based on democracy and federalism in the realization of the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy

5. To equalize development of all regions and states while making efforts for enhancement of health, education and job opportunities of the ethnic nationals,

I'd like to urge the entire ethnic national people to strive for building a new Union based on democracy and federalism to be able to perpetually stand tall among the global countries.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing addresses ceremony in honour of Diamond Jubilee Union Day, takes salutes of honorary columns

The honorary columns and Tatmadaw aircraft are pictured in saluting the Senior General who returns the salutes at the grand celebration of Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022.

FROM PAGE-1

Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn handed over the flag to Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Maung Maung Naing who led the conveyance of the Union Flag to Nay Pyi Taw city hall where the flag will spend one year.

The Senior General took the salute of the flag bearer representing the Tatmadaw (Army), the companies representing respective ministries and organizations as well as bands and the State Military Band.

Meanwhile, military aircraft from Gyogyar, Arkar, Yanaung, Yeman, Yekkha, Thurein and Yazar squadrons in various forms flew over the parade ground to salute the Senior General, hanging the Union Flag,

SEE PAGE-5

The decorated floats are seen at the grand celebration of Diamond Jubilee Union Day in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 February 2022.

The honorary columns are marching to pay salutes to the Senior General in honouring Diamond Jubilee Union Day in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 February 2022.

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State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing addresses ceremony in honour of Diamond Jubilee Union Day, takes salutes of honorary columns

The decorated floats representing the respective states and regions are seen celebrating Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022 event in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 February 2022.

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region and state flags, releasing the colourful smoke trails.

Then, decorated floats representing Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Chin states, Sagaing, Tanintharyi, Bago, Magway and Mandalay regions, Mon, Rakhine and Shan states, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions displaying emblems of the ethnics, lifestyle, traditions and customs as well as products presented song and dance performances. Yazar squadron led by Lt-Col Kyaw Aung flew over the decorated floats in fan break form with shooting flares.

A total of 1,100 students from basic education schools in Zabuthiri and Pyinmana townships of Nay Pyi Taw Council portrayed the names of Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, regions and states.

After the ceremony, the Senior General waved at those present and left the parade ground.

The Senior General and wife cordially waved at decorated floats and dance troupes from regions and states. — MNA

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Tatmadaw aircraft are seen saluting the Senior General in honour of Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022 in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 February 2022.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla host dinner marking Diamond Jubilee Union Day

CHAIRMAN of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla held a dinner reception to mark the Diamond Jubilee Union Day at Nay Pyi Taw City Hall square in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Vice-Chairman of SAC Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Thray Sithu Soe Win and wife, accompanied by Union Ministers, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman and ethnic cultural groups welcomed Senior General and wife when they arrived at the place of dinner.

Then, the Senior General, Vice-Senior General and wives cordially greeted state/region ethnic cultural groups, chairpersons and representatives of political parties, members of peacemaking organizations, representatives of seven NCA signatories and four non-NCA signatories, region/state ethnic affairs ministers, deputy ministers, senior military officials, region/state Chief Ministers, Union Ministers, Union level officials and SAC members.

The Senior General and wife took the position at the dining table and viewed the swarm of drones that were flying in the formation of the flag of Diamond Jubilee Union Day, flags and maps of regions/states.

Then, SAC members Dr Banya Aung Moe, U Shwe Kyein, Saw Daniel, U Moung Har, Jean Phang Naw Taung, Daw Aye Nu Sein, Mahn Nyein Maung and U Khin Maung Swe presented cash awards for the decorated floats and the respective region/state chief ministers received the awards.

Then, SAC member U Khin Maung Swe gave the third prize for the float of Ayeyawady Region to region Chief Minister U Tin Maung Win and Vice-Senior General Soe Win presented the second prize for Shan State to Shan State Chief Minister Dr Kyaw Tun.

Then, the Senior General gave the first prize to Magway Region to Chief Minister U Tint Lwin.

After that, the Senior General and his wife enjoyed the dinner together with the attendees.

Before and during the dinner, the musicians of the MRTV modern music band entertained the audience with the songs.

After the dinner, the Senior General and wife watched the performance of the artists from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, region/state cultural dance troupes at the square of City Hall.

After the entertainment programmes, the Senior General and wife cordially gave the honorary flower bouquet and greeted the ethnic cultural troupes who entertained at the Diamond Jubilee Union Day event.

The dinner reception was attended by SAC members and their wives, retired Generals and Lieutenant-Generals, the Union Supreme Court Chief Justice, Chairman of UEC, Union Ministers and wives, Union Auditor-General, the chairman of Union Civil Service Board, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Chief Ministers of Regions and States, CBM Governor, the chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission, senior military officers and wives, advisors of the SAC Chairman, Judges of the Union Supreme Court, members of the Constitutional Tribunal, UEC members, Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and wife, Deputy Ministers, Members of Union Civil Service Board, Deputy Governors of CBM, Deputy Chairman of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, Nay Pyi Taw Council members, region/state Ethnic Affairs Ministers, members of ACC, Nay Pyi Taw municipal members, Deputy Mayor, members of peacemaking organizations, leaders and representatives of NCA signatories, chairmen and representatives of political party, departmental officials, region/state ethnic cultural groups and invitees among others. — MNA

The Senior General and wife cordially greets the representatives of political parties, NCA signatories, non-NCA signatories and dignitaries at the dinner event.

The Senior General and wife cordially greets the representatives of political parties, NCA signatories, non-NCA signatories and dignitaries at the dinner event.

The first prize for the decorated float.

The second prize for the decorated float.

The third prize for the decorated float.

Situation on Peacemaking Process

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.

