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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.

Inter-State/Region Women's Aerobics Competition concludes with award-giving ceremony

THE closing and award-presenting ceremony of the 2022 Inter-State and Region Women's Fitness (Aerobics) Competition was held at Nay Pyi Taw Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium (B) yesterday afternoon in line with the COVID-19 rules.

Members of the State Administration Council Daw Aye Nu Sein, Jean Phang Naw Taung and Saw Daniel, Deputy Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs U Myo Hlaing, officials and staff from respective departments attended the event.

An award-giving ceremony was held after the final competitions of the individual aerobics event.

Consolation prize winners of the five-a-side aerobics competition from Kayin State, Mon State and Magway Region were awarded by Myanmar Women's Sports Federation Executive Daw Jennifer Tin Lay.

Next, Secretary of the Myanmar Women's Sports Federation Daw Aye Aye Shwe presented consolation prizes to the three-a-side teams from Shan State, Rakhine State and Bago Region.

Vice-President of Myanmar Women's Sports Federation Daw Yee Yee Win gave consolation prizes to the individual aerobics competition



SAC Member Daw Aye Nu Sein presents the trophy to the Kachin State team at the competition in Nay Pyi Taw on 22 February 2022.

participants from Kayin State, Sagaing Region, Bago Region and Shan State.

Next, Director-General of the Department of Sports and Physical Education U Tun

Myint Oo presented the first, second and third prizes to the five-a-side aerobics teams from

Yangon Region, Kachin State and Shan State.

SEE PAGE-2

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Myanmar delegation attends the public hearing related to Preliminary Objections raised by Myanmar

PAGE-3

INTERVIEW

Natyaykan coffee farm to open courses for speciality coffee production this year: U Zaw Thein, the farm in charge

PAGE-5

NATIONAL

MoC oversees imports of anti-COVID-19 devices, essential medical supplies

PAGE-6

LOCAL BUSINESS

Tapioca needs market promotion to penetrate more foreign markets

PAGE-7



Objectives of 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

1. THE Tatmadaw to participate in the leading role of national politics for the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism while safeguarding the Constitution (2008) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
2. The Tatmadaw to take responsibility for substantial contribution to measures of peace and prosperity of the country and food sufficiency as a national task the government primarily emphasizes
3. The Tatmadaw to join hands with all ethnic national people in the national reconciliation and peace processes
4. The Tatmadaw to provide necessary assistance for convening a free and fair multiparty democracy general election for ensuring the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism upon completion of endeavours in accord with the provisions of the State of Emergency
5. To build a powerful, capable and modern patriotic Tatmadaw to protect the national interest of the State

Statement to appreciate teachers' efforts

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

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

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

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

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

Information Team
State Administration Council

Inter-State/Region Women's Aerobics Competition ...

FROM PAGE-1

Then, Deputy Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs U Myo Hlaing presented the first, second and third prizes to the three-a-side aerobics teams from Yangon Region, Kachin State and Kayin State.

Afterwards, Jean Phang Naw Taung, a member of the State Administration Council, presented an award to Ma Zami Tang from Kachin State, who won the first prize in the individual aerobics competition.

First runner-up Ma Aye Aye Soe from Rakhine State and second runner-up Ma Yadana Lin from Yangon Region, were also awarded individual medals and cash prizes by Saw Daniel, a member of the State Administration Council.

Then, Daw Aye Nu Sein, a



SAC members Jean Phang Naw Toung (left), Saw Daniel (centre) and Deputy Minister U Myo Hlaing (right) give the medals and cash prizes to individual and the three-a-side aerobics teams.

member of the State Administration Council, presented a championship trophy to the Kachin State team which won the tourney. The purpose of the 2022 State and Region Women's Aerobics Competition was to promote ethnic friendship and the emergence of a new generation of athletes and to raise national fitness standards, officials said. — MNA

3,563 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 22 February, total figure rises to 572,127

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **572,127** after **3,563** new cases were reported on 22 February 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **526,338** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **19,344** after **6** died.—MNA

Promote education as a priority for strengthening democracy

As a larger number of educated persons is designed to own the future of the country for democratization, ...

(Excerpt from the speech made by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at meeting with departmental officials and town elders from Kengtung and Mongpyin townships of Shan State (East), Namsang Township and Kholan of Loilem District in Shan State (South) on 18-2-2022)

Myanmar delegation attends the public hearing related to Preliminary Objections raised by Myanmar

THE International Court of Justice is holding a public hearing relating to the preliminary objections raised by Myanmar concerning the application filed by the Gambia alleging Myanmar of violating the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, from 21 February to 28 February 2022, at the Peace Palace, in The Hague, the Netherlands. The Myanmar delegation led by the Agent of Myanmar, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing and the Alternate Agent of Myanmar, Union Minister for Legal Affairs Attorney-General of the Union Dr Thida Oo is attending the aforementioned public hearing.

During Myanmar's first round of oral argument on 21 February 2022, the Agent of Myanmar, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing presented the opening statement. In his opening statement, the Agent of Myanmar stated that in

administration of justice. He further stated that the arguments that the Court will be hearing over the next days are important and they have significant implications for the future functioning of the Court in general and they have implications for any inter-State case brought before any international court or tribunal. The Agent said that the Government of Myanmar is determined to solve these complex problems, which include consequences of former colonial rule over Burma and India, through peaceful means of negotiation and reconciliation. He added that the tripartite diplomatic discussion between Myanmar, Bangladesh and China has been undertaken for preparation of the process for repatriations to Rakhine State from Bangladesh, the working groups from Myanmar and Bangladesh are now closely cooperating for verification of the list of displaced persons who want to be repatriated voluntarily in accordance with the



er members of the population generally. The Agent also stated that the projects for closing IDP camps and arranging the return of IDPs back to their normal lives are underway. He further stated that these ongoing developments demonstrate the will of the government to find effective and constructive

ing the provisional measures indicated by Court, and are submitting regular reports as called for in the Provisional Measures Order.

Then, Dr Christopher Staker presented the Myanmar first preliminary objection that the Court lacks jurisdiction, or alternatively, the application is

which states the application is inadmissible, as The Gambia lacks standing to bring this case before the Court under Article IX of the Genocide Convention. Professor Robert Kolb then presented to the Court that the application is inadmissible, as The Gambia cannot validly seize the Court due to Myanmar's reservation to Article VIII of the Genocide Convention as Myanmar's third preliminary objection. Finally, Dr Christopher Staker argued that the Court lacks jurisdiction, or alternatively, the application is inadmissible, as there was no established legal dispute between The Gambia and Myanmar on the date of filing of the Application instituting proceedings as a fourth preliminary objection.

It is learnt that the Gambia will present its first round of oral arguments on 23 February 2022. Then Myanmar will make its second round of oral argument on 25 February 2022, followed by Gambia's second round of oral argument on 28 February 2022. —MNA



arguing that the Court lacks jurisdiction or that the case is inadmissible, Myanmar is not, therefore, seeking to impede the judicial processes of the Court, in fact, Myanmar is seeking to ensure the proper

bilateral agreement between these States. And within Myanmar's territory, internally displaced persons, IDPs, in IDP camps in Rakhine State are receiving the Covid-19 vaccination on par with oth-

ways forward in Rakhine State. The Agent added that the Government of Myanmar is also committed to respecting Myanmar's existing obligations as a party in these proceedings and is diligently implement-

inadmissible, as the real applicant in these proceedings is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, not The Gambia. After that Professor Stefan Talmon argued Myanmar's second preliminary objection

CASE CONCERNING APPLICATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE
PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE
(THE GAMBIA V. MYANMAR)

21 FEBRUARY 2022

U KO KO HLAING

AGENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

OPENING STATEMENT OF THE AGENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION
OF MYANMAR



Madam President, Mr Vice-President, distinguished Members of the Court,

1. It is a great honour for me to appear before the Court as the Agent of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

2. There have been some changes in the composition of the Court and representation of the parties since the last public sitting in this case. It is my pleasure to congratulate Your Excellency President Donoghue and Your Excellency Vice-President Gevorgian on your elections, and Your Excellencies Judges Nolte and Charlesworth on your appointments. I would also like to extend my amicable respect to Their Excellencies Mr Dawda Jallow and Mr Hussein Thomasi, the new Agent and new Co-Agent for The Gambia.

3. I also appear before you as the new Agent for Myanmar, accompanied by the new Alternate Agent, Her Excellency Dr Thida Oo, with the deepest trust that the Court, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, will decide this matter impartially under the law.

Madam President, Members of the Court,

4. The law that this Court must apply includes of course not only the substantive law governing relations between the States that appear before it but also the rules of law governing the

jurisdiction of the Court and the admissibility of cases brought before it.

