DON'T RELINQUISH GOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEACE DIALOGUES PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

MSME manufacturing process based on agriculture and livestock farms must be operated to achieve success in local businesses: Senior General

MSME businesses are being encouraged to substitute import goods and increase the export volume, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at a meeting with businesspersons of micro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSME) from Kachin State at the city hall in Myitkyina yesterday afternoon.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing looks into the booths displayed at the meeting with MSME businesspeople from Kachin State in Myitkyina on 13 December 2022.

Individual discussions on requirements for the development of businesses

The Kachin State chief minister reported on the implementation of the Myitkyina economic development zone, manufacturing of industrial products, implementation of MSME businesses in Kachin State, aid for MSME businesses in the state, disbursement of loans by the government for the improvement of MSMEs, region-wise production, and undertaking of agriculture and livestock farms with the State economic promotion fund.

Local businesspersons reported on the difficulties of MSMEs in Kachin State, negotiation with relevant countries to reduce levying tax over the MSME export products, disbursement for loans with soft interest rates and needs for the development of local businesses.

U Zakhun Yein Sawng from Kachin Special Region 1 conveyed thanks expressed by local people to the government for the development of Chipwe and Panwa regions, improvement of transport facilities for quick development of socio-economic life of the region and other requirements.

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MYANMAR GAZETTE

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Head of Service Organization

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned U Win Zaw Aung, Director-General of the Union Minister Office of the Ministry of Immigration and Population, to the duties of Permanent Secretary/ Director-General of the same ministry concurrently.

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Head of Service Organization confirmed

THE State Administration Council has confirmed the appointment of Dr Chit Sein as Rector of Yangon University of Distance Education of the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education after the one-year probationary period.

Public Notice

1. The State Administration Council awarded Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma, Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma, Agga Maha Thray Sithu, Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu, Maha Thray Sithu, Thray Sithu, Sithu, Thura, Thiri Pyanchi, Zeya Kyaw Htin, Wunna Kyaw Htin, Alinka Kyaw Swa and Theikpa Kyaw Swa titles in 2022 with Order Nos 2/2022, 54/2022, 63/2022, 211/2022, 212/2022, 213/2022, 214/2022, 215/2022, 218/2022, 219/2022, 220/2022 and 221/2022.

2. The honorary titles recipients will be awarded honouring Diamond Jubilee Independence Day and are invited to attend in person or their family member to the honorary titles conferring ceremony.

3. It is here announced that the recipient of titles or one family member on behalf of awardees who will attend the ceremonies must contact Phone Nombers 067-3412715 and 067-3412716 of Sub-Committee on Invitation no later than 20-12-2022.

13 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 13 December, total figure rises to 633,475

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 633,475 after 13 new cases were reported on 13 December 2022 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached 607,998 including 15 new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at 19,488 on 13 December with no new deaths reported from the pandemic.

Daily laboratory examination showed decline of infection to less than 1 per cent for 28 successive days.

According to the research, it is found that people who have been vaccinated do not suffer severely from the disease, need not to be hospitalized and unlikely to die. If they have received booster shot, the death rates can be reduced more.

As such, the people need to follow the new normal way in living with COVID. Hence, all the people above five have to fully receive COVID-19 vaccination inoculated by the Ministry of Health free of charge. Six months after the vaccination, they have to take booster jabs at relevant health centres and ward/village administration offices without fail.

Moreover, they have to wear masks while in closed chambers and public places. They need to often wash hands with soap and water or the hand gel containing alcohol (at least 60 per cent) for 20 seconds.

People need to follow the social distancing rule and avoid the crowds as much as possible. While not wearing masks, if they cough and sneeze, they need to cover mouth and noses with elbows in line with the personal hygienic ways. COVID-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health. —MNA

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Blood donation ceremony held to mark Diamond Jubilee Independence Day in Bahan Tsp

A blood donation ceremony marking Diamond Jubilee Independence Day was held at Jivita Dhana Sangha Hospital at the corner of Koh Min Koh Chin and Wingaba roads in Bo Cho 1 Ward of Bahan Township in Yangon Region yesterday.

The collective blood donation event was led by township administrative officials and attended by authorities, township-level departmental officials, hospital chairman and staff, doctors and nurses from National Blood Bank, NGOs, ward administrators and blood donors.

A total of 52 — 38 males and 14 females — including monks, nuns, departmental staff, township red cross society members, reserved firefighters and social welfare association members donated blood at the event. — Sanda Htay (IPRD)/KTZH

Private sector and individual role – the main driving force for the State in the market economic system

ENCOURAGING MSMEs means encouraging the business centred on the private sector. The country is practising market economy and multiparty democracy. The private sector and individual role are the main driving force for the State in the market economic system.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of the MSME Development Central Committee Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 1/2022 of the central committee on 23 September 2022.)

MSME manufacturing process based on agriculture ...

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Discussions of Union ministers in relevant sectors

Union ministers and deputy ministers explained the establishment of border region development schools to turn out human resources, arrangements for smooth transportation, fulfilment of relevant ministries for the development of MSMEs, allocation of the capital funds to regions and states and self-administration regions, disbursement of loans to MSMEs and needs to pay back the debts to the government. The state chief minister discussed plans underway to fulfil the needs of MSMEs in Kachin State.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets MSME businesspersons in Kachin State yesterday.

Encouragement to MSMEs

In his speech, the Senior General said that more than 90 per cent of MSME businesses are being operated not only in developing countries like Myanmar but also in developed countries. Only when encouragement is given to domestic manufacturing business will the nation develop. It is necessary to encourage rural businesses called agriculture and livestock farms. If rural people develop their socioeconomic lives, the demand for rural businesses will increase. If so, money circulation will improve, and the State economy will develop. As such, MSME businesses are being encouraged to substitute imported goods and increase the export volume.

Requirement of electricity and fuel

The Senior General noted that although the country can generate some 40,000 megawatts of hydropower in the nation, these projects were halted for various reasons. It is necessary to efficiently utilize the resources to generate hydropower in Kachin State. To electrify people, electricity can be generated through solar power and wind power. On the other hand, the consumption of electricity must be saved.

The Senior General urged all to save fuel use as much as possible. All the people should use bicycles which do not need to use fuel with national spirit. Rail transportation must be emphasized for minimizing the use of fuel.

The Senior General views the work of Kachin traditional costumes.

Encouragement to domestic businesses based on local products

If products can be manufactured at home sufficiently, prices of goods will decline. The Senior General urged all of Kachin State to manufacture products beneficial for the majority of the people rather than the individuals. MSME businesses can operate manufacturing of import substitute personal and consumer products. Kachin State can emphasize the manufacturing of rubber products and tyres as it possesses a lot of rubber farms. Moreover, wood and bamboo can be used in the production of paper. The government will provide necessary assistance for these businesses.

The Senior General pointed out that it is necessary to increase the per-acre yield of crops rather than expanding sown acreage. MSME manufacturing processes based on agriculture and livestock farms must be operated to achieve success in local businesses.

Emphasize turning out qualified human resources

The promotion of the education sector is to uplift the future of individuals and the country. Education promotion must be done for turning out human resources for the development undertakings of the nation. The government will give a helping hand to Kachin State for the development of MSME businesses.

The Senior General cordially greeted MSME businesspersons at the meeting. Then, the Senior General viewed round natural resource products, foodstuffs, consumer goods, industrial products, traditional products, clothes and traditional medicines displayed at the booths and asked about grasping market shares for these products. — MNA

SAC Chairman C-in-C of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets officers, other ranks and families of Myitkyina Station

State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds the meeting with officers, other ranks and family members of Myitkyina Station on 13 December 2022.

TATMADAW has always worked towards the three main national causes together with the people throughout the ages. And the Tatmadaw will continue to be the guardian of the nation at any time under any government, said State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at a meeting in Myitkyina. The Senior General and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, accompanied by Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung and his wife, senior military officers of the office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and their wives and Commander of the Northern Command Maj-Gen Ko Ko Maung and responsible personnel, met with officers and other ranks of Myitkyina Station at the Bala Minhtin Hall yesterday morning.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said: if we look back at the history of the country, it can be seen that there emerged armed conflicts in the nation due to the divide-and-rule policy of British colonialists after their occupation of the Union. That policy sowed discord in the minds of national brethren and it is still a danger to the nation. As a result, there still exist armed conflicts and the country has not achieved peace and stability up to now, about 75 years after her independence.