(Excerpt from the speech made by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on one-year State responsibilities discharged by the State Administration Council on 1-2-2022)

Flag hoisting ceremony to celebrate 75th Union Day organized in Nay Pyi Taw

The flag hoisting ceremony to commemorate the 75th Union Day in progress in Nay Pyi Taw.

The State Flag is being hoisted.

The ethnic nationals together with Guard of Honour are pictured in saluting the State Flag.

THE flag hoisting ceremony to mark Diamond Jubilee Union Day was organized at Nay Pyi Taw parade ground yesterday.

The Diamond Jubilee Union Day was organized full of the essence of the national objectives of 75th Union Day – (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 perpetually ensure strengthening dynamic Union Spirit which is a genuine patriotic spirit (4) To build the Union based on democracy and federalism in the realization of the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy and (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.

The Guard of Honour hoisted the State Flag at 5:20 am and saluted it together with the ethnic people. — MNA

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

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

A total of 13 tonnes of masks were imported by two vehicles of one company via the Lwejel trading post yesterday.

From 1 to 12 February, a total of 264 tonnes of masks were imported by 38 vehicles of 13 companies.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures 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

Link helping hand and receiving hand at an opportune time

THE good news came out with auspiciousness for the whole country and the entire citizens on 12 February 2022 coinciding with Diamond Jubilee Union Day.

As a gesture of honouring Diamond Jubilee Union Day, the State Administration Council Chairman has withdrawn the ongoing criminal proceedings against AA members and 46 subordinates in accord with Order 17/2022 under Section 419 of the Constitution. Such a move is sure to contribute towards the restoration of perpetual peace for the nation.

The State Administration Council Chairman also granted pardon and deportation to seven Sri Lankan people from the prison under Sub-section (1) of Section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedures on bilateral relations between Myanmar and Sri Lanka and humanitarian grounds while the country is building a peaceful, developing and disciplined democratic nation.

> On the other hand, those already released prisoners need to change their mindsets by abandoning their practice of misdeeds and evil behaviours. It is an opportune time for them to renew their lives by showing their honesty and innocence to the society participants. If so, society will be pleasant and prosperous for all. Now is the time to link the helping hand and receiving hand in society.

Among prisoners who have been sentenced in various prisons for violating the existing laws, 814 prisoners who have already served their sentences in good discipline were sentenced under Sub-section (1) of Section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and they were also pardoned on the condition that if they commit another offence, they will continue to serve the remaining sentences.

It was a great chance for those prisoners to rejoin society as well as their families. In society, everybody possesses an outstanding point to do something. Likewise, those prisoners have the specific capacity in individuals to be able to benefit society. That is why it is necessary to utilize their capability while improving their mindsets based on the progress of their constructive activities in society when they have rejoined.

A human cannot live alone. They have to live in society. Those already released prisoners are sure to have a keenness to rejoin society. Hence, all the people from the society should not set aside them and lend a helping hand to those prisoners to have a daring to participate in the social works.

On the other hand, those already released prisoners need to change their mindsets by abandoning their practice of misdeeds and evil behaviours. It is an opportune time for them to renew their lives by showing their honesty and innocence to the society participants. If so, society will be pleasant and prosperous for all. Now is the time to link the helping hand and receiving hand in society.

WHO prequalifies arthritis drug for severe Covid cases

The World Health Organization said Friday that it had prequalified the arthritis treatment tocilizumab for use in patients hospitalized with severe Covid-19, in a bid to increase access to the pricey drug.

THE monoclonal antibody, used in anti-inflammatory drugs made by Swiss pharma giant Roche, has been shown to reduce the risk of death and also hospitalization time in certain patients suffering from severe Covid.

WHO has, like the United States and the European Union, already recommended its use to treat severe Covid in hospital settings.

But it remains in short supply and is very expensive — a single dose reportedly goes for up to $600 in lower-income countries, WHO said, adding though that its prequalification should help make it more accessible.

Roche, a Swiss multinational healthcare company, operates worldwide under two divisions: Pharmaceuticals and Diagnostics. The monoclonal antibody, used in anti-inflammatory drugs made by Swiss pharma giant Roche, has been shown to reduce the risk of death and also hospitalization time in certain patients suffering from severe Covid. **PHOTO: ROCHE/AFP**

Monoclonal antibody

The UN health agency said it had added three different compositions of the monoclonal antibody to its list of prequalified treatments for the pandemic disease, in a move aimed to spur more the production of more cheaper generic versions.

"The listings should pave the way for more companies coming forward to seek WHO prequalification, thereby increasing the number of quality-assured products and creating competition leading to potentially lower prices," WHO said in a statement.

"The prequalification of these products will also facilitate low- and middle-income countries' authorization of them as Covid treatments," it said.

WHO told AFP its prequalification process was primarily aimed at ensuring the quality, safety and efficacy of medical products procured to developing countries.

A prequalification provides assurances to countries that they are purchasing quality health products.

Prior to tocilizumab, the WHO has prequalified three different compositions for the steroid dexamethasone for treating Covid, as well as Gilead's antiviral remdesivir, although that prequalification has since been suspended.

Tocilizumab has previously been authorized mostly for the treatment of arthritis in about 120 countries.

But during the pandemic, it has also been shown to suppress a dangerous "cytokine storm" — the over-reaction of the immune system to the coronavirus.

Patent for tocilizumab

WHO pointed out that the patent for tocilizumab had expired for most uses.

This, it said, "means there should be no intellectual property barriers," although it warned there was "low global availability for quality-assured biosimilars of the product".

WHO said it was currently discussing with Roche how to lower prices and improve access in low- and middle-income countries.