5. Maintenance of the international rule of law requires that these latter norms of international law be respected as meticulously as any other legal norms. The institutions of the international legal order have been established by the common consent of a remarkably diverse community of nations. For the international legal order to continue to progress and develop, it is vital that all members of this diverse community can be confident that the limitations of what they have mutually consented to will be faithfully respected.

6. In arguing that the Court lacks jurisdiction or that the case is inadmissible, Myanmar is therefore not thereby seeking to impede the judicial processes of the Court. On the contrary, it is seeking to ensure the proper administration of justice. Myanmar raises these preliminary objections with the utmost respect to the Court.

7. The arguments that this Court will be hearing over the next days are therefore important. They have significant implications for the future functioning of the Court in general. Indeed, they have implications for any inter-State case brought before any international court or tribunal.

Madam President, Members of the Court,

8. The preliminary objections raised by Myanmar are genuinely preliminary. They are entirely independent of any question of the merits of The Gambia's claim that there has been a violation of the Genocide Convention. The Court can and must put that question completely out of all considerations when deciding the issues now before it.

9. Paragraph 85 of the Provisional Measures Order makes absolutely clear that these preliminary objections have not been prejudged or affected by the Court in any way. It is only now that the preliminary objections fall for decision. It is now that they call for the Court's careful and comprehensive consideration.

10. Because of this, I do not need to say anything today about the substance of The Gambia's claim. I would nevertheless take the opportunity to make one obvious point. The fact that Myanmar argues that the Court is without jurisdiction and that the case is inadmissible, in no way

12. The Government of Myanmar is determined to solve these complex problems through peaceful means of negotiation and reconciliation. A tripartite diplomatic discussion between Myanmar, Bangladesh and China has been undertaken for the preparation of the process for repatriations to Rakhine State from Bangladesh. Working groups from Myanmar and Bangladesh are now closely co-operating for verification of the list of displaced persons who want to be repatriated voluntarily in accordance with the bilateral agreement between these States. Preparations for the Pilot Project of Repatriation are being undertaken by the Government. Within Myanmar's territory, internally displaced persons, IDPs, in IDP camps in Rakhine State are receiving the Covid-19 vaccination on par with other members of the population generally. Projects for closing IDP camps and arranging the return of IDPs back to their normal lives are underway. These ongoing developments demon-

Court, and are submitting regular reports as called for in the Provisional Measures Order.

Madam President, distinguished Members of the Court,

14. Myanmar raises four preliminary objections. Its arguments in relation to each of these have already been set out comprehensively in the written pleadings, to which the Court is respectfully referred. In accordance with the Court's Rules and Practice Directions,¹ at this oral hearing counsel for Myanmar will focus on points requiring further attention or emphasis.

15. Myanmar's arguments today will be presented in the following order. Dr Staker will now present Myanmar's arguments on the first preliminary objection. He will be followed in turn by Professor Talmon, who will deal with the second preliminary objection, and then by Professor Kolb, who will take up the third preliminary objection. Finally, Dr Staker will return to speak to the fourth preliminary objection.

The fact that Myanmar argues that the Court is without jurisdiction and that the case is inadmissible, in no way means that Myanmar has no answer to The Gambia's case. Furthermore, the Government of Myanmar remains committed to addressing the problems in northern Rakhine State, which have a long history. These problems are complex and include consequences of former colonial rule over Burma and India. The Government of Myanmar is determined to solve these complex problems through peaceful means of negotiation and reconciliation.

means that Myanmar has no answer to The Gambia's case.

11. Furthermore, the Government of Myanmar remains committed to addressing the problems in northern Rakhine State, which have a long history. These problems are complex and include consequences of former colonial rule over Burma and India.

strate the will of our government to find effective and constructive ways forward in Rakhine State.

13. The new provisional government of Myanmar is also committed to respecting Myanmar's existing obligations as a party in these proceedings. As a responsible party, we are diligently implementing the provisional measures indicated by

Madam President, distinguished Members of the Court,

16. I thank you for your kind attention, and I ask you, Madam President, to now call upon Dr Staker. Thank you.

¹ Rules of Court, Article 60, paragraph 1; Practice Direction VI.

Natyaykan coffee farm to open courses for speciality coffee production this year: U Zaw Thein, the farm in charge



By Yu Yu Thein

lings each for Petai bean, avocado and Macadamia have been raised in our farm, totalling 80,000 seedlings. The nursery of new coffee varieties is being carried out as well.

Q: What are the other activities of the department?

A: There are 10 coffee growing village-tracts in the highland area. It is time to harvest and



Natyaykan coffee farms in Ngaphe Township produces 2.5 tonnes of coffee seeds. Those coffee seeds are sent to the markets of Ywargan, Yenangyoung and PyinOoLwin townships, fetching K3.5 million per tonne. **PHOTO : U TOE LWIN**

FOLLOWING is an interview with U Zaw Thein who takes in charge of the coffee technology development farm in Ngaphe Township, Magway Region under the Agriculture Department.

Q: Could you please tell me the current performance of the farm?

ANS: To distribute the seedlings to the growers in the coming monsoon 2022, 50,000 coffee plants and 10,000 seed-

the post-harvest technology comprising the systematic packaging, processing and storage is being disseminated among the growers. The tool to determine moisture content and test sugar level has been



The interview in progress.

provided to the growers. The department is also conducting know-hows of the machine.

Q: Please tell me about the prospect of courses related to coffee technology.

A: We have a plan to launch courses to improve coffee technology and production in 2022. The coffee growers' group has been formed to produce speciality coffee. The department offered three courses and three pieces of training on demonstration model plots in the previous years.

Q: I like to know the production of the coffee farm (Natyaykan) and sowing acreage.

A: There are 26.36 acres of highland Arabica (Viet Nam's origin) in the coffee farm (Natyaykan). The production rate is 2.5 tonnes per acre.

Under the guidance of the Union Minister, an experimental plantation of Arabica coffee varieties SL 28 and SL 34 which fit for the weather is being undertaken on two acres.

Q: Could you please explain about nursery seedling and harvest season of coffee?

A: The garden waste and residues turn to organic fertilizer.

The growers use those recycled natural fertilizers. The awareness of organic farming practices and composting methods have been conducted. The harvest season of our farm is one month later than the regular season due to the effects of the shade on the hill. It is harvested between January and March.

Q: What would you like to add as the person in charge of the farm?

A: The coffee market is strong on the hill this year. Genius Coffee producer from Ywargan Township came to buy our speciality coffee. It is also demanded by Shan State. The price varies every day. The growers have a plan to increase acreage in the following year as the income is growing year over year.

Natyaykan coffee farms in Ngaphe Township produces 2.5 tonnes of coffee seeds. Those coffee seeds are sent to the markets of Ywargan, Yenangyoung and PyinOoLwin townships, fetching K3.5 million per tonne.

(Translated)



Stalls of New Mingala Market set to complete at end of June

THE government constructs the New Mingala Market in Mingala Taungnyunt Township and the construction of the four-storey building, including the basement where the old shop owners operated, will be completed by the end of June, according to the officials of the market construction site.

The market is constructed by the San Myat Tun Company at the cost of K68 billion.

It will be a 17-storey building with a two-storey basement car park and the construction process will be conducted by skilled engineers and workers using heavy machinery following the COVID-19 health rules. There will be banks, restaurants and supermarkets on the ground floor and from 6th to 13th floors including the two-storey basement car park can accommodate more than 700 cars. There will be also shops and warehouses on the 9th and 10th floors while

the offices will be on the 11th and 13th floors. There will be more than 1,000 stalls from the 5th to 8th floors managed by the construction companies. The YCDC will manage the first four-storey of the market complex for vendors who rented the stalls for a fire outbreak.

The officials accelerate the operation to be completed as quickly as possible and it is estimated that the first four-storey will complete by the end of June and to reopen the stalls by the end of August. Moreover, the entire market building is also estimated to complete in October.

Upon the completion of the New Mingala Market, it can make profits for more than 40,000 people including vendors, staff and customers and so the market will become more alive than before. — Pwint Thitsar/GNLM



Construction site of New Mingala Market. **PHOTO : SOE MYINT AUNG**

MoC oversees imports of anti-COVID-19 devices, essential medical supplies

THE Ministry of Commerce is overseeing the importation of essential medical supplies including anti-COVID-19 devices that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, through border trade points, international airports and seaports. Yesterday, 36 tonnes of masks were imported by a company via the Chinshwehaw trade zone.

It is reported that anti-COVID-19 medical supplies and equipment are being given

priority in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures coordinated with the relevant departments, and notice related to the import of medicines and related products have also been made available on the Ministry's website: commerce.gov.mm. — MNA

The imported medical supplies are loaded onto the lorry to transport them to states/ regions.



COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions



The ongoing vaccination programme underway across states and regions.

DOCTORS and nurses from public hospitals, Tatmadaw medical teams, healthcare workers and volunteers are working hard to give COVID-19 vaccines in different states and regions as the vaccination programme is one of the most important activities in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 disease.

COVID-19 vaccine is administered daily to target groups regardless of race or religion, including Buddhist monks and nuns, local people over the age of 40, students, religious leaders, prisoners, people with disabili-

ties, ethnic armed groups, people with chronic diseases, people in IDP camps and over 12-year-old students, respectively.

Yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 726 people from Tachilek and Mongpyin Townships in Shan State (North), 3,287 people from thirteen townships in Mon and Kayin States, 494 people from Yankin and Tamway Townships in Yangon Region, 18,285 people

from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region, 9,835 people from seven townships in Rakhine State, 1,267 people from Hkamti Township in Sagaing Region and 120 people from Htantabin Township in Bago Region, respectively.

Similarly, healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 234 students from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region on 20 January.

It is reported that officials from the respective Military Commands visited the site and coordinated the necessary work. — MNA

CRIME NEWS

Illegal diesel, raw jade, timbers, commodities seized

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

On 18 February, the unit led by Commander Cmdr Min Thuya of Taninthayi Naval Region Command conducted the sea domination operation and seized one illegal oil tanker called MT Kyaw Min Thu measured 32.3 metres in length, seven metres in width with a draught of 2.5 metres (iron frame). They confiscated about 8,000 gallons of diesel worth K56,000,000, including US\$250,250 and took action under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law.

On 21 February, the Ayeyawady Region Forest Department seized K576,912 worth of 8.2416 tonnes of timber in Myanaung Township in a sur-



Confiscated raw jade.

prise check and took action under the Forest Law.

Similarly, the Customs Department at Asia World Port Terminal inspected the imported containers from China and seized K4,056,000 worth of

various small remote-control toys which were not expressed in ID lists and action was taken under the Customs Law.

Moreover, on 22 February, the Kawkaireik (Tadakyoe) inspection team of Kayin State

seized undocumented 100 packs of washing powder worth K2,000,000 and the officials took action under the Customs Law.

The combined inspection team of the Sagaing Region also seized K5,500,000 worth of two

unregistered vehicles — Toyota Hilux Surf worth K4,500,000 in Sagaing Township and Toyota Dyna worth K1,000,000 and they took action under the Export/Import Law.

Similarly, the Yaypu checkpoint of Shan State K5,000,000 worth of overloaded China-made foodstuffs and K4,000,000 worth of unregistered Toyota Wish that carried similar foodstuffs, and the officials took action under the Customs Law.

Moreover, the combined team of Kachin State also seized 344 bags containing large/small sizes of raw jade and took action under Myanmar Gems Law.

Thus, a total of 9 arrests (estimated value of K77,132,912) including US\$250,250 were made on 18, 21 and 22 February, according to the committee. — MNA

Kyaukpadaung oil millers operate businesses depending on raw pulses due to rising edible oil price

DUE to the rising of edible oil prices in Kyaukpadaung township, Mandalay Region, oil millers are operating their businesses depending on the raw pulses, said an edible oil miller.

This year, more raw products are imported than last year. So, the millers operated day and night shifts depending on the accessibility of electricity.

There are many oil mills in Kyaukpadaung township. Some are owned large oil mills while some are owned small businesses and some are working on a manageable scale. But they have ground the edible crops this

year than last year. The grinding charge of pulses is K200 per viss. About 100 visses of pulses can produce 42 visses of pulse oil.

The oil millers have to grind about 20 bags of sesame (one and a half baskets per bag) and 80 bags of groundnut per day depending on the accessibility of electricity.

“The price of edible oil in the domestic market is unstable. Now, the price of groundnut fetched K3,000 per viss and the groundnut oil are ranging between K5,800-K6,200 per viss. The sesame price is sold for K6,500 per viss. We are selling



The oil millers from Kyaukpadaung township bought the raw products from Pakokku and Seikphyu townships. The groundnut prices from those regions are sold at K3,075 per viss.

about 480 visses of groundnut oil and 40 visses of sesame oil per day. Sesame oil is not used for fried things. Currently, both ses-

ame and pulses are not entered our region. Now, we are grinding the pulses conveyed from the west. Now, we are working day and night shift because of power problem,” said an oil miller from Zaykwatthit ward, Kyaukpadaung township.

The oil millers from Kyaukpadaung township bought the raw products from Pakokku and Seikphyu townships. The groundnut prices from those regions are sold at K3,075 per viss. Then, the ground finished products are mainly conveyed to Yangon. — Ko Nay (Kyaukpadaung)/GNLM

Tapioca needs market promotion to penetrate more foreign markets



At present, dried tapioca is delivered to foreign trade partners. However, the export volume is pretty low to 50 tonnes per month. A tonne of tapioca is worth approximately US\$200-250. The foreign market demand is still low.

MYANMAR can ship only a small volume of tapioca to the external market for now. Efforts are required to hold large market shares, according to Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

At present, dried tapioca is delivered to foreign trade partners. However, the export volume is pretty low to 50 tonnes per month. A tonne of tapioca is worth approximately US\$200-250. The foreign market demand is still low.

Myanmar has been striving for tapioca export to China. Foreign direct investment is invited to manufacture the value-added products of tapioca and to explore markets.

The tapioca is primarily grown in Kyonpyaw, Yekyi, Ngathainggyoung, Kyaunggon

es of tapioca powder dropped from K850 to K500-550 per viss.

The price collapse and low market demand prompted some growers to turn to other crops this year. The sowing acreage fell by 10,000 accordingly.

Myanmar has a favourable geographical condition to cultivate tapioca. The commercial farming of tapioca is found in Ayeyawady, Yangon, Bago and Magway regions and Kachin, southern and northern Shan, Kayah and Rakhine states. The residents are engaged in tapioca starch production as well. It

Tapioca powder production has export market potential. Myanmar has a favourable land resource to grow tapioca.

Myanmar, located among the large buyer countries of tapioca, should widely cultivate tapioca as China and India account for 90 per cent of the global demand for tapioca starch. It can raise foreign income for the country.

Tapioca can be used in food products, substitutes for wheat flour, medicines, feedstuffs and biofuel. However, it is not highly consumed in the domestic market as residents lack tapioca uses. — NN/GNLM

Myaung grows over 1,000 acres of winter peanuts this year

THE local farmers from Myaung township, Sagaing region cultivated more than 1,000 acres of winter peanuts this year than last year, according to the Myaung Township Agriculture Department.

“Myaung township mainly grows two species of edible oil peanuts. We sow seeds nine inches apart in a row, with four inches between stems. This year, we have cultivated over 18,000 acres of winter peanuts, an increase of over 1,000 acres more this year than last year,” said the head of the Myaung Township Agriculture Department.

In the last 2020-21FY, Myaung township cultivated

17,452 acres of winter peanuts during the winter crop season. This 2021-22FY, the township grew about 18,591 acres of winter peanuts, recording a rise of 1,139 acres of peanuts when compared to that of last year, it is leant.

Myaung township successfully cultivated only two kinds of peanuts species. The traditional peanuts oil mills are also earning income in Myaung township.

Peanut is one of the top oil-seed crops grown in Myanmar and it is rich in essential nutrients. Peanuts seed contains about 40 to 45 per cent of oil and 25 per cent of protein. — Lu Lay/GNLM



This 2021-22FY, the township grew about 18,591 acres of winter peanuts, recording a rise of 1,139 acres of peanuts when compared to that of last year.

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Harmonize ecosystem with development of living beings

CURRENTLY, the climate is changing in various forms across the world. Warming of the North Pacific Drift causes a process of the La Niña with the speedy wind of northeast monsoon, lessening night temperature in Myanmar, increasing coldness, effects of whirlwinds from the east and untimely raining.

As humans do not take a notice of climate change due to daily busy processes, they unexpectedly encounter not only COVID-19 but seasonal flu. In fact, the world has created the proper environment and climatic conditions in harmony with the living beings. However,

Mangrove forests are a green wall for living beings. The businesses based on maritime travels, offshore and inshore fishery, offshore oil and natural gas production, tourism and other businesses are of blue business. Hence, conservation of the coastal mangrove forests can benefit the country.

marine ecosystems are crucial in removing the elements which trigger climate change.

These ecosystems absorb a large volume of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Such a kind of natural storage is called blue carbon. Some countries emphasize conservation for the rapid thriving of coastal areas, marine resources, forests and mangrove plantations. Only when all global countries enhance conservation measures can they harmoniously take care of ecosystems so as to emerge the regular circle of seasons across the world, much benefiting the humans and environments.