All the officers and other ranks must see the political history of the nation from the right perspective. After gaining independence, the nation practised parliamentary democracy, there were rivalries between socialists and capitalists before and after independence, the communists went underground in March 1948, Chinese Kuomintang invaded the country by 1950 and the Tatmadaw had to drive them out. Since then, the Tatmadaw has always had to try hard to prevent the disintegration of the Union.

From 1962 to 1988, the country was ruled by the Revolution Council and Burma Socialist Programme Party. But due to mismanagement and the weaknesses of socialism, the country's economy failed in 1988 and a major political crisis erupted and the country had to be faced with the danger of the disintegration of sovereignty. Therefore, the Tatmadaw had to assume the responsibilities of the State.

After 1988, the Tatmadaw government worked towards the emergence of multiparty democracy keeping in line with the wishes of the people and succeeded in writing the constitution in 2008 and it was approved in the national referendum.

In the first democratic election, the government led by U Thein Sein came to power and the Tatmadaw worked in cooperation with it. In 2015, a new government took office and, due to the weaknesses in the management of the new government, the country was faced with an economic downturn. In the 2020 election, the ruling party used unscrupulous methods to win victory in the election. The Tatmadaw urged all those concerned about the problem of vote fraud. However, the request of Tatmadaw was turned down and the ruling party tried to call the Hluttaw. Therefore, Tatmadaw had to take the responsibilities of the State under the 2008 Constitution.

The Tatmadaw has always worked towards the three main national causes together with the people throughout the ages. And the Tatmadaw will continue to be the guardian of the nation at any time under any government.

Then, the Senior General gave foodstuffs to officers, other ranks and their families and the commander received them on their behalf. The wife of the Senior General also offered cash assistance for the maternal and child welfare association of Myitkyina Station and the wife of the commander received it. — MNA

The Senior General presents foodstuffs.

Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of the Senior General, gives the cash assistance.

SAC Vice-Chair Dy PM Vice-Senior General Soe Win receives Rosatom Dy D-G

STATE Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win received Deputy Director-General of Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation Mr Nikolay Spasskiy at the parlour of the Office of the SAC Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They discussed and exchanged views on project potential and future work plans for projects to be implemented by the Ministry of Electric Power, Ministry of Science and Technology and Russia's Rosatom company.

After the meeting, the Vice-Senior General and the Deputy Director-General of the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation exchanged gifts and posed for documentary photos.

State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win receives Mr Nikolay Spasskiy, Rosatom Deputy Director-General yesterday.

Also, present at the meeting together with the Vice-Senior General were Union Ministers U Thaung Han and Dr Myo Thein Kyaw and officials. The Deputy Director-General of the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation was accompanied by Dr Nikolay Listopadov, Russian Ambassador to Myanmar. — MNA/KTZH

MoFA Union Minister receives Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar

UNION Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received Mr Chhouk Bunna, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, who is leaving Myanmar after completion of his tour of duty in Myanmar at 10:30 am on 13 December 2022 at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the farewell call, they reviewed the status of the existing traditional friendly relations and candidly discussed matters on a wide range of issues pertaining to the possibilities of further strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation, especially in the areas of trade and investment, culture, tourism and people-to-people contacts between the two countries as well as closer collaboration at both regional and multilateral arenas. — MNA

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin receives the farewell call of Mr Chhouk Bunna, Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar yesterday.

MoIC Union Minister receives Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar

Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing receives Mr Chhouk Bunna, Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar yesterday.

UNION Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing of the Ministry of International Cooperation received Mr Chhouk Bunna, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, who is leaving Myanmar after completion of his tour of duty in Myanmar at 11 am on 13 December 2022 at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the farewell call, they cordially exchanged views on the traditional bonds of friendship and partnership between Myanmar and Cambodia, as well as further advancement of closer collaboration both in bilateral and multilateral contexts in the coming years. The Union Minister also expressed his appreciation to the Government of Cambodia for its constructive role in providing Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar. — MNA

Final matches of SAC Chairman's Trophy Inter-State/Region Invitational Volleyball Tournament (Men/Women) held in Nay Pyi Taw

SAC Member Daw Aye Nu Sein presents the championship trophy to the Yangon Region women's volleyball team.

THE Department of Sports and Physical Education under the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and the Myanmar Volleyball Federation jointly hailed Diamond Jubilee Independence Day and continued to hold final matches of the State Administration Council Chairman's Trophy Inter-State/Region Invitational Volleyball (Men/Women) Tournament at the Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium B in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning. SAC members — Mahn Nyein Maung, Daw Aye Nu Sein, U Sai Lone Seng, Dr Banyar Aung Moe, and U Shwe Kyein— Union ministers, deputy ministers, officials from the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and the Myanmar Volleyball Federation, officials from divisions and sports enthusiasts were present on the occasion.

In the finals of the volleyball tournament, the Yangon Region women's team defeated the Sagaing Region women's team by 3-0, and the Yangon Region men's team won over the Mandalay Region men's team by 3-1.

An award ceremony continued after the competitions. Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint for Ethnic Affairs and Union Minister U Min Thein Zan for Sports and Youth Affairs awarded cash awards to the players who won the best athlete awards in men's and women's volleyball teams.

The ceremony was closed after cash prizes were awarded in order from the first prize to the fourth prize-winning teams (men/women) by the SAC members and Union ministers.

Afterwards, in commemoration of the 2023 Diamond Jubilee Independence Day, quarter-final matches of the Under 18 women's invitational football tournament were held. SAC members, Union ministers, deputy ministers and officials watched the match between the Mandalay Region team and the Bago Region team at the Wunna Theikdi training field 1 and the match between the Yangon Region team and the Kachin State team at the training field 3. — MNA/CT

MoHT Union Minister attends 7th Global Food Tourism Forum online

UNION Minister Dr Htay Aung of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism virtually attended the seventh Global Food Tourism Forum cooperated by the World Tourism Organization and Basque Culinary Centre (BCC) that was held at Nara in Japan yesterday.

At the beginning of the forum, Nara Prefecture Administrator Mr Shogo Arai, Director-General of the Nara Tourism Bureau Ms Hirata Chieko, Dr Qu Dongyu from FAO, General Manager of Basque Culinary Centre (BCC) Mr Joxe Mari Aizega, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization Mr Zurab Pololikashvili and State Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Mr Hiroo Ishii delivered opening speeches.

According to the forum programme, topics such as the talents of women and youths, the ensuring of no wastage of food and drink, the future of earth and mankind, the achievement of sustainable development goals and the World Tourism Federation's food tourism industry challenges will be divided into three parts and discussed.

The forum titled "Gastronomy Tourism for People and Planet: Innovate, Empower and Preserve", will be held from 12 to 15 December, with the aim of allowing food tourism professionals to share good practices and new ideas and to help recover from the effects of COVID-19.

Meeting teachers and students who study tourism and hospitality services at the National Management Degree College in Yangon, the Union minister discussed cooperation with the Ministry of Education to open up tourism subjects to the university level, and the ministry's employees and tourism experts to teach hotel and tourism subjects. Professors from international universities visited and taught at the college and student exchange programmes were conducted with foreign tourism universities.

Afterwards, Principal of the National Management Degree College Dr Nila Myint Htoo explained the teaching of diploma and degree courses and plans to open new courses. Then, the Union Minister coordinated. — MNA/KZL

Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was reconstituted under the State Administration Council's Order No 366/2021 dated 10.12.2021, and action is being taken effectively against illegal trade under the law.

The following telephone numbers, fax and email address can be reached to safely report information in connection with illegal trade.

Auto telephone number - 067 409 883
Mobile phone - 09 404339969
Fax - 067 409 886
Email address - antiillegaltradeinfo@gmail.com

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was reconstituted under the State Administration Council's Order No 366/2021 dated 10.12.2021, and action is being taken effectively against illegal trade under the law.

Regarding the "request for money from departmental organizations in conducting trade", the following numbers can be reached to safely report such information.

Auto telephone number - 067 409 881
Mobile phone - 09 699611116
Fax - 067 409 887
Email address - antiillegaltradeoffice@gmail.com

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

Meeting on Myanmar-Russia projects held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Ministry of Electric Power organized a meeting on projects to be implemented between the Ministry of Electric Power, Ministry of Science and Technology and Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

It was attended by Union Minister for Electric Power U Thaung Han, Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Myo Thein Kyaw, Deputy Minister of Electric Power Dr Aung Zeya, departmental heads, Russian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Nikolay Listopadov, Deputy Director-General of Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom Mr Nikolay Spasskiy and other relevant officials.

