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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Five-Point Road Map

1. Priority will be given to fully realizing peace, stability and rule of law throughout the Union to safeguard the socioeconomic life of the people.
2. People-centred development work that enhances socioeconomic well-being will be undertaken to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.
3. Processes will further continue to consolidate a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and build a Union based on democracy and federalism.
4. Priority will be accorded to work aligned with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, in order to achieve enduring peace for the entire nation.
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.

SAC Chairman Defence Services C-in-C Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing addresses 78th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade

State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing inspects the parade columns at the 78th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade in Nay Pyi Taw on 27 March 2023.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing delivered an address at the Parade of the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day which falls on 27 March 2023 at the Nay Pyi Taw Parade Ground yesterday morning.

Officers and other ranks from Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air), female military parade company from Tatmadaw (Army), members of Myanmar Police Force and female police members parade company took positions in relevant parade columns at Thittat parade ground on the parade agenda. The mechanized parade column led by Column Commander Brig-Gen Zaw Tun Oo comprising mechanized companies representing the Directorate of Artillery Corps, Directorate of Missile Corps, Directorate of Armoured Corps, Office of the Chief of Air Defence Corps, Directorate of Military Engineers and Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy) took the positions in the parade ground.

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Statement of Myanmar War Veterans Organization

27 March 2023, Monday

1. At about 6:30 am on 25 March 2023 (Saturday), the KKO (split) group and PDF terrorist groups attacked the Myawady Trade Zone in Myawady Township of Kayin State using heavy and small weapons. In the incident, the building of the trade zone and an x-ray machine were damaged and three police members, a Customs employee and an innocent civilian were killed and some members of security forces were injured.
2. Myanmar War Veterans Organization condemns these intentional attacks by terrorist groups to disrupt the development of Kayin State and the Myawady Trade Zone which is the main freight forwarding centre for the livelihoods of people engaged in agriculture across the nation.

Myanmar War Veterans Organization

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Statement of Myanmar Artists Organization (Central)

8th Waxing of Tagu 1384 ME
28 March 2023

1. It was sorrowful to hear that the trade zone building and an x-ray machine were damaged and a civilian, a government employee and some members of security forces were injured and killed in the attacks of terrorists who used heavy and small weapons at the Myawady Trade Zone in Myawady Township of Kayin State on 25 March 2023.
2. Myanmar Artists Organization (Central) strongly condemns the intention of terrorists to launch attacks on non-military areas, a war crime under the Geneva Conventions and international law.

Myanmar Artists Organization (Central)

Statement of Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central)

8th Waxing of Tagu 1384 ME
28 March 2023

1. It was known that terrorists attacked the trade zone in Myawady of Kayin State with heavy and small weapons on 25 March, causing damages to the trade zone building and an x-ray machine with an innocent civilian, a public employee and some members of security forces being injured and killed.

2. Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central) strongly condemns the intention of terrorists to launch attacks on non-military areas, a war crime under the Geneva Conventions and international law.

Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central)

Prizes given to parade companies that participated in 78th Armed Forces Day parade

CHAIRMAN of the Leading Committee for Organizing the Armed Forces Day Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye attended the award-giving ceremony to military companies that participated in the 78th Armed Forces Day parade at the Thittat parade ground yesterday.

First, the parade columns led by Parade Commander Maj-Gen Myint Kyaw Tun saluted Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, who is also Chairman of the Leading Committee on Organizing Armed Forces Day.

Then, Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Kyaw Swa Lin presented the trophy and cash prizes for the best flag bearers and best military bands to parade company (female) (officer) representing the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Navy Seals company representing the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy), the mechanized company representing the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy), the mechanized company representing the Chief of Air Defence Office, mechanized company representing the Directorate of Artillery Corps, mechanized company representing the Directorate of Missiles Corps, mechanized company representing the Directorate of Armoured Corps, mechanized company representing the Directorate of Military Engineers, Special Task Force of Tatmadaw (Army) (Female), Central Military Band, bag-pipe band, Flag Bearers of Aungzeya Column (female), Cavalry Company, Myanmar Police Force Band and best military band award to Hsinphyushin Column Band and best flag convoying award to Bayintnaung Column.