Mangrove forests are a green wall for living beings. The businesses based on maritime travels, offshore and inshore fishery, offshore oil and natural gas production, tourism and other businesses are of blue business. Hence, conservation of the coastal mangrove forests can benefit the country.

As such, Myanmar is implementing the administrative plans and policies for coastal areas and marine businesses while focusing on the harmonious development of the ecosystem for the standing of living beings similar to that of global countries.



humans cannot give priority to the conservation of the ecosystem. The people need to cooperate with governments and relevant organizations in preventing environmental degradation.

Currently, all humans and living beings are suffering from the impacts of sub-sequences of climate change. Greenhouse gas and carbon dioxide gas are the primary sources to cause climate change. As carbon dioxide is emitted from the materials used for the development of society, these gases cannot be remarkably reduced yet. For the time being, the increasing population of the world and the lifestyle evolution of humans also harm the ecosystem.

As civilization and lifestyle are improving in many countries day by day, only when the global development and environmental conservation for the ecosystem can be managed in harmony can all the humans and living beings march to the sustainable development goal. So, jungles, mangrove forests, coasts and

What do Laws on Terrorism Say on the situation of Myanmar?

By Mr Sea (Maung Pinlal)

“ARE you safe in Myanmar?” One of my foreign friends humbly asked me. Despite the question itself being quite short and simple, I felt very sad to take it. Am I safe in Myanmar? Since the widespread of the targeted murder to the civilians, how can a civilian feel safe? Indeed, my friend’s worrisome query encouraged me to write this article with the perspective of law that I have some knowledge on it.

Disclaimer

- The true point of this article is for educational purposes and the progressive development of the law.
- Some information used in this article may have the possibility of not being correct or incomplete since it is largely relied upon the open sources such as Facebook and other internet sources.

The atrocities in Myanmar

In recent days, the anti-State Administration Council (SAC) groups, in particular, the Peoples’ Defence Force (PDF) and its affiliates have been intensified their strategy of targeted murder to the civilians. I am not sure about the total number of lives that have been lost since February 2021, but it is noticeable that over 1,400 civilians have been murdered solely by the PDF.

PDF inhumanely killed the school teachers in Kayah State just because of not participating in the CDM (Civil Disobedience Movement). Many local administration officers have been shot dead across Myanmar. PDF recently issued death threats to the civil administration officers in the Nay Pyi Taw Region. More than 30 Buddhist monks have been assassinated mostly in the Sagaing region. A street vendor, who sell fish-noodle, and his family, including an eight-month-old baby, has been shot dead by a local PDF assassin in Ayeyawady Region, and later on, claimed that they

killed them as an example to the population to receive fearful respect. A college student had been shot dead in Sagaing Region for attending the classes and being a daughter of a local administration officer. A nurse, who provides healthcare services to the civilian population, barely survived the targeted murder in the Sagaing Region, but all of her four family members had lost their lives. Six civil servants (electric bill collectors) have been shot by local PDF in Ayeyawady Region and three have lost their lives. Local PDF shot an engineer and other two civil servants to death in Shan State. Several members of opposition parties, mostly USDP, and their families had been murdered and decapitated in some cases. A family of four belonging to a lady police officer has been burnt to death by PDF for their daughter’s refusal to participate in the CDM. A couple, the husband is a Headmaster and wife is a school teacher, shot and stabbed to death by PDF in Mandalay Region.

A short video clip appeared on Facebook in which a lady administration officer has assassinated in broad daylight at the local market by PDF while she is distributing surgical masks for COVID-19 prevention. Members of local PDF units in Yangon threw grenades at the COVID-19 vaccination centres causing some casualties. A total of 16 attacks to the COVID-19 vaccination centres by the PDF.

The most prevalent cause is the murder of Dr Wint Myaing, Township Medical Officer of Kutkai Township. On her return from COVID-19 vaccination work in remote villages, the PDF assassins dragged her from the car and shot her 11 times to the head for performing such an anti-pandemic campaign without participation to CDM. Another one is the murder of a nurse with pregnancy and her husband in Mandalay for providing healthcare services to the population without participation in CDM.

Generally, PDF and their affiliates have the tendency of claiming responsibility for such killings and other plots. However, in most cases, the local population is tacitly well-known who are the culprits of the crime, but unable to speak out due to the life-threatening fear factor. That is understandable because if they speak out, they potentially are the next victim.

Those are the top of the iceberg of atrocities being happened across Myanmar. I don’t wish to dig out all those cases in detail, not because all information could easily be found on social media, but my heart unable to bear the burden of such sadness.

Terminology

It is obvious that PDF has been targeting some groups among the civilian population such as civil servants and their families, members of opposition political parties and the civilians who seem to be working with or close to the government. Based on the fact that such acts of PDF against the civilian population shall be labelled as “targeted murder”.

Who are the civilians?

It is required to distinguish who are the civilians legally in order to make ourselves have a clear understanding.

International Humanitarian Law that governed armed conflicts of all kinds defined civilian as follows;

“A civilian as any individual who is not a member of one of the following groups:

- the regular armed forces, even one that professes allegiance to a government or authority not recognized by the adverse power;
- the armed forces of a party to the conflict, as well as militias or volunteer corps forming part of such armed forces;
- all organized groups and units, as long as these groups and units are under a command that is responsible for the conduct of its subordinates, even if the party to the conflict to which it responds is represented by a government or authority not recognized by an adverse party. This last category includes organized resistance movements and other small armed groups.¹

{ *** Since Geneva Conventions provide the complicated definition of civilian, I choose to state MSF’s (Medicines Sans Frontières) definition appeared in its Practical Guide to the Humanitarian Law which coincides and better understandable version of the definition provided by the Geneva Conventions. Please check Geneva Conventions, if not satisfied with MSF’s definition. }

If you looked at the cases carefully, it is evident that a negligible number of security members is included in the overall killings of PDF. The majority of the people murdered by PDF does not belong to any of the aforementioned categories and are confirmed to be civilians by the universally accepted international law.

They may argue that the civilians they killed were the spies or informers of SAC. The International Humanitarian Law says that even spies must be treated humanely and prohibits any execution without regular trial².

What is the advantage of killing civilians?

By the general perception, I have no idea of why PDF largely targeted the civilians including civil servants. There will be no legal argument on PDF’s fight against security forces. But, why civilians? Why doctors, teachers, nurses, students... Why COVID-19 vaccination centres?

With the common sense consideration, PDF’s widespread killing of civilians is unlikely to produce an adequate effect to topple SAC or disable the security forces. I presumed that local PDF syndicates and

their commanders abroad may have a very well understanding of that point. The question is — what is the result they anticipated from such widespread killing of civilians while having the knowledge that their action is not enough to disable the security forces? Therefore, the possible conclusion that could be drawn from such given situation, by the perspective law, is that PDF’s targeted murder to the civilians, not only to the targeted person but also to his or her family, effectively generate and spread well-founded fear among the general population together with the threat that if any of the civilian will be punished to death if they do not support PDF or fail to participate in the CDM movement.

The laws on terrorism

For the purpose of higher understandability, I made the choice to highlight a customary definition, the national definitions of the United States and the United Kingdom, and an expert opinion which are very well known to the world. I am fully aware that the law of the United States and the United Kingdom could not be applied directly in the situation of Myanmar as they are separate sovereign states. But, my intention is to make some tests on the situation of Myanmar in the perspective of their laws on whether the conduct of PDF is satisfied with their norms of terrorism. Another reason is that the national laws of the United States and the UK are the best examples of state practices in defining terrorism.

International law

Although the internationally agreed definition of terrorism has yet to come out due to some elements of the definition has been deadlocked in the negotiations. However, in 2011, Professor Antonio Cassese, a renowned legal scholar, Professor of Florence University and President of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, has been able

to develop an internationally accepted customary definition of international terrorism which stated as follows:

“International Terrorism

- The perpetuation of a criminal act (such as murder, kidnapping, hostage-taking, arson, and so on), or threatening such an act;
- The intent to spread fear among the population (which would generally entail the creation of public danger) or directly or indirectly coerce a national or international authority to take some action, or to refrain from taking it;
- When the act involves a transnational element.”

I am fully aware of the international character of the definition, but, I think, there is no limitation to apply domestically, at least to set the norms since the definition itself is customary in nature.

The main element of Cassese’s definition has two points applicable to the current situation of Myanmar. First, “perpetration of a criminal act and threatening such act” — killing any person or threatening to do so are no doubt of committing criminal acts. Second, “intent to spread fear among the population” — PDF’s targeted murder of civil servants and their families, members of opposition political parties and other civilians effectively spread fear in the population with the message of “support PDF and participate CDM or face the death”. The message itself is a fearful threat to the general population.