First, the MoEP Union minister said the MoST and MoEP signed the roadmap with the State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom on 6 September during the occasion of the seventh Eastern Economic Forum-EEF that was held between 5 and 8 September in Russia. Moreover, the Department of Electric Power and Planning under MoEP made NDA to conduct a feasibility study for Russia-Myanmar Small Modular Reactor (SMR) Projects with Rosatom Energy Projects, Joint Stock Company on 21 November during the visit to Russia for ATOMEXPO -2022 and the MoU on 22 November. The discussions on potential sites to launch a feasibility study for a thermal power plant project were also held and the needed terms of reference-TOR for that feasibility study will be signed at today's meeting.

The Union minister continued that the fundamental points for SMR will be found with the working groups. The representatives of Rosatom completed their ground study on wind power and small-scale hydropower to be generated in Myanmar. The study shows there are six potential places for wind power projects that can generate over 8,100 megawatts and the Rosatom should cooperate in wind power projects as quickly as possible. Then, he appreciated the assistance of Russia during 75 -year- old Russia-Myanmar relations.

Afterwards, the MoST Union minister also said the ministry will work with the experts of Rosatom in distributing technical awareness programmes to Myanmar people to gain a positive attitude.

The meeting between the Ministry of Electric Power, Ministry of Science and Technology and Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom is in progress.

Then, the deputy director-general of the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom expressed their experiences in establishing thermal power plant projects. He said the current project will generate power in Myanmar for a long time and the processes of signing the agreement will be carried out step by step.

The Russian ambassador also said the long-term projects can be implemented through bilateral cooperation and the current thermal power plant project will run for a long time without taking much time for construction.

Then, the Ministry of Science and Technology, on behalf of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and Rosatom, on behalf of the Russian Federation, signed the draft IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement) and the Department of Electric Power and Planning under MoEP signed terms of reference-TOR for a feasibility study on small modular reactor project with Rosatom Energy Project, Joint Stock Company, while the Joint Communication Plan for increasing public acceptance of atomic technologies in Myanmar by Atomic Energy Department under the Ministry of Science and Technology and Rosatom International Network.

The two parties enjoyed lunch after taking photos. — MNA/KTZH

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, foodstuffs, industrial materials, consumer goods, car parts and vehicles confiscated

Confiscated illegal goods, a motorbike and vehicles.

A combined team under the supervision of the Taninthayi Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force conducted inspections on 11 December at the Pauktaing Bridge checkpoint on Myeik- Dawei road and captured K7,308,000 worth of foodstuffs without official documents and 105 bags of illegal charcoal worth K472,500 from a Daewoo bus (approximately K30 million). Effective action was taken under Customs Procedures.

In addition, on 12 December, a combined team led by Customs Department captured K62,683,500 worth of car parts, industrial materials and consumer goods that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from two vehicles and trailers (approximately K167 million) near 21 Milepost on PyinOoLwin-Mandalay Road and action was taken under the Customs Procedures.

A combined team led by Myanmar Police Force seized two unregistered Kenbo 125 motorbikes in Monywa and Indaw townships. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

A total of 18.4306 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K1,290,142 was confiscated in Taungup, Minbya and Thandwe townships and action was taken under the Forest Law.

A total of 0.4012 tonne of illegal sawn teaks worth K264,792 was seized in Pakokku township and a total of 5.1228 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K1,684,088 in Toungoo and Pyay districts on 13 December and action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, 17 arrests (at an estimated value of K271,003,022) were made on three consecutive days from 11 to 13 December, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

OPINION

Don't relinquish good opportunities for peace dialogues

DEMOCRACY is a system of government and representatives are typically elected. The federal system is a concept of dividing up the authoritative power on concerted efforts of the ethnic groups from different regions and states and is also a system of living in unison and sharing equal opportunities.

In a definition of the Union system based on the democratic and federal systems, the administrative system selected by the people in the Union is meant for living in unison and the entitlement of adopting self-legislation in the respective states and regions according to the Constitution.

It is needed to abide by the Constitution and promulgated laws regardless of the status of the person, institution and designation. The fundamental to underpin the genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system is to hold a free and fair multiparty democratic general election. The administrative mechanism of the country has to be operated by the establishment of respective Hluttaws and government bodies according to electoral results.

> Since it will be performed in accord with two political agendas; the strengthening of the genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system, and building the Union based on the democratic and federal system, the Tatmadaw cordially invited to pave the way to non-signatory EAOs in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). As such, any stakeholders and organizations should not relinquish the chance for the EAOs to be able to join the peace dialogues.

Therefore, the eligible candidates are required to be elected on behalf of the respective ethnic groups, regions and social stratification in forthcoming elections, and the election is needed to be held without any space left across the country. The State Administration Council is trying to design nation-building as a national affair, but not meant for politics.

In the specific regions without peace, not only the development will be far apart but the economy, social life, health and education of inhabitants will also be lagged far behind. It is known that there is no racial discrimination in the country composed of multi-ethnicity and the development of the country.

In the implementation of the peace process, the basis of two agendas; the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and the 2008 Constitution are being fundamentally conducted. In the discussion and peace dialogue with ethnic armed organizations-EAO to accelerate the peace process in a practical way, the absolute necessity for the region and country is being negotiated through the Union Spirit. Satisfactory results have been achieved for the country and people through those dialogues.

Since it will be performed in accord with two political agendas; the strengthening of the genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system, and building the Union based on the democratic and federal system, the Tatmadaw cordially invited to pave the way to non-signatory EAOs in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). As such, any stakeholders and organizations should not relinquish the chance for the EAOs to be able to join the peace dialogues.

■

ARTICLE

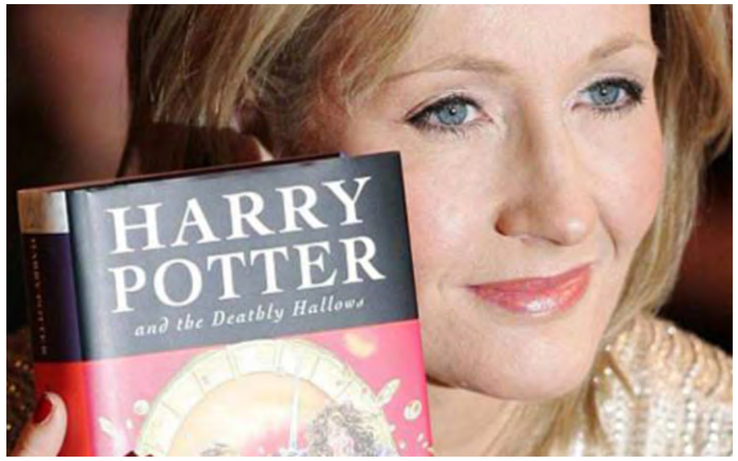
Strive to be a lifelong learner

By Ywatha Phoe Maung

WE LEFT the nest of the parents to pursue education in the teacher's care. The environment between the school and home is causing divergence just like the two banks of the river. The parents nurtured their first child until four-five years with parental warmth. So, some had a discrepancy between home and school life. They failed to correspond with the strangers in the neighbourhood. This is the first learning crisis they encountered to adjust to the school environment.

A child considered class boring. The first grade in elementary school is like a burden for them. Oh, I was lucky. My homeroom teacher was good-natured. The teacher from another room punished the students by scolding or beating them. My homeroom teacher was also my relative so she was complaisant. However, it was not fun learning. I skipped school but my father found out and captured me. He beat me out of anger. Thereafter, I no longer dare to miss school. I sometimes slept during class hours.

I had to attend the schools for 11 years from elementary school to high school. I did not pass the matriculation examination so I tried one more year for that. Then, I attended four years to earn a bachelor's degree at Mandalay University and passed one and a half more years to achieve the Diploma in Applied Psychology. That being so, I took priority over education with cognitive skills for 17 years. I exerted my utmost efforts at the University. Although I did not love to learn, I was forced to learn. Yet, education plays a pivotal role to overcome the formidable hurdles in life.



Author of the Harry Potter book series, JK Rowling. **PHOTO: AFP**

A teacher from the UK taught English as a foreign language and became an esteemed author with a success after a string of failures through her strong perseverance in a vulnerable state. I regret I had strived for the best like her. Let bygones be by gones. I won't let the past taint the present. I would like to encourage the young people who will take matriculation exams and undergraduates to search for the life story and speeches of J.K Rowling (31.7.1965) so that they feel inspired and motivated by her failure to unimagined success.