But it stressed to AFP that while Friday's prequalification was specifically for Roche products, "many generic companies are already producing tocilizumab, some of which have also applied for prequalification".

SOURCE: AFP

COVID-19 entry ban could deter interest in Japan: UK scholars

SCHOLARS of Japanese in Britain fear for the subject's long-term future due to strict COVID-19 regulations, which prohibit foreign students from coming to Japan.

Academics speaking to Kyodo News say they are worried applications to study Japanese and Japan at British institutions could start to fall in the future.

This could impact the viability of smaller Japanese studies departments and, in turn, Japan losing valuable global influence via graduates who have spent time in the country.

Currently, students in Britain are reduced to having online language lessons with tutors in Japan, frequently at antisocial hours due to the time difference.

Some students have deferred their studies until Japan reopens or transferred to other languages where they can take a year abroad, according to the scholars.

Academic studies of Japan

In addition, academic studies of Japan have been put on hold while researchers cannot access the country properly and conduct practical fieldwork.

Due to the pandemic, Japan currently has an entry ban on nonresident foreigners. This will be maintained until the end of February "while all necessary steps will be taken from the perspective of humanitarian concerns and in accordance with Japan's national interest," according to the Japanese Embassy in London.

Christopher Hood, president of the British Association for Japanese Studies, who helped organize an open letter to the Japanese Embassy complaining about the situation, said he feared applications to study Japan will fall this year unless the requirements are eased.

"If this situation continues through 2022, we are likely to see pressure on smaller programs, and possibly even some of the larger ones. It could also deter people from doing an M.A. or Ph.D. relating to Japan," Hood told Kyodo News.

"I dare say that there are some academics having to think what their prospects are given how hard it is to get to Japan and do research," he said.

Financially untenable to wait

Barak Kushner, a professor of East Asian history at Cambridge University, said, "If things don't change, we are now going to be in our third year of not being able to get into Japan. We have students who have put their lives on hold, and after a certain amount of time, it becomes financially untenable to wait."

"I think that longer-term we are going to see people say 'well, why bother?' (with Japanese)."

"If Japan's primary response (to a new variant) is to shut all the foreigners out, then that is going to create a potential backlash," Kushner said. "Japan is letting its own people out to study...this is going to create discord."

"Japan scholars are growing frustrated and despondent about the future."

He said several of his students had switched from Japanese to study Chinese in Taiwan, which has been very accommodating to foreign students.

Kushner added foreign students are more than happy to pay for quarantine facilities in Japan rather than the government.

He warned continued entry restrictions could diminish Japan's "footprint" of influence in Europe "very quickly".

Despite the pandemic, the academics argue allowing a relatively small number of foreign students and academics to enter Japan would not pose a serious risk.

Entry for research trips

Lauren Constance, 25, a Ph.D. student in Japanese studies at Cardiff University, expressed the frustration of countless young people trying to gain entry for research trips.

"It feels frustrating because I studied the Japanese language pre-pandemic for four years at undergraduate level and spent time in Japan," she said. "You feel that because you have invested so much in a country, that they would welcome you. I feel a little isolated and stranded."

Constance is unsure if she will be able to visit Japan before completing her Ph.D., which is now solely based on online research.

She said, "I feel really sorry for the undergraduates who are going to miss out on their year in Japan. Even if they provide what they can online, it's nowhere near the same as being able to get out there and having the full experience. It's also not just the opportunity to use the language but developing yourself as a person."

SOURCE: Kyodo

Photo shows an international arrival lobby at Narita airport near Tokyo on 2 December 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 12 February 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 13 February 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region and isolated in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon, and Ayeyawady regions and Northern Shan, Chin, Rakhine and Kayah states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of continuation of scattered rain or thundershower in Taninthayi Region.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 February 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 February 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 February 2022: Partly cloudy.

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

A moderate earthquake of magnitude (5.0) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (3) miles south of Tanai), latitude 26.31°N, longitude 96.72°E, depth (10) kilometers, about (73) miles northwest of Myitkyina seismological observatory was recorded at (01)hr (46)min (47) sec MST on 12 February 2022.

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EAOs, NGOs, political parties visit construction site of Mara Vijaya Buddha Image in Nay Pyi Taw

The state/region chief ministers and Tatmadaw retired officers (left), representatives of political parties (centre) and ethnic armed organizations (right) pay observation tours around the Mara Vijaya Buddha Image in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 February 2022.

THE representatives of ethnic armed organizations, NGOs and political parties, who attended the Diamond Jubilee Union Day Ceremony, visited the construction site of Mara Vijaya Buddha Image in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

First, the construction in charge Brig-Gen Zaw Naing Oo explained that the main intentions of the construction of Buddha image, seeking advice from State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, the marble rock was conveyed from the Sagyin Hill to Nay Pyi Taw through waterway and motor roads, work process to publish the Tri Pitaka treatises in Romanized language in the Buddha Park, curving of altar using modern CNC machines and the construction of religious buildings in the pagoda compound based on architectural works of the Yadanabon era.

Then, the study group viewed the scale model of the Buddha image, pagoda compound, Pitaka inscription chambers, samples of stone inscriptions, location of altar of the Buddha image and curving processes with the use of modern machines.

Similarly, the retired Tatmadaw officers, state/region Chief Ministers and wives visited the Buddha image construction site and the deputy chairman of the pagoda construction committee Lt-Gen Kan Myint Than clarified the work processes to convey the marble rocks, placement of the thrones and curving processes with the use of modern machines.