United States’ definition of Domestic Terrorism

Lets’ have a look at how the United States defined Domestic Terrorism. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)’s definition on Domestic Terrorism referenced to the US Code at 18 U.S.C. 2331(5) is as follows;

SEE PAGE-10



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 22 February 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 23 February 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi region and Kachin state, eastern Shan states and isolated in upper Sagaing region and (northern and southern) Shan state. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be generally fair in lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway regions and Rakhine state and partly cloudy 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: Slight decrease of night temperatures in upper Myanmar areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 February 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 February 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 February 2022: Generally fair weather.

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What do Laws on Terrorism Say on the situation of Myanmar?

FROM PAGE-9

“Activities that involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any State; appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.”

The National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism of the United States (June 2021) also used the same definition as the FBI.

Let’s make some tests by placing the Myanmar situation in the perspective of the United States domestic terrorism law. FBI definition has three salient points to our case. First, “acts dangerous to human life that is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any State”— I believe that no criminal on laws on earth, including the United States and Myanmar, permitted such killings of PDF in particular to the civilians. Second, “intimidate or coerce a civilian population”— as we discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the civilian population is exclusively targeted by PDF as their primary intention is to spread fear in creating an environment where the civilian population has no other choice than to support PDF and CDM, rather than a military advantage. Third, “... affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, targeted murder or kidnapping,” — that is what exactly PDF has been doing. The widespread targeted murders against civilians, especially civil servants, have a clear intention to remove supporting pillars of the administrative mechanism of SAC piece-by-piece. Based on the preceding facts the act of PDF proved to be “Terrorism” under the United States law.

UK’s Definition of terrorism

Another test of Myanmar situation is with the United Kingdom’s definition of terrorism. But I have learnt that the UK has been used one definition to cover both the international and domestic context of terrorism. The current definition of terrorism is derived from the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974 (PTA) which defined terrorism in Section 14(1) as follows: —

“The use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear”

Since, the formulation of that definition in the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974 (PTA) has been motivated by the conflict in Northern Ireland and in particular the threat posed by the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which only covered acts of domestic terrorism. Therefore, the UK formulated the current definition of terrorism in 2000 for dual-use, domestic and international.

Section (1) of the United Kingdom’s Terrorism Act 2000, amended twice by the Terrorism Act 2006 and the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008, defined terrorism³ as follows: —⁴

“Section 1.1(1)

In this Act ‘terrorism’ means the use or threat of action where —

- (a) the action falls within subsection (2) [Subsection (2) - (a) involves serious violence against a person, (b) involves serious property damage, (c) endangers a person’s life, other than that of the person committing the action, (d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or (e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously disrupt an electronic system.]
- (b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government or an inter-

national governmental organization or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and

- (c) The use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Section 1.1(3)

The use or threat of action falling within subsection (2) which involves the use of firearms or explosives is terrorism whether or not subsection (1)(b) is satisfied.

{*** Rephrased purposely since the definition contained separate paragraphs. If it is not satisfied, see the original definition. }

The UK’s definition itself is quite comprehensive and has a broader scope with respect to the element of crime and the intent. Based on the current activities of PDF, their act of targeted murder of the civilian population by means of shooting, beheading, bombing at COVID-19 vaccination centres, banks and schools very well falls under the scope of Subsection (2). In addition to the perpetrations, the intent of PDF effectively falls within the scope of Subsection (1-b) and (1-C) as their ultimate objectives are, first, to disable SAC’s administrative mechanism and, second, to intimidate the public to support them and participate in the CDM for their political advantage. Since PDF has been using arrays of weapons and ammunition supplied by certain entities, needless to say, it falls within the scope of Section 1-1(3). All and all, the elements of a crime under the UK’s definition have simply proved the conduct of PDF in Myanmar to be the effective “Terrorism”.

Expert definition of terrorism

In addition to the above national definitions, Professor Bruce Hoffman⁵, very well-known counterterrorism and homeland security expert,

made a very clear definition of terrorism which is as follows:

“... We may therefore now attempt to define terrorist as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change. All terrorist acts involve violence or the threat of violence. Terrorism is specifically designed to have far-reaching psychological effects beyond the immediate victim(s) or object of the terrorist attack. It is meant to instil fear within, and thereby intimidate, a wider “target audience” that might include rival ethnic or religious groups, an entire country, a national government or political party, or public opinion in general. Terrorism is designed to create power where there is none or to consolidate power where there is little. Through the publicity generated by their violence, terrorists seek to obtain the leverage, influence and power they otherwise lack to effect political change on either local or international scale.”

Professor Bruce Hoffman’s definition highly matched with the current situation of Myanmar. Despite PDF has been receiving support from the same part of the population, the majority of the population still exercises their civil and political rights by means of not supporting PDF or supporting other political entities. In this given context, the easiest way to divert their support to the PDF in a short period of time is the application of “fear” as a weapon within the population. That is the reason why PDF is letting the effect of fear spread through the entire population in the country by exercising the tactic of targeted murders in order to receive support from non-PDF-supporters. Currently, the fear generated by PDF has effectively been instilled into the mind of the

entire population, as a psychological effect, spread by the example-killings to the non-PDF-supporters. The frequent issuance of dead-threats to the civil servants by PDF is another proof of “Terrorism” by Professor Bruce Hoffman’s definition.

Conclusion

We have discussed the atrocities being happened in Myanmar from the perspective of various legal regimes. The decision is up to the readers. My humble advice is not to draw the conclusion directly by reading only this article. It would be more precise and beneficial in the decision making if the readers collect information of what really happening in Myanmar from various sources as much as possible, make some tests with various perspectives of law, and then decide. It is to be careful that the majority of mainstream media, both international and domestic, have the tendency of covering one-sided information and some true stories have not been touched or even removed in the social media in particular in Facebook and YouTube.

We, the people of Myanmar, hate terrorism as much as the peoples around the world do. At the same time, I do believe that democracy cannot be promoted by terrorism.

We have laws for the prevention and suppression of terrorism in both international and domestic contexts. That means countries around the world have an obligation to prevent and suppress terrorism regardless of where it happens. I would like to beg the international community, especially those leading democratic countries, to help us to prevent and suppress terrorism in Myanmar since your negligence on such terrorist acts may cause further loss of lives and proliferation of terrorism in Myanmar.

I pray Myanmar is free from Terrorism.



Footnotes

1. MSF’s (Medicines Sans Frontières) practical guide to the humanitarian law, <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/civilians/> (GCIII Arts. 4.a.1–3, 4.a.6; API Arts. 43, 50)
2. Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions
3. https://www.hrw.org/legacy/background/eca/uk1007/6.htm#_ftn54
4. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/0E707CD33E7F656573C777BE23C27168/S0020589317000070a.pdf/div-class-title-defining-terrorism-one-size-fits-all-div.pdf>
5. <https://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism-incidents/about/definitions.html>

India’s cumulative COVID-19 vaccination coverage crosses 175.46 cr

INDIA’S cumulative COVID-19 vaccination coverage crossed 175.46 crores with the administration of over 7 lakh doses in the past 24 hours, informed Union Health Ministry on Monday.

“With the administration of more than 7 lakh doses (700,706) vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, India’s COVID-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 175.46 crores (1,75,46,25,710) as per provisional reports till 7 am today,” the ministry said in a release.

This has been achieved through 1,98,99,635 sessions, the Ministry added.

Of the total doses administered so far, 1,75,46,25,710, health care workers received the first dose 1,04,00,693 and second vaccine doses 99,52,973. Front line workers were administered the first dose with 1,84,07,927 and the second dose with 1,74,18,259.

“In the age of 15-18 years old people, as many as 5,36,77,342 first dose of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered and 2,17,30,069 second dose,” the ministry said.

Meanwhile, India reported 16,051 new COVID-19 cases and 206 fatalities in the last 24 hours,

the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed on Monday.

The testing capacity across the country continues to be expanded. The last 24 hours saw a total of 8,31,087 tests being conducted. India has so far conducted over 76.01 Cr (76,01,46,333) cumulative tests.

While testing capacity has been enhanced across the country, the weekly positivity rate in the country currently stands at 2.12 per cent and the daily positivity rate is reported to be 1.93 per cent, the Ministry informed.

— ANI ■



India’s cumulative COVID-19 vaccination coverage crossed 175.46 crores with the administration of over 7 lakh doses in the past 24 hours, informed Union Health Ministry on Monday. **PHOTO: MANJUNATH KIRAN /AFP**

Lao gov’t to expedite COVID-19 vaccination programme



People relax, play and exercise at a park in Vientiane, capital of Laos, on 9 July 2020. **PHOTO: KAIKEO SAIYASANE/XINHUA**

THE Lao government has vowed to expedite a nationwide vaccination programme for children aged 6 and over against COVID-19, starting on Monday.