This British author Joanne Kathleen Rowling wrote the much-loved series of seven Harry Potter novels (1997-2007). Having sold over a half-billion copies around the world, Harry Potter is the best-selling book series in history. They were republished in 85 different languages including Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Thai and Myanmar. Around five to six translators worked on those series; Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone and Harry Potter and Harry Potter and magic stone. The book turned into a massively successful film produced and distributed by Warner Bros and the author J.K Rowling became a millionaire from the Harry Potter franchise. Some even said she is richer than the Queen of England as she owned properties and assets. She is a well-known author and has become a source of inspiration for young people.

Seven series of Harry Potter grossed billions for the producers and the authors between 2001 and 2010. It is just a combination of luck and talent. The genuine efforts in her life reaped a fruitful result.

She attended Exeter University to study French with Greek and German although she wanted to learn English. Her parents convinced her that being bilingual was able to give her more opportunities than a job in literature could. Thanks to her diligence, power of patience and capabilities, Harry Potter books and films have become a blockbuster.

The pearl is made from the mucus of the molluscs and oysters to protect against tissue damage. The poet uses metaphor to compare the mucus to the tear of the molluscs and oysters from the long-suffering. However, they made precious objects.

J.K. Rowling is from a poor family. She was not hired after she got a bachelor's degree. She got married and has two daughters. She struggled a lot for her living. She worked as an English teacher after her divorce. Every cloud has a silver lining. JK Rowling rose to success out of dire poverty. It is like a real treasure in herself covered by an old cloth. She wanted to be a writer and shaped her dream of a novelist to happen for real. Her strenuous efforts and unwavering determination made her a well-known novelist although she started her career as a teacher first.

From her teenage to 40 years, she had a firm resolution and definite aim. She spent her time at the library. She took notes on old good books and did research and filled in missing pieces.

She chose the cheapest train ride for transportation and bread for food. She put her daughters first. She did not own a property and lived in a small room in London. Although she seemed poor, she overcame challenges, the burdens of life, and judging based on looks with her fortitude, diligence, life-long learning and self-restraint. She also dealt with suicidal thoughts.

She was bitterly battered by the difficulties in life, poverty, bitterness and resentment. She faced the challenges by biting her lips. Her younger sister gave her mental support and comforted her to survive failures.

She delivered the commencement speech at Harvard University on 5 June 2008 to Harvard graduates. The video clips of her speech can be found on YouTube.

The audience applauded her speech. Looking back at the 21-year-old that I was at graduation, was a slightly uncomfortable experience for me now. Her choice of motivational words, method of speech delivery, facial expressions showing self-esteem, and her gesture and powerful and heartening advice moved many audiences.

I was depressed about my impoverished background. I spent the night in tears. Failure gave me inner security. Had I really succeeded at anything else, I might never have found the determination to succeed in the one area I believed I truly belonged. There was a strikingly uneasy balance between her far-reaching ambition and her real-life experience. Although I noticed it was a craze and unimagined success, I did not let go of my ambition in life. My strong desire to achieve my goals is so powerful with continuous learning and passion.

The audience is so touched by her humble character explicating failures. She captured the attention of the audience with laughers, applause and emotional moments. She wore simple clothes and her appearance and facial expressions are not as strong as the Queen Elizabeth of Britain, former PM Margaret Thatcher, and PM Liz Truss. People love her kind, intelligent, empathetic and strong female character. An individual with a noble heart of compassion is more powerful than an absolute ruler.

Translated.

■

Study establishes link between heart condition and Covid

RESEARCHERS at Cedars-Smidt Sinai's Cardiac Institute confirmed the link between a debilitating heart condition and Covid-19, as well as a new link between the same condition and the Covid-19 vaccine. Their findings, published in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Cardiovascular Research, suggest that a small percentage of patients vaccinated against Covid-19 may develop postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, or POTS. The investigators also found that those diagnosed with Covid-19 are five times more likely to develop the same cardiac condition after infection than after vaccination, emphasizing the importance of the vaccine.

A potential link

"The main message here is that while we see a potential link between Covid-19 vaccination and POTS, preventing Covid-19 through vaccination is still the best way to reduce your risk of developing POTS," said Alan C. Kwan, MD, first and corresponding author of the study and a cardiovascular specialist at Cedars-Sinai. Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome is a nervous system-related condition that most commonly affects young women of childbearing age. The most identifiable POTS symptom is a rapid increase in the heartbeat of more than 30 beats per minute, or a heart rate that exceeds 120 beats per minute, within 10 minutes of standing.

Other symptoms include fainting, dizziness and fatigue, although some patients with severe disease may also experience migraine, increased urination, sweaty extremities, anxiety, and tremor. To validate their findings, study authors used data from 284,592 vaccinated patients treated within the broader Cedars-Sinai Health System between the years 2020 and 2022, as well as 12,460 Cedars-Sinai patients with Covid-19.

Odds of developing POTS

"From this analysis, we found that the odds of developing POTS are higher 90 days after vaccine exposure than the 90 days prior to exposure," said Kwan. "We also found that the relative odds of POTS were higher than would be explained by increases in visits to physicians after vaccination or infection." Kwan emphasizes that despite this finding, the rates of POTS after vaccination were much lower than rates of new POTS diagnosis after Covid-19.

"This knowledge identifies a possible--yet still relatively slim--association between Covid-19 vaccination and POTS," said Kwan. Many patients--especially those who developed POTS prior to the Covid-19 pandemic--spent years trying to get properly diagnosed. This is because many healthcare providers are unfamiliar with the disease and its symptoms, which often can be incorrectly attributed to chronic fatigue syndrome or other conditions. However, Covid-19 has expanded the medical field's understanding of POTS.

A broader understanding

"In an unexpected but important way, the Covid-19 pandemic brought a deal of great awareness to POTS--both to patients and providers," said Peng-Sheng Chen, MD, an expert on the condition who leads one of only a few POTS specialty clinics in the nation. "Given a broader understanding of the disease, many patients can be diagnosed more quickly permitting earlier interventions that can greatly improve their symptoms." Many effective interventions involve lifestyle modifications, Chen says, include avoiding triggers such as prolonged standing, extreme heat, extreme cold and alcoholic beverages. Additional recommended measures may include eating a high-sodium diet and wearing abdominal or lower body compression garments. Certain medical therapies can also be considered.

SOURCE: ANI

When it comes to examining hearts for potential abnormalities, artificial intelligence can offer cardiologists a "head start". It can detect a problem early and identify those at a higher risk of developing heart disease in the future. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ MICROSOFT/ANI**

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Myanma pearl production reaches 67% of set target

Popular pearls from Myeik islands.

THE production of Myanmar pearl reached its target of 67 per cent and efforts will be made till it surpasses 100 per cent, according to the Myanma Pearl Enterprise.

In the seven months from April to the end of October of the financial year 2022-2023, a total weight of 699,500 momme (a momme equals 3.75 grammes) is targeted to be produced from domestic pearl production. A total of 792,298 pieces of pearl weighing 468,019.88 momme were produced during the seven months of the current financial year, indicating that 67 per cent of target production was completed. It is expected to exceed 100 per cent of the target production by the end of this financial year, according to the statistics of the Myanma Pearl Enterprise.

In the financial year 2020-2021, 128 per cent of cultured pearl production was achieved, creating employment opportunities for residents, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

There is a total of 12 pearl culture sites — four foreign companies, seven local companies, and a state-owned pearl camp — that are joint ventures with the Myanma Pearl Enterprise in the Taninthayi Region. In the 2019-2020 financial year, a total of 1,290,076 pieces of pearl were produced while 1,034,217 pieces of pearl by eight companies until the end of July in the 2020-2021FY. The three companies and one state-owned company are still running the farms. Companies produced 337,912 pieces of pearl and the valuation and proportionate allocation were conducted under Subsection (a) of Section 25 of the Myanmar Pearl Law. The pieces of pearl exceeded the estimated production rate for the 2020-2021FY. — TWA/CT

Fuel sold at K1,785 per litre lower than reference price

SOME filling stations in Yangon are selling fuel oil at K1,785 on 12 December although the reference retail price for 92 Ron is set at K1,805 per litre, according to taxi drivers.

The oil price has been falling from K1,900 for five consecutive days since 8 December in the fuel market and the reference price of 92 Ron per litre was released on 12 December to sell at the rate of over K1,805 per litre.

Stations in Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, Bago, Magway, Pathein, Dawei, Monywa, Hpa-an, Mawlamyine, Lashio, Taunggyi and Loikaw are selling 92 Ron at the rate of over K1,800 per litre whereas those in Myitkyina and Sittway are selling it at the rate of over K1,900, and over K2,000 in Haka and Kengtung.