They also studied the scale model of the Buddha image and religious buildings to be constructed in the pagoda compound. — MNA

"Tu Shin Hnwal Pyaw Gita Pwal Taw" grand singing contest, award-giving event held

A live broadcast of the "Tu Shin Hnwal Pyaw Gita Pwal Taw" grand final third round singing competition & awards ceremony, which marks Diamond Jubilee Union Day, was held last night at the Myawady Media Centre in Pyithaya, Yankin Township of Yangon Region.

At the ceremony, the Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe, Yangon Region Government Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Win Tint, Chairman of the Yangon City Development Committee Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay, Ayeyawady Region Government Minister for Social Affair U Maung Maung Than and the officials were in attendance.

At the grand final third round, an ethnic competition, MF 03 Yay Gi Nah from Sagaing region, MF 04 Zaw Htway Latt from Mandalay region, Zin Thu Thu Tun from Ayeyawady region, MF 07 Cho Mi Mi Zaw from Ayeyawady region and MF 10 Chit Nu from Bago region competed with two songs each, performed by the Ensemble band.

Then, the well-known singer, Jenny and other MRTV's Ethnic musicians were entertaining while the judges are counting the votes to celebrate the awarding ceremony for the grand final third round.

After that, a congratulatory and thankful video message, delivered by the Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn to the "Tu Shin Hnwal Pyaw Gita Pwal Taw" grand final third round, was played.

At the award presentation ceremony, the five special price winners, MF 01 Myat Soe San from Magway region, MF 02 Kyu Kyu Khaing from Yangon region, MF05 Ahrain from Kachin State, MF08 Chan Hein Win Tun from Kayin state and MF09 Zan Htoo from Yangon region, approached the second step, were awarded by U Lwin Myint, chairman of the Myanmar Music Association (Central) while MF 03 Yay Gi Nah from Sagaing region was awarded by U Zayar, director of Myanmar Radio and Television and MF 04 Zaw Htway Latt from Mandalay region was awarded Mayor U Bo Htay, Chairman of the Yangon City Development Committee Yangon.

The third prize winner, MF10 Chit Nu from Bago region was awarded by U Maung Maung Than Minister for Social Affair, Ayeyawady Region Government while the second prize winner, MF07 Cho Mi Mi Zaw from Ayeyawady region was awarded by Colonel Win Tint, Minister for Yangon Region Government Security and Border Affairs.

The first prize winner, MF 06 Zin Thu Thu Tun from Ayeyawady region was awarded by Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe, Commander of Yangon Command.

At the "Tu Shin Hnwal Pyaw Gita Pwal Taw" grand final third round singing competition & awards ceremony, authorities gave K10 million for the first winner, K6 million for the second winner, K4 million for the third winner, K20 million each for outstanding awards and K1 million each for the special prize.

The "Tu Shin Hnwal Pyaw Gita Pwal Taw" grand final third round singing competition has been held every Friday night since 26 November 2021. — Ko Ko Zaw/GNLM

Awardees are pictured at the "Happy Together Music Festival" at the Myawady Media Centre in Yangon on 12 February 2022. **PHOTO : LAT LAT (MNA)**

1,787 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 12 February, total figure rises to 545,298

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **545,298** after **1,787** new cases were reported on 12 February 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **516,882** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at **19,310** without casualties for 20 days consecutively.—MNA

40 inmates released from Mandalay Central Prison in commemoration of Diamond Jubilee Union Day

FORTY inmates of the Mandalay Central Prison were pardoned under Section 401, Sub-section (1) of the Criminal Procedure Code to commemorate Diamond Jubilee Union Day in Aungmyaythazan Township, Mandalay.

The amnesty ceremony was held at the Mandalay Central Prison yesterday morning, attended by Mandalay Region Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Kyaw Kyaw Min, Mandalay Region Police Chief Sein Lwin and head of Mandalay Region Prison Department U Cho Win Tun.

Prison officials then instructed the inmates to obey COVID-19 prevention measures and were released from prison after undergoing a medical examination and receiving travel expenses.

Deputy Director in charge of the Mandalay Central Prison U Aung Myo Chun said that the State Administrative Council has commuted the sentences of prisoners in prisons under Section 401 and Sub-section (1) of the Law in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day.

"The number of prisoners released from Mandalay Central Prison today is 37 male inmates and three female inmates, for a total of 40.

At the time of their release, they were given travel expenses and vaccination records of COVID-19," U Aung Myo Chun said.

Next released inmate Ko Kyaw Zin Tun said, "We especially thank all the responsible authorities for allowing prisoners like us, who are serving their sentences, to return home earlier than the due date in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee. I am very happy to be able to return to my family home earlier".

According to Section 401, Sub-section (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, if the inmates commit another crime, they will be pardoned on the basis that they will continue to serve the remaining sentences, officials said. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/ GNLM

Released inmates are seen at the front of the Mandalay Central Prison on 12 February 2022. **PHOTO : MIN HTET AUNG**

Illegal teak, utensils, mobile phones, and vehicles seized

Customs officials check the illegal mobile phone units.

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

On 5 February, a joint team from the Customs Department in charge of opening a container at Hteedan Port in Yangon seized goods (estimated value of K36,960,000) that were not included in the import declaration (ID) and were prosecuted under the customs law.

On 11 February, under the m anagement of the Ayeyawady Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force, a joint team from the Region Forest Department inspected 23.133 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated at K6,295,160) in Kyangin Township, and action is taken under the Forest Law.

Similarly, on 12 February, according to the information provided by the Bago Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force, the Region Forest Department and its joint teams inspected 6.4514 tonnes of illegal timber (estimated at K1,403,060) in forest reserves in Toungoo and Thayawady districts and action is taken under the Forest Law.