The programme is part of the government’s efforts to ensure that people of all ethnic groups are immunized against

COVID-19 and are protected against the Omicron variant in particular, as the variant is much more transmissible than the Delta variant, the local daily Vientiane Times reported on Monday.

Vaccinations will take place in the provinces of Huaphan,

Xieng Khuang, Oudomxay, Savannakhet and Xaysomboun from 21 Feb to 4 March, according to a notice issued by the Prime Minister’s Office.

In other provinces and the Lao capital Vientiane, vaccination rollout is scheduled for 4 to 19 March. However, provinces that are ready can start inoculating children on 21 Feb.

After children in this age group have been vaccinated, health authorities will be instructed to consider the possibility of immunizing children aged 3-5, according to the notice. The Ministry of Education and Sports has been instructed to work with relevant sectors to assess the number of children aged 6-11 and those aged 12 and over, with figures to be provided by public and private schools. These figures must be provided before the vaccination rollout begins.—Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

No perfect solution to protection from COVID-19 amid growing fatigue: Fauci

TOP US infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci said there is no perfect solution to the need of protecting US citizens from COVID-19 infection amid growing fatigue with the pandemic.

In a report carried recently by Singapore’s Chinese-language newspaper Lianhe Zaobao, Fauci said that US states are facing tough choices in their efforts to balance the need to protect their citizens from contagion and the growing fatigue with the pandemic that has entered its third year.

“There is no perfect solution to this,” said Fauci, a member of the White House COVID-19 Response Team, in an interview with Reuters. The remarks were made against the backdrop that US health officials said they were preparing new COVID-19 guidance on many aspects of the virus response as the Omicron case surge declined. — ANI ■

COVID-19 death toll in Israel surpasses 10,000

THE death toll from the COVID-19 in Israel exceeded 10,000 on Monday, nearly two years after the first fatality from the virus was reported in the country in March 2020. Israel reported 29 new deaths from the coronavirus in the past 24 hours, increasing the death toll to 10,001, the Ministry of Health reported. Meanwhile, the number of patients in serious condition decreased from 820 to 772, while active cases dropped from 133,040 to 120,713, said the ministry.—Xinhua ■

S. Korea reports 95,362 new COVID-19 cases

SOUTH Korea reported 95,362 more COVID-19 cases as of midnight Sunday compared to 24 hours ago, raising the total number of infections to 2,058,184, the health authorities said on Monday.

The daily caseload was down from 104,827 in the previous day due to fewer tests over the weekend, falling below 100,000 in four days, according

to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA).

The recent resurgence was driven by infections in the Seoul metropolitan area amid the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, which became a dominant strain here.

Of the new cases, 19,957 were Seoul residents. The number of the newly infected people living in Gyeonggi province and

the western port city of Incheon was 26,777 and 7,362 respectively.

The virus spread also raged in the non-metropolitan region. The number of new infections in the non-capital areas was 41,122, or 43.2 per cent of the total local transmission.

Among the new cases, 144 were imported from overseas, lifting the total to 28,244. —Xinhua ■



Health workers in protective gear guide people queuing for Covid-19 testing in Seoul last month. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Japan's top business lobby calls for border controls to be eased more

THE head of Japan's largest business lobby suggested Monday that the country's border controls aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus are not based on epidemiological grounds, calling on the government to further ease them by simplifying immigration procedures.

Masakazu Tokura, who leads the Japan Business Federation, said at a press conference that the government's decision to raise the cap on the daily number of new entrants from the current 3,500 to 5,000 starting next month is not enough.—Kyodo ■

Nigerian gov't says ready to bolster energy generation

THE Nigerian government on Monday said it has been exploring ways of improving the country's energy generation and supply.

Minister of Science, Technology, and Innovation Ogbonnaya Onu told reporters in Abuja that with the new Revised National Energy Policy and Related Master Plan, the country's electricity generation and supply would be improved to boost national development.

"It would also help us in our aim to build a strong industrial base for the nation. Nigeria is rich in energy resources with fast-moving rivers, the abundance of sunshine, wind energy, geothermal sources, bio-mass in addition to our huge deposit of natural gas yet to be fully exploited," Onu said.—Xinhua ■

Chinese investment in Argentina a boost to community development

CHINA'S investment and infrastructure projects in Argentina have helped jumpstart development in various underserved communities and offer dynamic business opportunities, said Alejandra Conconi, executive director of the Chinese-Argentine Chamber of Production, Industry and Commerce.

On the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Argentina and China, Conconi highlighted the increase in Chinese investment in the South American country over the past decade, emphasizing renewable energy projects, telecommunications and transportation,

among other areas crucial to improving quality of life. "We see that China began to invest in the country in the late 1990s and again at the beginning of the 21st century. However, the vast bulk of Chinese investment and capital began in 2010," said Conconi. "An estimated 36 billion US dollars have been invested in our country through 38 companies. There has been investment in energy resources, in agri-food, and today we see with special interest investment in renewable energies, everything from solar parks and wind farms to hydroelectric dams," she said.—Xinhua ■



Chinese engineers and technicians with CRRC Qingdao Sifang Co., Ltd., together with their Argentine colleagues, inspect a train in Llavallol, some 33 km south of Buenos Aires, Argentina, 16 Nov 2020. PHOTO: MARTIN ZABALA/XINHUA

Thailand's economy rebounds in fourth quarter



Long queues are seen at the cashiers at IKEA as it reopened after restrictions to halt the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus were lifted in Bangkok on 17 May, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

THAILAND'S economy rebounded in the fourth quarter of last year on the back of rising exports and the easing of coronavirus restrictions that allowed tourists to return, senior officials said Monday.

The 1.9 per cent on-year expansion was more than double what was forecast and marked a strong bounce after a 0.2 per cent contraction in the previous three months.

For the whole year the econ-

omy grew 1.6 per cent, according to the National Economic and Social Development Council, and also beat expectations.

South East Asia's second largest economy was hit with a 6.1 per cent contraction in 2020 — its worst economic performance since the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis.

The NESDC said it saw growth of 3.5-4.5 per cent this year as tourism picks up and government spending kicks in.

Council secretary-general Danucha Pichayanan said reopening the border to fully vaccinated foreign tourists in November had made some impact.

Nearly 500,000 tourists have visited since November, well short of the country's target of five million, but the arrivals provided much-needed support to the economy. The reopening was dealt a blow in December by the fast-spreading Omicron Covid variant.—AFP ■

Spain, Denmark oppose EU green label for gas, nuclear

SPAIN and Denmark reiterated Monday their opposition to plans by the European Union to label gas and nuclear energy projects as green investments, an issue that has divided the bloc.

The two nations believe such a move would send "the wrong message to investors and society as a whole", Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez told a joint news conference in Madrid with his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen.

The European Commission drafted plans late last year to label gas and nuclear energy as green investments, a move it hopes will steer huge sums of private capital into activities that support EU climate goals.

But Austria and Luxembourg have along with Spain and Denmark opposed the EU's draft plans for a so-called "sustainable finance taxonomy".

Heavyweight Germany opposes labelling nuclear power as sustainable, but not gas.



The EU's proposal says that "it is necessary to recognize that the fossil gas and nuclear energy sectors can contribute to the decarbonization of the Union's economy." PHOTO: AFP/FREDERICK FLORIN / FILE

Sanchez and Frederiksen believe decisions about the new rulebook should have a "strictly scientific basis", a "position shared by Austria and Luxembourg", the Spanish government said in a statement after the two leaders met.

EU member states are awaiting the commission's final proposal, which it has said it will

publish soon, without giving a date. Once published, a majority of the European Parliament or a super-majority of EU member states — 20 of the 27 countries — could block the rules.