According to the statement of fuel reference prices released on 12 December, the retail prices in Yangon are K1,805 for 92 Ron per litre, K1,895 for 95 Ron per litre, K2,185 for HSD (500 ppm) per litre, K2,260 for HSD (50 ppm) and HSD (10 ppm).

In addition, the reference wholesale prices released by the Supervisory Committee on Fuel Oil Import, Storage and Distribution are K1,713 for 92 Ron per litre, K1,802 for 95 Ron per litre, K2,082 for HSD (500 ppm) per litre and K2,155 for HSD (50 ppm) and HSD (10 ppm) per litre in Yangon Region. - TWA/MKKS

7 Myanmar travel companies to take part in Moscow International Travel Fair

SEVEN Myanmar travel companies will participate in the International Travel Fair in March 2023 in Moscow, Russia, according to the Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA).

The Moscow International Travel Fair will be held from 12 to 14 March 2023. Myanmar tour companies will present beauty spots and other tourist destinations in Myanmar with the help of video clips. In addition, there is a plan to invite Russian travel companies and representatives to Myanmar.

While meeting Mr Kosinkov Evgeny, Commercial Director of Yi Ling Tourism Company in Russia, in Nay Pyi Taw on 2 December, Union Minister Dr Htay Aung highlighted that tourism cooperation kicked off and all necessary measures will be coordinated as Myanmar is exerting to enhance friendly relations and cooperation in tourism with Russia.

Mr Kosinkov Evgeny pointed out that Russian tourists are travelling internationally by purchasing insurance and they would like Myanmar to ease the need to obtain additional insurance as well.

From 6 April to the end of October 2022, about 60,000 international tourists purchased travel insurance worth over US$3.8 million, according to Myanma Insurance.

There were a small number of Russian tourists who visited Myanmar in the past and about 5,000 Russian tourists entered Myanmar every year, according to the ministry's statistics. – TWA/MKKS

View of Moscow in the Russian Federation.

Import of potatoes surpasses supply of domestic potatoes

THIRTY-SIX thousand visses of potatoes from the Shan State and 300,000 visses of old and new potatoes from abroad entered the Bayintnaung market in Yangon during the last seven days (from 5 to 12 December), according to brokerage houses.

The rate of entry was only one truck per day, but there was no arrival of Shan potatoes on 6 December.

The wholesale price of old Chinese potatoes is the highest within this week, reaching up to K2,300 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes). The price of new Chinese potatoes was K1,750 per viss.

Potatoes from Bangladesh have a weak demand and fetched only K1,100-K1,200 per viss.

Although the price of Shan potatoes increases, depending on their sizes, it is uncommon that the price of A1 (small size) beat that of OK and S1 (medium size) this week. Potatoes from Aungban, Shan State — A1, OK, S1, and S2 were valued at K1,750, K1,700, K1,700 and K2,150 per viss respectively on 10 December.

The production of domestic potatoes is low during the four months from August to November. However, the market for domestic potatoes was stable due to the influx of potatoes from abroad.

Foreign potatoes enter the market during months of high domestic production as well. In these times, the price of imported potatoes is lower than that of domestic potatoes, said Ko Myint Soe, a seller from Yaytama street.

The wholesale price of Chinese potatoes and Shan potatoes were K1,650 and K1,800-K2,200 per viss on 12 January 2022. Potatoes from the Sinphyukyun area and Chinese potatoes were priced at K1,350-K1,850 and K1,700 per viss on 4 April 2022. According to the record of old prices, Shan potatoes and Chinese potatoes hit the market price of K1,450-K1,500 and K1,200 per viss on 15 June, and potatoes from Shan State, China and Bangladesh were valued at K1,600, K1,700 and K1,500 per viss respectively on 25 June. — TWA/CT

LOCAL BUSINESS

Octane 92 price dips below K1,800 per litre

THE price of Octane 92 sank below K1,800 per litre in the domestic fuel oil market.

The prices of fuel oil have gradually moved down to K2,000 per litre since end-November. On 1 December, the prices stood at K1,965 per litre for Octane 92, K2,040 for Octane 95, K2,380 for diesel and K2,455 for premium diesel.

On 13 December, the prices declined below K1,795 per litre for Octane 92, K1,885 for Octane 95, K2,130 for diesel and K2,205 for premium diesel. The figures showed a decrease of K150-250 per litre within two weeks.

The domestic fuel prices are following the decline in the price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in southeast Asia, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil.

Tracking the MOPS' price index, the prices touched a high of K2,605 per litre for Octane 92, K2,670 for Octane 95, K3,245 for diesel and K3,330 for premium diesel in late August.

The committee is steering the oil sector effectively not to have a shortage of oil in the domestic market and ensure price stability for energy consumers.

The committee is issuing the daily reference rate for oil to offer a reasonable price to energy consumers. The reference rate is set on the MOPS' price assessment, shipping cost, profit margin, premium insurance and other general costs.

The rates for regions and states other than Yangon are evaluated after adding the transportation cost and the retail reference rates daily cover on the state-run newspapers and are posted on the media and official website and Facebook page of the department on a daily basis starting from 4 May.

As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. The domestic fuel price is highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss between the importers, sellers and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries.

A sign displaying fuel oil prices at the petrol station in Yangon. **PHOTO: AUNG KYAW KYAW**

Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices than Myanmar. However, Malaysia's oil sector receives government subsidies and the prices are about 60 per cent cheaper than that of Myanmar. Every country lays down different patterns of policy to fix the oil prices. Myanmar also poses only a lower tax rate on fuel oil and strives for energy consumers to buy the oil at a cheaper rate. — NN/EMM

Black gram prices gain on strong Indian demand

THE price of black gram rebounded to K1,838,000 per tonne on 13 December from K1,695,000 on 1 December in the beans and pulses market, indicating a significant rise of K140,000 per tonne within two weeks.

The Kyat-dollar exchange rate and India's demand are contributing factors to the price fluctuation of the black gram. At present, the weakening of Kyat against hard currency has stopped. However, India's demand for black gram has increased again in the market.

In late August, the dollar against Kyat peaked at K4,500 in the black market. Following that, the black gram price reached a record high of K2.1 million per tonne.

Myanmar bagged over US$800 million from more than 1.1 million tonnes of pulses exports over the past eight months in the current financial year, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

Myanmar exported over 1,098,377.603 tonnes of various beans and pulses worth $863.237 million to foreign trade partners between 1 April and 2 December 2022 in the current financial year 2022-2023. The country shipped 942,926.773 tonnes of pulses and beans valued at $756.457 million to foreign markets by sea, and over 155,450 tonnes valued at $106.78 million were sent to the neighbouring countries through land borders.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes of black gram and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas.

Myanmar exported over 2 million tonnes of various pulses worth US$1.57 billion to foreign trade partners last financial year 2020-2021. The country shipped 1.24 million tonnes of pulses and beans valued at $966.4 million to foreign markets through the sea route, and 786,920 tonnes worth $604.3 million were sent to the neighbouring countries through land borders.

Myanmar primarily exports black gram, green gram and pigeon peas. Of them, black gram and pigeon peas are mainly sent to India while green grams are shipped to China and Europe.

India has growing demand and consumption requirements for black gram and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2022, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that annual quota.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes of black gram and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas. Myanmar is the top producer of the black gram that is primarily demanded by India, while pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are cultivated in Australia and African countries besides Myanmar. — NN/EMM

Myanmar ships over 5,000 tonnes of rohu worth $6.49 mln to Bangladesh in H1

MYANMAR conveyed 5,195.2 tonnes of rohu to Bangladesh through two cross-border posts (Sittway and Maungtaw) in the first half (April-September) of the current financial year 2022-2023, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar shipped 5,180.6 tonnes of rohu worth $6.314 million in the six-month 2021-2022 mini-budget period. The figures showed a small increase of $0.18 million this FY. However, the border trade has come to a halt since September amid transport security concerns, according to the Maungtaw border post.

Rohu is processed in Yangon and they are sent to the Sittway border post by cold-storage trucks or ships after pre-shipment inspection. Then, they are shipped to Bangladesh by motorboats. Myanmar has begun exporting rohu to Bangladesh through Sittway and Maungtaw border posts since 2016.

Agriculture and livestock are the backbones of Myanmar's economy. Commercial fish farming businesses are found in some townships in Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady regions. As rohu has grasped market shares in the international markets, farmers have expanded the scope of rohu farming.

Approximately 1,000 tonnes of rohu from Yangon city are delivered to Sittwe and Maungtaw border posts in Rakhine State with Bangladesh. Rohu from the other two cities is also sent to the border via sea route and road transport. Myanmar's export has been surpassing imports in the cross-border trade with Bangladesh, including exports worth $19.066 million and imports valued at $0.14 million between 1 April and 2 December in the 2022-2023 FY.