In addition, a joint inspection team under the management of the Sagaing Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force conducted a surprise inspection and seized one unregistered Isuzu vehicle (estimated at K6,000,000) in Shwebo and action is taken under the Import Law.

Similarly, in Kayin State, a total of 244 illegal mobile phone sets (estimated at K20,400,000) and one express vehicle carrying these items (estimated at K75,000,000) totalled approximately K95,400,000 were raided by the Customs Department and the Joint Inspection Team of the Kawkareik Bridge Permanent Inspection Station and action is being taken under the Customs Law.

Therefore, a total of six arrests were made on 5, 11, and 12 February and their estimated values are K146,058,220, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. —MNA

About 19.45 mln people fully vaccinated in Myanmar as of 8 Feb

ABOUT 19.45 million people had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in Myanmar as of 8 February, according to the Ministry of Health (MOH).

The country is administrating the vaccines to 36.9 million people aged 18 and above. As of 1 February, there are 19.45 million people completed full doses of the vaccine and about 3.11 million people received single doses of COVID-19, according to the Ministry.

Currently, the country has successfully inoculated over 53 per cent of its population. This year, the vaccination will continue to be given to targeted groups to improve vaccine coverage.

The Ministry of Health has already received over 60 million doses of vaccines including about 45 million doses were donated and over 15 million doses were purchased, according to the Ministry.

Besides, the Russian-made Sputnik Light COVID-19 vaccine, which is need to be given in a single injection, is being inoculated in townships with low immunization coverage in states and regions including Yangon. So far, about 124,747 people had already been received the Sputnik Light vaccines as of 27 January, according to the MoH.

The Russian-made Sputnik Light vaccine requires a single injection and has a high immunity rate, which could raise the coverage of the COVID-19 vaccine in a short period.

Myanmar detected its first two COVID-19 positive cases on 23 March 2020. The Ministry also urged people should receive the full dose of the vaccine and those who have received the first dose to visit the nearest immunization location or near the scheduled date for the second dose.

The country has been administering vaccinations since January 2021, using the China-made Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines, across the country. — Aye Maung/ GNLM

Diamond Jubilee Union Day celebrated in regions, states, self-administered division/zones

Diamond Jubilee Union Day celebration in Minbu.

THE Diamond Jubilee Union Day ceremonies were organized in states/regions and self-administered division/zones yesterday. The events were attended by respective region/state chief ministers, acting chief ministers, commanders of respective military commands, state/region-level departmental officials, social welfare organizations, students and locals among others.

First, the region/state chief ministers and officials saluted the National Flag, fallen heroes and soldiers and relevant officials read out the message sent by SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to mark Diamond Jubilee Union Day.

The attendees to the events also viewed the booths displaying regional development programmes, transport, rural development, social, economy, education, health, livestock, electrification programmes in regions and states under implementation by ministries concerned and the sports competitions.

Moreover, the officials gave prizes to the students who won in sports competitions.

To mark the 75th Union Day, the roads, bridges, buildings, stadiums and departmental exhibition booths were opened, and the region/state and self-administered division/zones celebrated colourful light festivals and other funfairs in the evening. — MNA

Diamond Jubilee Union Day is held in Hpa-an.

Booths opened marking 75th Union Day in Sittway Township

THE opening ceremony of departmental and social organizations, books and literary works of authors and Rakhine traditional food exhibition booths were organized at Wethali Stadium in Sittway Township of Rakhine State marking the 75th Union Day yesterday.

First, Commander of the Western Command Maj-Gen Htin Latt Oo, acting Rakhine state chief minister Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Kyaw Thura, Economic Affairs Minister U San Shwe Maung and Natural Resources Minister U Than Tun cut the ribbon to open the booths. Then, the officials inspected the booths.

U Tin Ko Win, head of Rakhine State IPRD said, "We display with 40 booths marking the 75th Union Day. They feature record photos of state government regarding development programmes, work plans of departments concerned, public services, books published by writers from Sittway and in Rakhine State, including the traditional food of Rakhine people. The departmental officials and students can study the displays. If the people visit, they can know the performance of the state government for regional development programmes, including activities of relevant departments. Therefore, the people should pay visits there."

The booths were opened at Wethali Stadium of Sittway Township on 11 and 12 February. — Tin Tun (IPRD)/GNLM

Diamond Jubilee Union Day ceremony held in Yangon People's Square

THE 2022 Diamond Jubilee Union Day State Flag hoisting and saluting ceremony were held at Yangon People's Square yesterday at 5:30 am.

The ceremony was attended by Colonel Win Tint, Minister for Yangon Region Security and Border Affairs, on behalf of the Chief Minister of Yangon Region, regional government ministers, the officials from departments, ethnic representatives and guests.

Initially, Colonel Win Tint, Minister for Yangon Region Security and Border Affairs saluted the Union Flag together with attendees.

Then, Colonel Win Tint, Minister for Yangon Region Security and Border Affairs, read the Union Day message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing after which the ceremony came to a close. — Aung Myint (IPRD)/GNLM

Ethnic people are pictured in celebrating Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022 in Yangon. **PHOTO : AUNG MYINT**

German BASF, Heraeus to establish JV for precious metal recycling in China

Located within 2 hours west of London, BASF's state-of-the-art recycling facility at Cinderford in Gloucester, UK is fully dedicated to the recovery of precious metals from spent automotive catalytic converters. **PHOTO: BASF/XINHUA**

THE German chemical group BASF and technology company Heraeus agreed to establish a joint venture in China to recover precious metals from spent automotive catalysts, the companies said on Friday.

The new company would be set up in Pinghu, China. The establishment of the legal entity is planned for the first quarter of 2022 following approval by relevant authorities, according to a joint statement.