It is unlikely that such a majority will be reached since a dozen nations including nuclear-reliant France back the new rulebook.—AFP ■



A nickel electrolysis workshop at Kola Mining and Metallurgical Company in Russia, 25 February 2021. PHOTO: CFP/XINHUA

Nickel prices soar on Russia tension, tight supply

NICKEL surged Monday to the highest price in more than 10 years, driven by simmering Ukraine-Russia tensions and tight supplies. The industrial metal forged \$24,610 per tonne — the highest level since 2011 — in late morning deals on the London Metal Exchange. Marex broker Al Munro said nickel was “benefitting from the threat to Russian production” in an already tight market with demand up as economies reopen from pandemic lockdowns. The price of the industrial metal, a key raw material in the manufacturing of stainless steel, has soared by nearly 20 per cent since the start of the year. “The Ukraine crisis continues to hang over metals prices,” said Commerzbank analyst Daniel Briesemann. However, he cautioned that aluminium and palladium prices had not risen to the same extent as nickel. Russia is one of the world’s largest producers of nickel, and of both aluminium and palladium. “The nickel market still appears to be very tight” with stockpiles falling, Briesemann said.— AFP ■

HSBC announces \$1 bn share buyback as 2021 profits double

HSBC on Tuesday announced bumper 2021 profits and plans to repurchase shares worth up to \$1.0 billion as the Asia-focused bank continues its recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and major restructuring. The lender endured a tumultuous 2020 like the rest of the banking sector as the virus outbreak rocked the economy just as it embarked on a restructuring programme to slash 35,000 jobs to refocus on its most profitable areas in Asia and the Middle East. The London-headquartered bank on Tuesday reported pre-tax profit of \$18.9 billion in 2021, up \$10.1 billion on the year before, helped by lower bad loans and operating expenses. Profit after tax was up \$8.6 billion to \$14.7 billion. Fourth quarter profit before tax rose \$1.3 billion to \$2.7 billion. In a boon for investors, the bank also announced plans for a \$1.0 billion share buyback, adding to a \$2.0 billion buyback announced late last year. “We have good momentum coming into 2022 and are confident that we can continue to execute against our strategy,” Chief Executive Officer Noel Quinn said in the statement. “We also remain cognisant of the potential impact that further Covid-19- related uncertainty and continued inflation might have on us and our clients.”—AFP ■



HSBC endured a tumultuous 2020 like the rest of the banking sector as the virus outbreak rocked the economy. PHOTO: PHILIPPE LOPEZ /AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NORDDAL VOY.NO. (205S/207N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NORDDAL VOY.NO. (205S/207N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NARVIK VOY.NO. (206W/207E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NARVIK VOY.NO. (206W/207E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

Public Notice

Amara Communications Co., Ltd. (“Amara”) is entering into a Tower Transfer Agreement with Irrawaddy Green Towers Ltd (“IGT”), whereby Amara is agreeing to sell and IGT is agreeing to buy (30) telecommunication towers owned by Amara.

The effect of this transaction is that rent for the premises which are taken on lease by Amara in which the (30) Towers are erected will in future be paid by IGT, subject to IGT entering into a fresh lease with the actual landlords.

IGT confirms and undertakes that they will honor all the leases (and associated lease payments) agreed between Amara and landlords with respect to the above (30) Towers. The commercial terms of the lease agreements (including rental amount, tenure and time of payment) shall remain substantially the same.

If anyone has any objections to the transaction between Amara and IGT, please contact U Tun Myint with related facts within 14 days starting from the date of this advertisement at 09 771 001 177 or alternatively at tun.myint@igt.com.mm or by post at Irrawaddy Green Towers Ltd, International Commercial Center, No. 422/426, 7th floor, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

Irrawaddy Green Towers Ltd

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GREEN CLARITY VOY.NO. (0256-046N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GREEN CLARITY VOY.NO. (0256-046N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S'PORE) PTE., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V X-PRESS GODAVARI VOY.NO. (22003N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V X-PRESS GODAVARI VOY.NO. (22003N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-2-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S X-PRESS FEEDERS LINES

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NEWS
IN BRIEF

Turkey 'silences critics' with presidential insult law

TURKISH journalist Sedef Kabas begins her second month in detention on Tuesday for "insulting the president", an increasingly common offence which observers believe is stifling critical voices 16 months before the presidential election.

The 52-year-old has already spent longer in jail than any other journalist for this alleged offence, according to the NGO Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

During a television interview on 14 January Kabas quoted an old proverb affirming that a crowned head generally becomes wiser, and added: "but we see it is not true". She repeated the line, deemed to be derogatory to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his regime, on her Twitter account which has more than 900,000 followers. —AFP ■

Chile museum to return Easter Island 'head'

CHILE'S National Museum of Natural History said Monday it will return to Easter Island an enormous stone statue taken from the Rapa Nui people and brought to the mainland 150 years ago.

The monolith is one of hundreds, called Moai, carved by the Rapa Nui in honour of their ancestors and sometimes referred to as the Easter Island heads.

The statues are today the island's greatest tourist attraction, sculpted from basalt more than 1,000 years ago.

The one being returned, dubbed Moai Tau, is a 715-kilogramme (1,500-pound) giant brought by the Chilean navy some 3,700 kilometres (2,300 miles) across the Pacific in 1870.

Eight years later, it was moved to the natural history museum to be displayed.

The Rapa Nui, for whom the Moai represent the spirits of their ancestors, have been asking for the statue's return for years — as well as other cultural treasures taken from their island. —AFP ■

Iran president makes maiden Gulf trip for gas, nuclear talks

IRAN'S President Ebrahim Raisi arrived in Qatar on his first visit to a Gulf Arab state Monday for a major gas summit that will be dominated by tensions over Ukraine.

Raisi and Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, a close US ally, are also expected to discuss growing efforts to revive a stalled international deal to regulate Iran's nuclear programme.

Tuesday's Gas Exporting Countries Forum will be overshadowed by growing tensions around Ukraine which have boosted demand for gas as well as the price paid by consumers.

Producing nations say they will not be able to provide substantial amounts of gas to Europe if Russia, which has been accused of preparing an attack



Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and Raisi will attend Tuesday's Gas Exporting Countries Forum. PHOTO: QATAR AMIRI DIWAN/AFP

on Ukraine, cuts supplies in any sanctions showdown.

Raisi has not travelled in the Gulf region since taking office in June, and it is only his fourth

trip abroad. Qatar authorities imposed stringent security for his arrival at Doha airport, where he was met by the emir.

Qatar has added the Iran

nuclear dispute to its list of diplomatic hotspots where it has taken a behind-the-scenes mediation role. Earlier this month Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani went on an unannounced visit to Tehran after the emir met US President Joe Biden in Washington.

'Common concern'

The Qatar government said that the emir and Raisi would discuss issues of "common concern" without giving details. Diplomats said, however, that the nuclear talks would be on the agenda. In 2015, Iran and six world powers including the United States reached a landmark nuclear agreement that offered Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its atomic programme.—AFP ■

Deadly sinking of Spanish trawler blamed on engine failure

A Spanish fishing trawler sank in stormy waters off Canada last week, leaving 21 sailors dead or missing, because its engine failed, the owner of the vessel said Monday.

There were 24 people onboard the Villa de Pitango when it went down off the eastern coast of Canada early on Tuesday in Spain's worst fishing tragedy in nearly 40 years.

Rescuers found three survivors in a lifeboat suffering from hypothermia, including the ship's captain Juan Padin, who were taken to the Canadian port of St. John's.

Padin has said the accident happened when the ship attempted to turn, the Noreas

Marin group, the company based in Spain's northwestern region of Galicia which owns the ship, said in a statement.

"The main engine suddenly stopped, leaving the boat without propulsion or direction, exposed to the wind and the waves, suffering blows from the sea that caused it to tilt and sink very quickly," it added, citing the captain.

Onboard the vessel were 16 Spaniards, five Peruvians and three Ghanaians.

Rescuers have only found nine bodies. Given the freezing water temperatures and the rough seas, there is practically no chance of finding any more survivors. —AFP ■



There were 24 people onboard the Villa de Pitango when it went down off the eastern coast of Canada early on Tuesday in Spain's worst fishing tragedy in nearly 40 years. PHOTO: YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT/AFP

Kremlin pours cold water on Ukraine peace summit plan



Residents attend an open training organized for civilians by war veterans and volunteers who teach basic weapons handling and first aid on one of Kyiv's city beaches on 20 February 2022, amid soaring tensions with Russia. PHOTO: AFP

THE Kremlin warned Monday there are no concrete plans for a summit between the Russian and US leaders, as diplomats scrambled to head off the threat of a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The idea of a meeting between presidents Vladimir Putin and Joe Biden has been championed by France and cautiously welcomed by Ukraine as a way to avert a catastrophic war in Europe.

But Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "It's premature to talk about any spe-

cific plans for organizing any kind of summits" adding that no "concrete plans" had been put in place.

France's President Emmanuel Macron called Putin on Sunday and afterwards his office said that both the Russian and Biden were open to the idea. The summit would go ahead, however, only "on the condition that Russia does not invade Ukraine". "There is a diplomatic hope," France's minister for European affairs Clement Beaune told LCI television.—AFP ■

Defying West, Putin orders troops to Ukraine rebel regions

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops into two Moscow-backed rebel regions of Ukraine Monday, prompting a furious response from the West with the United States denouncing the move at the UN Security Council as a “pretext for war”.

After weeks of massing troops around Ukraine, Putin recognized the independence of the former Soviet state’s rebel-held Donetsk and Lugansk regions — paving the way for the deployment of a potential invasion force.