Myanmar's fishery export accounted for 65 per cent and dried groceries constituted 35 per cent of Myanmar's two border posts with Bangladesh. The fishery products include farmed rohu, hilsa, mackerel, dried anchovy and dried fish powder. Tamarind, onion, ginger, dried jujube powder, jaggery, longyi (sarong) and clothes are also exported.

The values of fishery products to Bangladesh via two border posts stood at $6.318 million (7,093.413 tonnes) in the 2019-2020FY, $4.76 million (5,010.7 tonnes) in the 2020-2021FY and $13.987 million (11,362.97 tonnes) in the 2021-2022 six-month mini-budget period (October-March). — KK

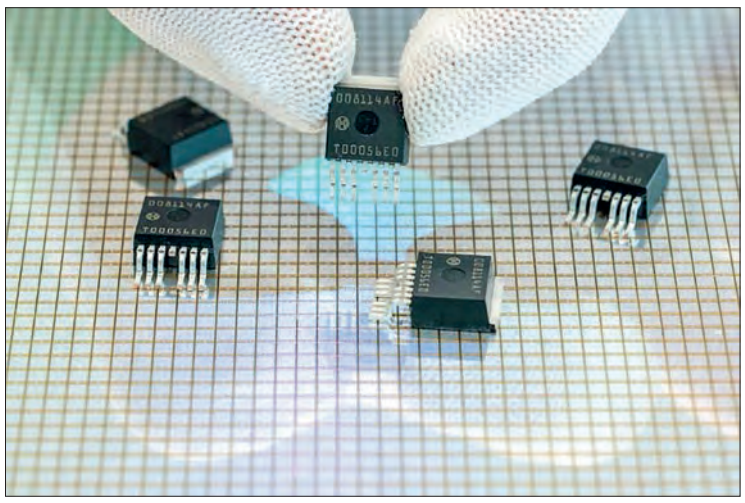
ECONOMY
WORLD

China launches WTO dispute over US chip sanctions

CHINA has filed a dispute with the World Trade Organization over US restrictions on chip exports, Beijing's commerce ministry said in a statement late Monday, accusing Washington of threatening global supply chains.

The United States in October announced new export controls aimed at restricting China's ability to buy and manufacture high-end chips with military applications, complicating Beijing's push to further its own semiconductor industry and develop advanced military systems.

The moves include export restrictions on some chips used in supercomputing as well as stricter requirements on the sale of semiconductor equipment.



The US export controls are aimed at restricting China's ability to buy and manufacture high-end chips with military applications. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The aim is to prevent "sensitive technologies with military applications" from being acquired by China's military, intelligence and security services, the US Commerce Department said in October. But China's Ministry of Commerce on Monday accused the United States of "obstructing normal international trade in products including chips and threatening the stability of the global industrial supply chain", as well as violating international trade rules and engaging in "protectionist practices".

The WTO dispute is intended to defend China's "legitimate rights and interests", the ministry said in its statement, urging Washington to "give up zero-sum thinking".

The two superpowers have long faced off over a range of issues including technology, trade, Hong Kong, Taiwan and human rights.—AFP

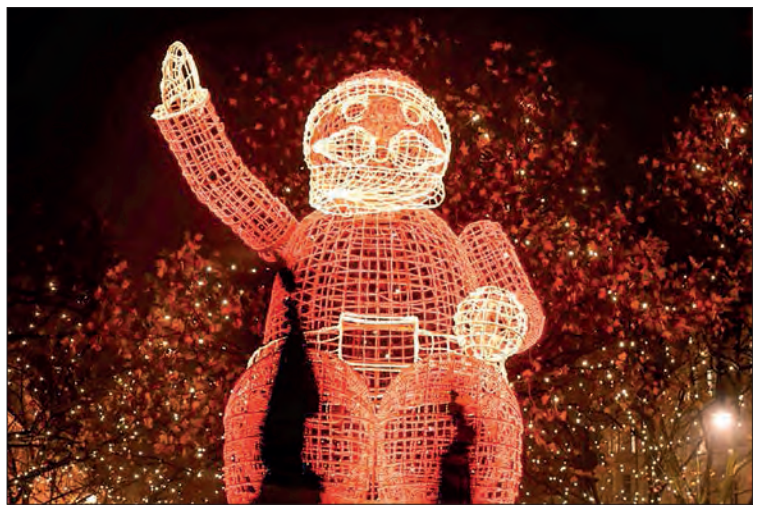
ECB mulls rate hike slowdown on 'peak inflation' hopes

GROWING hopes that the eurozone's red-hot inflation is nearing its peak could prompt European Central Bank policymakers to opt for a smaller rate hike on Thursday, observers said.

Following two consecutive interest rate hikes of 75 basis points, markets are on tenterhooks to see whether the ECB will keep up the aggressive pace or downshift to 50 basis points as the region braces for a winter recession.

This week's meeting of the ECB's 25-member governing council in Frankfurt will be the final one of 2022, a year that will be remembered for unprecedented consumer price shocks as Russia's war in Ukraine sent food and energy costs soaring.

Like other central banks, the ECB has fought back with a series of interest rate rises — walking a tightrope between raising borrowing costs enough to tame inflation, without dampening demand so much it triggers a deep economic downturn. ECB governors may take heart from November's eurozone inflation data, which showed prices slowing for the first time in 17 months on the back of cooling energy costs.—AFP



Consumers will be hoping for some Christmas cheer, with expectations that inflation has peaked seen as likely to prompt the ECB to opt for a smaller rate hike. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Europe's biggest port 'drowning in cocaine'

THE millions of containers unloaded by Rotterdam's giant cranes make it Europe's largest port, but the Dutch city is also dealing with ever larger amounts of a less welcome cargo: cocaine.

A record of nearly 70 tonnes of the drug was intercepted in 2021, up 74 per cent from a year before, said Ger Scheringa, who leads a team of armed customs officers at the port.

Rotterdam and Antwerp in neighbouring Belgium were the two main entry points used by a Dubai-based "super cartel" supplying a third of Europe's cocaine, which Europol said it busted last month.

Drug gangs hide cocaine in containers, often from South America. **PHOTO: AFP**

The cocaine is usually hidden in containers, or sometimes underneath ships in openings below the water line where they are then recovered by divers.

Pinpointing the reason for this jump in cocaine seizures is a "delicate question", Scheringa told AFP. "It seems there are lots of buyers" in Europe, he said dryly. "And if there is demand, it is supplied." Rotterdam has taken major steps to stop the white powder making its way into Europe, particularly by stepping up customs checks, the Dutchman said. But he doesn't expect Rotterdam's record for seizures to be beaten in 2022, and admitted that he "doesn't know if there is really a solution to the problem" as long as people keep taking cocaine.—AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rapidus, IBM sign development partnership on next-generation chips

NEW Japanese semiconductor producer Rapidus Corp. and IBM Corp. said Tuesday they have signed a strategic partnership deal to jointly develop technologies to manufacture next-generation chips amid heated rivalry between the United States and China. Rapidus aims to produce 2-nanometre chips starting in 2027 in cooperation with the US tech giant, which last year unveiled breakthrough nanosheet technology paving the way for the 2 nm node.

We can achieve "a more resilient supply chain that better balances geopolitical risk," by having production capacity in the United States, Europe and Japan, said Dario Gil, senior vice-president and director of research at IBM, at a press conference in Tokyo.

The issue of supply chain resiliency has been under the spotlight after the COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted global supply chains which caused shortages of semiconductors. The geopolitical risk of disruptions has also heightened as a result of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Rapidus and IBM said they will jointly develop the cutting-edge technology at the Albany Nanotech Complex in the state of New York.—Kyodo

Int'l digital trade expo kicks off in east China

THE first Global Digital Trade Expo opened on 11 December in Hangzhou, capital of east China's Zhejiang Province. International organizations and enterprises from more than 50 countries and regions have been invited to attend the expo to discuss hot topics on global digital trade and push the opening up and cooperation of the digital economy onto a fast track. Themed "Connecting Digital Trade to the World," the expo is co-sponsored by the people's government of Zhejiang Province and the Ministry of Commerce. It will last until Wednesday.—Xinhua

Johnson & Johnson's Japan unit searched over antitrust violation

THE Japan unit of US pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson and a Tokyo-based firm selling medical products were searched by the country's antitrust watchdog over potential violations of the antimonopoly law, sources close to the matter said Tuesday.