BASF and Heraeus would hold 50 per cent each in the joint venture, according to the statement. Construction of a new factory in China is scheduled to begin in 2022. Operations are to start in 2023, creating 100 new jobs.

Recycling end-of-life materials to recover platinum-group-metals would "enable a circular economy," the statement noted. The precious metals were used to manufacture new products for the automotive, chemical, electronics, and green hydrogen industries.— Xinhua ■

BMW acquires 75 pct stake in China joint venture

GERMAN car maker BMW "strengthens partnership in China" as the extension of the agreement of the joint venture BMW Brilliance Automotive Ltd. (BBA) until 2040 took effect on Friday.

With the issuance of a new "business licence", the BMW Group's share in the joint venture with Brilliance China Automotive Holdings Ltd. (CBA) was increased from 50 per cent to 75 per cent, the company said.

"Today marks an important step, as we continue to expand our long and successful commitment to China," said Oliver Zipse, chairman of the Board of Management of BMW AG. "Our continued success in the world's largest automotive market can only go hand in hand with the growth and further development of our BBA joint venture." The joint venture was established in 2003 and the agreement on the contract extension was signed in late 2018. BBA produces BMW vehicles with internal combustion engines and electric drives mainly for the Chinese market at two factories in Shenyang, capital of Liaoning Province.

In 2021, a total of 846,237 BMW vehicles were sold to customers in China, an increase of 8.9 per cent year-on-year. In the same period, more than 700,000 cars were produced by the BBA joint venture.—Xinhua ■

Photo taken on 7 November 2020 shows an i8 Roadster car is exhibited at the booth of BMW at the Automobile exhibition area during the third China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, east China.
PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHAO DINGZHE

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M.V DA PING VOY.NO. (074)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V DA PING VOY.NO. (074)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-2-2022** 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.

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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.

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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.

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Shipping Agency Department
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel decides to evacuates diplomats from Ukraine amid escalating tensions

ISRAEL said Friday that it has decided to evacuate Israeli diplomats and embassy employees from Kyiv amid escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Israel has issued a travel warning and Israeli visitors to Ukraine are advised to leave the country.

The ministry also recommended Israelis who are considering travelling to Ukraine to postpone their plans for the time being.

"In the wake of the worsening situation in Ukraine, Israeli nationals who are currently in Ukraine are advised to reconsider their stay in the country," the statement read, urging Israelis "to avoid approaching flashpoint areas in any case."—Xinhua ■

Palin lawsuit against New York Times tests US libel laws

A New York jury was preparing Friday to begin considering a defamation lawsuit brought by 2008 Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin against the New York Times that could have implications for journalistic freedom of expression in the United States.

Palin, the 58-year-old former Alaska governor and one-time darling of the conservative Tea Party movement, claims the newspaper intentionally harmed her reputation with a 2017 editorial that suggested her campaign rhetoric had helped incite a mass shooting.

The article was published following an attack on Republican lawmakers who were practising for a baseball game near Washington.

The comment piece linked the attack to a 2011 shooting in Arizona that wounded lawmaker Gabrielle Giffords and killed six others.

It noted that before the Arizona attack Palin's political action committee had run an ad that put Gifford's congressional district in the crosshairs of a firearm.—AFP ■

US sending 3,000 more troops to Poland, as Ukraine tension rises: senior official

Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division, sit strapped into a C-17A Globemaster III before they airdrop during Joint Operational Access Exercise at Pope Air Force Base, N.C., 9 February 2011. **PHOTO: U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO/STAFF SGT. GREG C. BIONDO/AFP**

THE United States said Friday it is sending 3,000 more troops to Poland to reassure NATO allies amid heightened fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

These 3,000 troops from the 82nd Airborne Division, the US military's main rapid reaction force, were already placed on alert in late January at the request of President Joe Biden.

Biden wanted to show support for US allies in Eastern Europe in the face of any possible aggression by Russia.

They will now leave the base in coming days and are expected to arrive in Poland early next week, a senior defence official said. These troops will join some 2,000 airborne soldiers whose deployment was announced 2 February. A total of 1,700 are in Poland and the rest in Germany, where US forces in Europe have their headquarters.

"All told, these 5,000 additional personnel comprise a highly mobile and flexible force, capable of multiple missions," said the US official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"They are being deployed to reassure our NATO allies, deter any potential aggression against NATO's eastern flank, train with host-nation forces, and contribute to a wide range of contingencies," the official added.

They are in addition to some 80,000 US troops stationed in Europe, either on a permanent base or on a rotating basis. In a dramatic escalation of its threat warning, the White House said Friday that Russia could invade Ukraine in a matter of days, even before the end of the Beijing Olympics on 20 February.—AFP ■

Double trouble: Fears of violence over Libya's 2 PMs

LIBYANS found themselves with two prime ministers on Friday, raising the spectre of renewed violence in a country where elites have ignored the wishes of citizens to choose their leaders, analysts say.

After weeks of manoeuvering since 24 December elections were indefinitely postponed, the House of Representatives in the country's east on Thursday picked former interior minister and ex-fighter pilot Fathi Bashagha to replace interim prime minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah.

But Dbeibah, a construction tycoon appointed a year ago as part of United Nations-led peace efforts, has vowed only to hand power to an elected government.

Peter Millett, a former British ambassador to the country, told AFP the main division now "is between the Libyan people -- who want elections -- and the political elite, who don't."He noted that more than two million Libyans, out of a total population of seven million, had collected voter cards last year, showing a desire to pick new representatives in December when both legislative and presidential polls were supposed to be held. "The motivation of many MPs is to hang on to jobs and privileges rather than allow for a smooth process leading to elections," Millett said.