In an often angry 65-minute televised national address from his office, Putin railed against Ukraine as a failed state and

“puppet” of the West.

Putin said it was necessary to “take a long overdue decision, to immediately recognize the independence” of the two regions.

In two official decrees, the Russian president instructed his defence ministry to assume “the function of peacekeeping” in the separatist-held regions.

Moscow’s gambit triggered international condemnation and a promise of targeted sanctions from the United States and the European Union -- with a broader package of economic punishment to come in the event of further incursion into Ukraine’s territory. The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting,



Ukrainian troops in training exercises. PHOTO: AFP ARCHIVES

where US ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield described as “nonsense” Putin’s reference to peacekeepers.

“We know what they really are,” Thomas-Greenfield said, adding Putin’s speech amounted to a “series of outrageous, false claims” that were aimed at “creating a pretext for war”.

Russia’s ambassador to the UN Vasily Nebenzya told the meeting that Moscow was still open to a diplomatic solution.

“However, allowing a new bloodbath in the Donbas is something we do not intend to do,” he added, referring to the region encompassing Donetsk and Lugansk.

Putn’s move triggered panic on financial markets, with equities tumbling in Asian trade while the price of oil spiked.—AFP ■

EU agrees to help Cyprus manage record migrant influx



Syrian refugees rest at the Temporary Reception Centre in Kokkinotrimithia, about 20 kilometres from the Cypriot capital, Nicosia. PHOTO: AFP

CYPRUS struck a deal Monday with the European Union to help it handle a large migrant influx to the divided Mediterranean island, which Nicosia says is the highest per capita in the EU.

The agreement will make it easier for Cyprus to send back

failed asylum seekers and help upgrade its overcrowded reception facilities.

The Republic of Cyprus accuses Turkey, whose troops have since 1974 occupied the island’s northern third, of encouraging much of the influx of Syrian ref-

ugees and arrivals from sub-Saharan Africa across the UN-patrolled Green Line that divides the island.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by Cypriot Interior Minister Nicos Nouris and EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson, who attended virtually.

“Today is a milestone for the Republic of Cyprus and efforts made by the government to manage a problem that has plagued our country,” Nouris said at the ceremony. Johansson tweeted that the deal would help Cyprus implement “timely asylum procedures” to reduce the backlog, “establish effective integration and improve the efficiency of returns”. Nicosia says 4.6 per cent of the country’s population are asylum seekers or beneficiaries of protection, the highest ratio in any EU country.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Morocco creates new military zone along Algeria border

MOROCCO has established a new military zone bordering Algeria, a Moroccan military publication said Monday, amid mounting tensions between the two North African countries.

The establishment of the new zone redefines Morocco’s military borders, introducing a new eastern military zone alongside the previously designated northern and southern military zones.

Algeria borders Morocco to the latter’s east and south.

The Moroccan armed forces’ magazine said in its latest edition on Monday that the creation of the new zone dates back as early as 5 January, when its command was handed over to Major General Mohammed Miqdad during a ceremony.—AFP ■

IMF says Somalia funding at risk over election delays

THE International Monetary Fund could stop its programme in Somalia in three months if long-postponed national elections encounter fresh delays, a senior official told AFP, as she began a mission to the troubled Horn of Africa nation on Tuesday.

The IMF’s programme in Somalia is due for a review in mid-May, but election delays mean that a new administration may not be ready to endorse planned reforms in time, said Laura Jaramillo Mayor, the fund’s mission chief for the country.—AFP ■

Ex-Bolivia interim president Anez gets 3 more months’ prison

FORMER Bolivian interim president Jeanine Anez, imprisoned since March 2021 for her alleged role in a coup d’etat, will remain in detention for at least three more months, a court ruled Monday.

Hailed as a “political prisoner” by her supporters, Anez has been on a hunger strike since 9 February, the eve of her trial over the ouster of former leftist

president Evo Morales.

“The request for an extension of (provisional) detention can be granted for a period of three months,” Judge Armando Zaballos told an online hearing, noting it was a “complex” case with an ongoing investigation.

Her defense has appealed the decision.

“They continue to punish me at the whim of my execu-

tioners. The terrorism case does not exist. They have not proven anything since they kidnapped me. I am innocent,” the conservative ex-president, in power between 2019 and 2020, tweeted after the ruling. Accusations of terrorism still under investigation stem from complaints made by the families of victims of a police crackdown against protesters.—AFP ■



Former Bolivian interim president Jeanine Anez has been on a hunger strike since 9 February. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Myanmar team to compete in ASEAN Para Games in July

THE 11th ASEAN Para Games will be held in Indonesia in July, with participation of the Myanmar Sports Team.

The Para Games will be held after the SEA Games.

Indonesia will host the 11th ASEAN Para Games, which was last cancelled in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 11th ASEAN Para Games will be held from 23 to 30 July according to a recent meeting of the ASEAN Para Sports Federation.

Indonesia is set to host three new sports, based on the 11 sports planned for the ASEAN Para Games hosted by Viet Nam.

The Myanmar Para Sports Team will compete in the event and is training at the camp, officials said.

The Team Myanmar will continue to compete in the Asian Para Games to be held in China after the ASEAN tourney, officials added. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Tuchel fights to rekindle Chelsea fire to ‘survive’



Thomas Tuchel admits Chelsea are fighting to “survive” as the spluttering Champions League holders prepare to face Lille in the last 16 first leg on Tuesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

THOMAS Tuchel admits Chelsea are fighting to “survive” as the spluttering Champions League holders prepare to face Lille in the last 16 first leg on Tuesday.

Tuchel’s side have won their last five games in all competitions, but there was little joy on the German’s face when he reflected on Saturday’s 1-0 victory

at Crystal Palace.

The honeymoon is definitely over for Tuchel as he approaches the business end of his first full season as Chelsea boss.

In just five months in charge last term, Tuchel led Chelsea to the Champions League crown and the FA Cup final, as well as a top four finish in the Premier

League.

When Romelu Lukaku was signed from Inter Milan for a club record £97 million (\$131 million), it was expected the Belgium striker would help Chelsea enjoy a period of sustained dominance.

Chelsea were tipped to emerge as serious challengers for the Premier League title and in the early weeks of this season it seemed they might live up to the hype.

But in the grip of a wind-swept winter in Britain, Tuchel has found it increasingly tricky to keep Chelsea from being blown off course.

The first signs of discontent behind the scenes emerged when Lukaku went public with complaints about the way he was being deployed by Tuchel.

Forced to apologize, Lukaku has cut a disconsolate figure ever since and remains without a league goal since December.— AFP ■

Fans’ welcome ‘exceeded expectations’, says Djokovic after winning return

NOVAK Djokovic admitted the warm reception he was given by fans in Dubai on Monday exceeded his expectations as he made a successful return to the tour for the first time since his deportation from Australia.

The world No1 kicked off his 2022 campaign with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Italian teenager Lorenzo Musetti, and was greeted by loud cheers from a packed stadium as he commenced his quest for a sixth title in the Emirates in style.

Djokovic was not sure how he would be received in the wake of everything that happened in Australia last month, but stated he

“couldn’t ask for a better reception” as fans scrambled to take photos with him after the match, chanting ‘Nole, Nole’, to celebrate his victory and his return to action.

“I think Dubai is a perfect place for me to start a season because of the support and the fans that showed up tonight and really cheered me on the way they did,” Djokovic told reporters in an outdoor press conference that was specifically set up for him, away from the main interview room.

“They exceeded my best expectations, so to say, in terms of the atmosphere.” —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.

Struggling Atletico look to reignite the fire against Man United

IF winning La Liga caused Atletico Madrid to soften their edge or lose their identity, a Champions League tie against Manchester United could be a chance for them to get it back.

From the highs of winning their second league title in 25 years, have come the lows of humiliating defeats, unprecedented fragility in defence and introspection over style and application that has left even Diego Simeone’s future in doubt.

And yet amid all the soul-searching and despair, there have been pockets of resistance, a handful of rare but uplifting performances dotted across a miserable season, each of them sparking hope that a corner was about to be turned. After losing away at Alaves, Atletico rallied against AC Milan at the San Siro, coming from a goal down to win 2-1,



Luis Suarez has scored 11 goals for Atletico Madrid this season. **PHOTO: AFP/ANDER GILLENIA/FILE**

Luis Suarez scoring a penalty in the 96th minute.

After losing at home to Mallorca, they prevailed in an all or nothing match against Porto in Lisbon, a fiery 3-1 win dragging them into the Champions League last 16.

In the last month alone, as the knives have sharpened and pressure mounted, Atletico have come from two goals down to beat Valencia and 3-2 behind to beat Getafe, on both occasions by finding a winner in the last minute.—AFP ■