The Japan Fair Trade Commission suspects Johnson & Johnson K.K. and ASP Japan of obstructing competitors' sales of cleaners and disinfectants for endoscopes.

ASP Japan said on its website that it was formerly under Johnson & Johnson until 2019 and specializes in infection prevention technology.

According to the sources, the companies allegedly required that only their disinfectants be used in endoscope cleaners that their trading partners produce. They are also believed to have created equipment maintenance contracts with hospitals that stipulate using their disinfectants.

The commission said it is looking into possible obstruction of trading and forced buying of tie-in products. Japan's antimonopoly law bans both practices.—Kyodo

UK unemployment edges higher: official data

UK unemployment has edged up to 3.7 per cent, official data showed on Tuesday.

The unemployment rate increased in the three months to the end of October from 3.6 per cent in the three months to the end of September, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement.

At the same time sky-high inflation continues to squeeze wages, resulting in mass strike action across Britain.

Sam Beckett, ONS head of economic statistics, said "the number of working days lost rose again in October, to the highest monthly level in over 10 years".

Reacting to the data and seemingly addressing strikers who are demanding big pay rises, finance minister Jeremy Hunt said that "any action that risks embedding high prices into our economy will only prolong the pain for everyone, and stunt any prospect of long-term economic growth".

He added in a statement: "While unemployment in the UK remains close to historic lows, high inflation continues to plague economies around the world."

UK annual inflation stands at more than 11 per cent, the highest level in four decades, after energy bills and food prices have soared. "With the (UK) economy likely already in recession, we expect unemployment to start trending upwards from the first half of next year," noted Yael Selfin, chief economist at KPMG UK. — AFP

Pedestrians on their way to work cross the London Bridge backdropped by The Shard in central London. **PHOTO: AFP**

Disgraced crypto tycoon Bankman-Fried arrested in Bahamas

DISGRACED cryptocurrency tycoon Sam Bankman-Fried was arrested Monday in the Bahamas at the request of the United States, according to US officials seeking to charge him after the spectacular collapse of his FTX platform.

The arrest comes on the eve of Bankman-Fried's scheduled appearance at a US Congress hearing in which he was to testify under oath about the crypto exchange's overnight demise.

The 30-year-old had in recent weeks defied legal advice and multiplied media appearances offering his version of his company's sudden failure, usually by video link from the Bahamas where his company is headquartered.—AFP

Nestle to open new $43-mln Ukraine factory

Swiss food giant Nestle said Monday it was opening a new production site in war-torn Ukraine, and would invest tens of millions in a factory and production network set to employ 1,500 people. **PHOTO: AFP**

SWISS food giant Nestle said Monday it was opening a new production site in war-torn Ukraine, and would invest tens of millions in a factory and production network set to employ 1,500 people.

"Nestle is announcing the opening a new production site in Ukraine," the company, which had three facilities in Ukraine before the war broke out, said in a statement. It said that "40 million Swiss francs ($43 million) will be invested in production in Smolyhiv located in Volyn region, in the western part of the country." —AFP

Lufthansa raises profit outlook again on travel rebound

Lufthansa made huge losses when the coronavirus brought air travel to a halt, and had to be bailed out by the German government in 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

GERMAN airline giant Lufthansa on Tuesday significantly raised its profit outlook for 2022, citing continued "strong demand for air travel" as the industry leaves the pandemic slowdown behind.

The group now expects adjusted operating profits (adjusted EBIT) to reach around €1.5 billion – up from an estimate of "over one billion euros" in October that was itself an upward revision of an earlier projection of €500 million.

The company's performance in October and November had "exceeded expectations", Lufthansa said in a statement, adding that passenger bookings for the months ahead suggest "the positive trend" will continue.—AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MITRA BHUM VOY.NO. (133W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MITRA BHUM VOY.NO. (133W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **14-12-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Japan picks 'war' as kanji character of the year

Seihan Mori, master of the ancient Kiyomizu temple, writes the Chinese character, known in Japan as "kanji", for 'war', which was selected as the single best kanji to symbolise the year of 2022 at a temple in Kyoto on 12 December 2022. **PHOTO: STR / JIJI PRESS / AFP**

JAPAN chose the kanji character for war on Monday as the symbol for 2022 after a year marked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the assassination of former leader Shinzo Abe.

The public votes in the annual event for the written character they think best represents the past year. Olympic-themed choices dominated 2021.

The mood was darker this year, however, according to the Japan Kanji Aptitude Testing Foundation, which organizes the vote. "The invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the shooting of former Prime Minister Abe, and the rapid yen depreciation and inflation faced in daily life have caused anxiety for many people," the group said in a news release.

Japanese TV stations broadcast the announcement live, with Seihan Mori, master of the ancient Kiyomizu temple in Kyoto, writing the character on a large white panel with an ink-soaked calligraphy brush.

"I was surprised, frustrated, angry and sad by the war in Ukraine. I am also angry at myself for not being able to do anything about it," said one voter who picked the character.

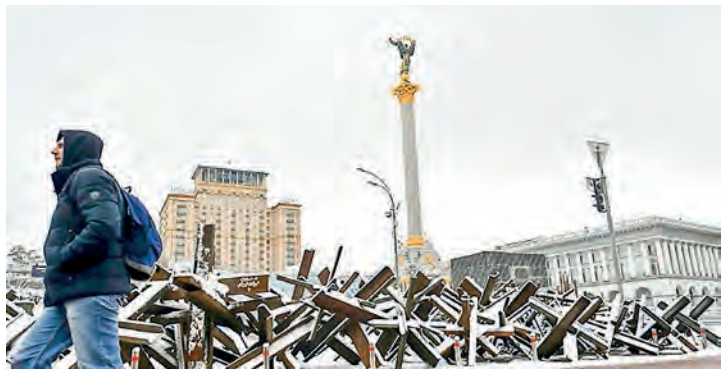
Abe was shot in July by a man who reportedly resented the Unification Church over massive donations his mother made to the sect.—AFP

World must 'rethink nuclear safety': Ukraine energy minister

THE world must "rethink nuclear safety" after Russia's seizure of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, Ukrainian energy minister German Galushchenko told AFP ahead of a Tuesday conference in Paris.

The international gathering hosted by France aims to raise funds to repair Ukraine's damaged infrastructure as well as highlight the country's support for Kyiv in its fight against Russia.

With at least 40 per cent of Ukraine's energy infrastructure demolished in the past two months, Galushchenko will join the conference to ask for materials and funds to get Ukrainians through the winter. Speaking to AFP on Monday, he said Russia's war in Ukraine "completely changes our understanding of nuclear security", pointing to the capture of the Zaporizhzhia plant as a turning point. —AFP



A man walks past anti-tank steel hedgehogs covered with snow along Independence Square in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv on 12 December, 2022. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ AFP**

WORLD: TOP HEADLINE

S.Africa's Ramaphosa faces 'heated' impeachment debate

SOUTH Africa's parliament is to debate Tuesday whether to initiate proceedings to remove scandal-engulfed President Cyril Ramaphosa from office.

Ramaphosa, who was championed as a graft-busting saviour after the corruption-tainted tenure of predecessor Jacob Zuma, has been marred by accusations that he attempted to cover up a huge cash theft at his luxury farm.

The findings of an independent panel, which said the president "may" be guilty of serious violations and misconduct, will be at the centre of an extraordinary parliamentary session in Cape Town at 1200 GMT.

Lawmakers are called to decide, by simple majority, whether to press ahead with impeachment proceedings.

The 70-year-old president seems likely to survive the day, having last week secured the renewed backing of his ruling African National Congress (ANC) party — which holds 230 of the National Assembly's 400 seats — after mounting a legal bid to have the damning report annulled. "The ANC caucus is likely to be relatively united," said Daniel Silke, director of Political Futures Consultancy.

"The fact that this is not a secret ballot will make it very difficult for any MP to vote against the party line."

Supporters of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa show their support outside the NASREC Centre in Johannesburg, on 5 December 2022 before the start of a National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting of the Africa National Congress (ANC) to discuss the fate of the President. **PHOTO / AFP**

Yet others believe there might be room for surprises, as the scandal has heightened rifts within the deeply factionalised ANC. The party's national executive vowed last week to vote down any attempt to force Ramaphosa from office.

That decision upset some within the party, who said the executive had forced their hand. "It's not a done deal, they (the ANC) are divided," said political analyst Sandile Swana.

Opposition parties are presenting a largely united front on the matter and are expected to make their voices heard.