It's not the first time the oil-rich North African country has found itself with two premiers.

Libyan interim Prime Minister Fathi Bashagha, newly named by the Libyan parliament, delivers a speech at Mitiga International Airport in Tripoli on 10 February 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

Torn apart by a decade of strife since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising that toppled dictator Moamer Kadhafi, Libya had two rival heads of government between 2014 and 2016.—AFP ■

Ukraine displaced fear losing homes again

WHEN she fled the conflict zone in east Ukraine, Lyudmyla Bobova never imagined she would celebrate her 59th birthday, almost eight years later, still living in emergency housing and under the threat of fresh bloodshed.

"We have got used to living here, we don't have a choice," she told AFP, standing in the doorway of the small room she shares with her disabled husband and elderly mother.

Now, as fears swirl that over 100,000 Russian troops camped along Ukraine's border could stage an invasion, there are fresh warnings that millions more people could join the hundreds of thousands like Bobova already forced from their homes.

It was the summer of 2014 when Bobova says she hastily packed two bags and left her native Lugansk region as it was engulfed by fighting between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists.

She headed to Ukraine's second city of Kharkiv, the nearest major hub controlled by the government, in the country's largely Russian-speaking industrial east.

By early 2015 she was living in pre-fabricated housing put up in a hurry for 500 vulnerable displaced with funding from the German government.—AFP ■

US warns Russia could attack Ukraine 'any day'

US President Joe Biden will speak to Vladimir Putin on Saturday after the United States warned that a Russian invasion of Ukraine could begin in days.

The US had dramatically raised the alarm over Ukraine on Friday, saying a Russian invasion starting with civilians caught under aerial bombing could begin in days and telling US citizens to leave within 48 hours.

An attack by the more than 100,000 Russian troops currently massed next to Ukraine "could occur any day now," White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters in Washington. Dismissing speculation that the Kremlin would never trigger the crisis while the Beijing Olympics were still underway in close Russian ally China, Sullivan said such an attack "could occur" before the Games end on 20 February.

Ukrainian servicemen take delivery of FGM-148 Javelins, American man-portable anti-tank missiles provided by the US. **PHOTO: AFP**

The scenario of an imminent attack is "a very, very distinct possibility," Sullivan added.

While stressing that it was not yet known whether Russian President Vladimir Putin had taken a decision, saying "we can't predict the exact determination", Sullivan made clear the United States was bracing for the worst, including a "rapid assault" on the capital Kyiv. "If a Russian attack on Ukraine proceeds, it is likely to begin with aerial bombing and missile attacks that could obviously kill civilians," he said. "Any American in Ukraine should leave as soon as possible, and in any event in the next 24 to 48 hours." Sullivan spoke shortly after President Joe Biden and six European leaders, the heads of NATO and the European Union held talks on the worst crisis between the West and Russia since the end of the Cold War. A US official said Biden would speak with Putin on Saturday, while the French government said that President Emmanuel Macron would also be calling the Russian leader on Saturday.—AFP ■

Iranians get behind wheel to mark Islamic revolution

In the Middle East country hardest-hit by the pandemic, tens of thousands of Iranians marked the 1979 overthrow of the shah's regime. **PHOTO: AFP**

TENS of thousands of Iranians drove through Tehran on Friday to mark the 43rd anniversary of the country's Islamic Revolution, staying in vehicles rather than marching on foot because of Covid restrictions.

Due to the pandemic, state television said that — again this year — there should be "no gathering or marching" by those celebrating the 1979 overthrow of the shah's regime.

Instead, people travelled by car, motorcycle and bicycle, to converge on the capital's iconic Azadi (Freedom) Square, despite chilly temperatures.

Some had draped the red, white and green Iranian flag over their cars. Others chanted slogans of "Death to America" and "We will resist until the end" from windows as they drove by. They looped around the roundabout, before some got out of their vehicles to let loose balloons and take selfies in front of Azadi Tower, a massive monument at the city's western entrance.—AFP ■

EU seeks to deploy border agency to Senegal

EUROPEAN Commissioner Ylva Johansson on Friday offered to deploy the EU's border agency to Senegal to help combat migrant smuggling, following a surge in perilous crossings to Spain's Canary Islands.

At a news conference in the Senegalese capital Dakar, Johansson said the arrangement would mark the first time that the EU border agency Frontex would operate outside Europe.

Should the Senegalese government agree, the commissioner added, the EU could send surveillance equipment such as drones and vessels, as well as Frontex personnel.

Deployed alongside local forces, the agents would "work together to fight the smugglers," she said.

"This is my offer and I hope that Senegal's government is interested in this unique opportunity," said Johansson, the EU's home affairs commissioner. The announcement comes amid a sharp jump in attempts to reach the Canary Islands — a gateway to the EU — as authorities have clamped down on crossings to Europe from Libya.

The Spanish archipelago lies just over 100 kilometres (60 miles) from the coast of Africa at its closest point. But the conditions in the open Atlantic are often dangerous, and would-be migrants often brave the trip in rickety wooden canoes known as pirogues. About 1,200 people died or went missing attempting the crossing in 2021, according to the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM).—AFP ■

African migrants try to reach Spain's Canary Islands aboard open canoes known as pirogues. Pictured: a 'boat graveyard' at Arinaga on Gran Canaria island. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hungary's gov't says no to extra NATO troops

THE government of Hungary will not accept further North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops on the country's soil as part of maneuvers related to the Ukraine crisis, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said here on Friday.

Contacted by Xinhua for confirmation, the ministry's Press Office referred to an earlier interview given by Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto to Euronews and said that it reflected the Hungarian government's official stance.

The United States has already sent extra troops to Poland and Romania, while Germany has deployed additional troops to Lithuania. NATO troops are already stationed in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.—Xinhua ■

US to reopen Solomon Islands embassy after 29 years

THE United States plans to re-establish an embassy in the Solomon Islands, a senior State Department official said Saturday, as Washington seeks to beef up its presence in a region where China is rapidly expanding its influence.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken is set to announce the opening of a new embassy on the Pacific island state during a visit to nearby Fiji -- 29 years after the United States downgraded its diplomatic presence in Honiara. The move comes just a few months after riots in the island chain of 800,000 people in November when protesters tried to storm parliament and then went on a three-day rampage, torching much of the capital Honiara's Chinatown. The unrest was sparked by opposition to veteran Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare and partly fuelled by poverty, unemployment and inter-island rivalries, but anti-China sentiment also played a role. The United States closed its embassy in the Solomons Island capital in 1993 and is now represented by a consulate there, with an embassy in the Papua New Guinea capital of Port Moresby.—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

(a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.

(b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

(c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

(a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.

(b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international inves tment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.

(c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

(a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.

(b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.

(c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Questions swirl as Russian skater awaits Beijing Olympics doping fate

Russia's Kamila Valieva trained on Friday in Beijing. **PHOTO: AFP**

QUESTIONS grew Saturday over why it took six weeks for Kamila Valieva's failed drug test to come to light, as the 15-year-old Russian figure skater fights to stay at the Beijing Olympics.

The build-up to the Games was overshadowed by concerns about Covid and human rights in China, and the doping scandal surrounding the prodigious teenager threatens to tarnish the Olympics anew.

Valieva's Beijing Olympic fate is now in the hands of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), which is expected to make a ruling before she is scheduled to compete in the women's figure skating singles competition starting on Tuesday.

Valieva, who played a starring role in helping Russia win team gold in Beijing on Monday, tested positive for the banned substance trimetazidine after competing at an event in Saint Petersburg on 25 December .—AFP ■

Bale returns as Real Madrid held by Villarreal

REAL MADRID were held to a goalless draw at Villarreal on Saturday despite the return from a lengthy injury absence of Gareth Bale. The La Liga leaders' slip-up will give renewed hope to title rivals Sevilla after their 2-0 win over Elche on Friday. Carlo Ancelotti's Real are now four points clear of second-placed Sevilla at the top as they look to regain the crown they lost to Atletico Madrid last season. The draw moves Unai Emery's Villarreal up to fifth, only two points behind Barcelona in the fourth and final Champions League spot.

Real Madrid will turn their focus to Tuesday's Champions League last-16 first leg at Paris Saint-Germain. Bale was surprisingly named in the starting line-up as the Welshman made his first appearance for Real Madrid since August.

He has suffered from various injuries in the months since, although he has played four times for Wales.—AFP ■

Team Myanmar make final preparations for ASEAN U-23 tourney

THE Myanmar U-23 team is making final preparations for the 2022 ASEAN U-23 Championship, according to the Myanmar Football Federation. The youth squad left for Cambodia on 8 February to compete in the ASEAN U-23 Championship and has been training since 9 February.

Myanmar U-23 head coach Popov selected up to 26 players for the tourney.

Team Administrator U Si Thu Aung, Head Coach Veliza Popov, Assistant Head Coach U Zaw Win Tun, Goal Coach U Aung Kyaw Kyaw, Goalkeepers Pyae Phyo Aung, Thura Kyaw, Thura Kyaw, Tun Nanda Oo, Defenders Aung Wunna Soe, Hein Zayyar Lin, Naung Naung Soe, Si Thu Moe Khant, Soe Moe Kyaw, Thet Hein Soe, Thet Paing Htwe, Ye Lin Htet, Midfielders Sai Sai Kuan Pha (alias) Arthur Pha, Lin Htet Soe, Nann Htike Zaw, Lwin Moe Aung, Wai Lin Aung, Yan Kyaw Soe, Ye Yint Aung, Zaw Win Thein, Pyae Phyo Aung, Strikers Htet Phyo Wai, Kaung Myat Thu, Khin Kyaw Win, Yar Zar Aung, Win Naing Tun and Myat Kaung Khant will be with the team.

With the withdrawal of the Indonesia team in Group B, there are only three teams left including Myanmar. Team Myanmar will play against Malaysia on 15 February and Laos on 21 February in the group matches.

Cambodia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Brunei Darussalam are falling in Group A while Thailand, Viet Nam and Singapore are participating in Group C.

The tournament will be held from 14 to 26 February. – Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Olympics: Japan leads way with Olympic record in speed skating pursuit

Japan's (from L) Miho Takagi, Ayano Sato and Nana Takagi compete in the women's speed skating team pursuit quarterfinals at the Beijing Olympics at the National Speed Skating Oval in Beijing on 12 February 2022. **PHOTO: KYODO**

JAPAN advanced from the women's speed skating team pursuit quarterfinals on Saturday, in Olympic record time as it began its gold medal defence at the Beijing Games.

The three-woman team of Ayano Sato, Miho Takagi and her older sister Nana Takagi set a blistering 2-minute, 53.61-second time at the National Speed Skating Oval, cutting 0.28 second off the trio's record at the Pyeonchang Games four years ago. Canada and the Netherlands advanced from their quarterfinals with the second and third fastest times, respectively, and will now face off in the semifinals.

The Russian Olympic Committee ranked fourth to set up a final-four showdown with Japan, which is aiming to become the second team to win two straight Olympic gold medals in the event.— Kyodo ■