"It could very well be a very heated and long procedure," said Silke. — AFP

Ukraine needs extra gas and weapons, Zelensky tells G7

PRESIDENT Volodymyr Zelensky urged G7 nations on Monday to provide extra gas and weapons to help Ukraine survive a brutal winter that threatens to bring further suffering to millions in the war-torn country.

With snow on the ground and Ukraine's energy grid battered by Russian strikes, many are facing freezing temperatures without power or heating.

During a video conference with the G7 club of wealthy nations on Monday, Zelensky said Ukraine needs "about two billion cubic metres" of additional gas to get through the winter. He also urged the G7 to send more arms to Ukraine, including "modern tanks" as well as "rocket artillery and more long-range missiles".—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Maduro says Venezuela-Colombia border to completely reopen 1 Jan

VENEZUELAN leader Nicolas Maduro said Monday his country would fully reopen its land border with Colombia on 1 January, completing a negotiating process that began in September with the two South American neighbours reestablishing diplomatic ties.

"I can announce that we will be completely opening the entire western border of Venezuela with Colombia for the passage of vehicles," the socialist president said in a statement broadcast on the state media.

"We are preparing everything to comply with what we announced, to fulfill the pledges made with (Colombian) President Gustavo Petro to open it on 1 January," Maduro said.

The border was partially closed seven years ago and completely blocked three years ago, when Maduro broke off diplomatic ties after the previous Colombian government questioned his re-election, the legitimacy of which many countries, including the United States, have also doubted.

As soon as he came to power, Petro, Colombia's first-ever left-wing president, sought to reestablish ties and pushed for a reopening of the border. —AFP

Russian tourists pose for photos at Punta Arenas beach in Venezuela during a guided tour of Isla Margarita. **PHOTO: YURI CORTEZ/AFP**

WORLD: TOP HEADLINE

Jin from BTS begins military service, marking end of an era

BTS star Jin started his mandatory South Korean military duty on Tuesday, the band's first member to enlist since a hiatus announcement this year left fans heartbroken over the K-pop juggernaut's uncertain future. The septet is widely considered the country's biggest-ever cultural phenomenon -- selling out stadiums around the world and dominating the charts while raking in billions and building a global legion of fans known as ARMYs.

But all able-bodied men in South Korea must serve at least 18 months in the military, and while there was a years-long debate about whether BTS deserved an exemption, they confirmed in October that all members will enlist. Jin -- whose full name is Kim Seok-jin -- reported to a frontline boot camp in Yeoncheon Tuesday to begin his five week training, kickstarting 18 months of military service. He was riding one of the black vans that arrived in a row around 20 minutes before a 2:00 pm (0500 GMT) deadline, according to BTS's agency HYBE.

Hundreds of media personnel and BTS fans packed an intersection in front of the boot camp's main gate, where a sign reads "A cradle for top class combat soldiers".—AFP

Biden to sign same-sex marriage protections into law

PRESIDENT Joe Biden will on Tuesday sign into law a bill granting federal protections to same-sex marriage — gathering thousands of guests at the White House to celebrate the legislative milestone.

It comes 12 years after Biden — then Barack Obama's vice-president — took a public stand in favour of same-sex unions, well before they became legal in the entire United States through a 2015 US Supreme Court decision.

After the Supreme Court — now significantly more conservative — overturned longstanding abortion rights last June, lawmakers from the left and right came together to prevent any subsequent move to curb same-sex marriage rights, feared by some.

The legislation's final adoption by Congress last week marked a rare show of bipartisanship in deeply divided Washington.

In celebration, Biden will be gathering a group of Republican and Democratic lawmakers on the White House grounds, along with advocates and plaintiffs in marriage equality cases across the country, his spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said Monday.

Jean-Pierre, who herself made history as the first openly gay White House press secretary, also touted "musical guests and performances to celebrate this historic bill".

The legislation, she said, "will give peace of mind to millions of LGBTQI+ and interracial couples who will finally be guaranteed the rights and protections to which they and their children are entitled."— AFP

After the conservative-led US Supreme Court overturned longstanding abortion rights in June 2022, lawmakers from the left and right came together to prevent any subsequent move to curb same-sex marriage rights. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Seven dead as Peru's new leader fails to quell protests

FIVE more protesters died in Peru on Monday as violent demonstrations over the ousting of the former president showed no sign of calming, despite his successor's efforts to quell the unrest.

Seven people, including three teenagers, have now died in escalating protests since the leftist Pedro Castillo was accused of an attempted coup, impeached and arrested last week.

New President Dina Boluarte tried to ease tensions on Sunday, announcing she would seek to hold elections two years early and declaring a state of emergency in flashpoint areas.

But that had little effect as protesters continued to demand her resignation, blocking roads in several cities around the country with logs, rocks and burning tires.

Some 2,000 protesters smashed runway lighting, burned security booths and forced the closure of the airport in Peru's second-largest city Arequipa for several hours on Monday before police dispersed them with tear gas.

The clashes left one dead, while another four people died as riot police quashed protests in Boluarte's southeastern home region of Apurimac — where two other protesters died in clashes with security forces during an attempt to storm an airport there on Sunday.

"We have seven people reported dead" since Sunday, a source from the public defender's office told AFP on condition of anonymity.—AFP

Demonstrators block the Pan-American highway during a protest in the Northern Cone of Arequipa, Peru, on 12 December 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

SPORT

GLOBAL AFFAIRS
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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.

The Myanmar National Football Team (white jersey) sing the national anthem during a friendly match against the Thai Team on 11 December. **PHOTO: MFF**

MFF selects 26 national footballers for AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022

HEAD coach Antoine Hey yesterday announced a list of 26 preliminary Myanmar national team players ahead of the ASEAN Championship AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022. Kyaw Zin Phyo, San Satt Naing, Tun Nandar Oo, and Myo Min Latt participated in the goalkeeper list.

The back row features talented players: Nanda Kyaw, Hein Phyo Win, Thiha Htet Aung, Ye Min Thu, Hein Zeya Lin, Zaw Ye Tun, Kyaw Zin Lwin, David Htan, and Win Moe Kyaw.

The midfield was reinforced by experienced players: Aung Naing Win, Wai Lin Aung, Kyaw Min Oo, Lin Htet Soe, Lwin Moe Aung, Yan Naing Oo, Myat Kaung Khant, Ye Yint Aung, Maung Maung Lwin, and Hein Htet Aung.

The forward of the team Myanmar was set up with talented youths: Win Naing Tun, Aung Kaung Mahn and Naing Zin Htet.

The Myanmar national team played a warm-up match against the Thai national team at the Thammasat Stadium on 11 December in preparation for the ASEAN Championship but lost 6-0. Head coach Antoine Hey fielded the team in a 5-3-2 formation for the friendly match.

Team Myanmar will host a home match against the Malaysian team on 21 December in Yangon as the debut of the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022. — KZL

FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar2022

France face tough exam from African giant-killers Morocco in World Cup semi

Morocco players celebrate with their supporters after they beat Portugal in the World Cup quarter-finals. **PHOTO: AFP**

DEFENDING world champions and title favourites France face African history-makers Morocco on Wednesday in what is sure to be a high-octane World Cup semi-final at the Al Bayt stadium.

France, who defeated England on Saturday, are looking to become the first team in 60 years to retain the trophy but they can expect fierce resistance from the surprise package of the tournament.

Morocco's giant-killing run to the last four, the first time an African nation has made it this far, has electrified fans at home and delighted the Moroccan diaspora in Europe and beyond. The Atlas Lions will again be roared on by thousands of passionate supporters in the stadium on the desert outskirts of Doha and can count on local Qatari support too as the first Arab team ever to make it to the last four.

"It's not over yet, our ambition is to go to the final," former Morocco international Aziz Bouderbala, part of the 1986 World Cup team that reached the last 16, told AFP.

"We are living a historic moment. We are among the four best teams in the world but it's fabulous, it's delirium." —AFP

Defiant and witty, Morocco coach wants more World Cup history

NEVER mind the fireworks and deafening pop music that await at Al Bayt stadium — the real pre-match show for the World Cup semi-final between Morocco and France was provided on Tuesday by Walid Regragui.

The 47-year-old coach of the first African and first Arab team to reach the last four of the World Cup took full advantage of the chance to address the world's football press in a Doha auditorium, the day before the clash with Didier Deschamps' team.

The Moroccan exuded pride, optimism, defiance and humour in a refreshing contrast to the usual drone of non-commital cliches that coaches ritually role out before big games. —AFP

FIFA World Cup 2022
Semi-final
01:30 MST (15-12-2022)
Morocco - France