Then, Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Soe Min Oo presented trophies and cash awards to the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Army) (female company 1) that won third prize, parade company representing Coastal Region Command that won third prize of best camp, parade company representing Directorate of Medical Services that won third prize for military song, parade company representing office of chief of Defence Industries that won third prize for best military discipline, parade company (2) of Office of Commander-in-Chief (Air) that won third prize for best parade and parade company (1) (female) and parade company (3) (male) representing Myanmar Police Force that won second prizes, parade company (female) representing the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Navy) that won second prize, parade company representing Directorate of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers that won second prize for best camp, parade company representing Directorate of Ordnance Services that won second prize for marching song, parade company representing Directorate of Supply and Transport that won second prize for best military discipline, parade company representing Office of Commander-in-Chief (Navy) that won second prize for best parade, parade company (female) and parade company (1) (male) representing Myanmar Police Force that won first prizes for best parade, parade company(female) representing Office of Commander-in-Chief (Air) that won first prize for Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) (female) parade, parade company representing Directorate of Armoured Corps that won first prize for best camp, parade company representing Office of Chief of Air Defence that won first prize for best marching song, parade company representing Directorate of Signals that won first prize for best military discipline and parade company representing Directorate of Artillery Corps that won first prize for best parade.

Then, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye gave trophies and cash awards to the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Air) for group flying, parade company representing the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Air) that won third prize for model company, parade company representing Directorate of Military Engineers that won second prize for the model company and parade company representing Office of Commander-in-Chief (Navy) that won first prize for model company.

The event came to an end with the concluding remark of Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye. — MNA/ KTZH

People need to participate in anti-corruption efforts as a national duty

— Everyone is urged to participate in making anti-corruption efforts as a national duty.

— The government is emphasizing the emergence of a clean government and good governance, improvement of capacity to take prestige and responsibility in administration, and not to harm the society, citizen rights and interests.

(Excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony to mark International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December 2022)

SAC Chairman Defence Services C-in-C Senior General Thadoe Maha ...

State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing returns the salutes of the parade columns on the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day yesterday.

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Afterwards, the flag bearers followed by the Anawrahta Column led by Brig-Gen San Yu Naing, the Kyansittha Column by Brig-Gen Tin Aung Swe, the Bayintnaung Column by Commodore Kyaw Lin Zaw, the Aungzeya Column by Brig-Gen Zaw Myint Oo, the Hsinphyushin Column by Brig-Gen Tun Win, the Bandoola Column by Brig-Gen Soe Hlaing and the Aung San Column by Police Brig-Gen Win Bo under the command of Parade Commander Maj-Gen Myint Kyaw Tun took the positions at the parade ground.

Along the route they marched, Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of the Senior General, Daw Than Than Nwe, wife of the SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army), wife of the Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air), wife of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy), wife of the Commander-in-Chief (Air) and wives of the senior military officers garlanded Tatmadaw members and police members. Likewise, officers, other ranks and families from Nay Pyi Taw Command headquarters and stations, artistes and local people warmly welcomed the Tatmadaw members and police members with garlands.

The ceremony was also attended by State dignitaries, the SAC Secretary, the SAC Joint Secretary, Union level officials, departmental heads, officials from social organizations, those from different strata and media.

The Senior General took the position on the dais and took salutes of Tatmadaw members and MPF members from the parade columns. The Senior General inspected the parade columns.

The Senior General and those from military columns took the four-point oath after saluting the State flag and fallen Tatmadaw members.

The Senior General then delivered an address. (The full text of the speech is reported on page 4 and 5.

The military columns led by Maj-Gen Myint Kyaw Tun marched past the Senior General and left the parade ground.

Meanwhile, aircraft from squadrons of the Tatmadaw (Air) in various formations flew over the parade ground to salute the Senior General.

The Senior General cordially greeted the guests and left the parade ground.

The bronze statues of three kings who established the first, second and third Myanmar empires posted in the Nay Pyi Taw Parade Ground and the flaming torch and the emblem to mark the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day could be seen in the parade ground on a grand scale in addition to hoisting colourful flags representing the Burma Independence Army, the Burma Defence Army, directorates of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), military commands and military divisions as well as regiments and units.

As a gesture of honouring the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, posters portraying images of Tatmadaw members are posted on Yangon-Mandalay Highway and at the junction of Pinlaung Road. Moreover, banners bearing mottos of the Tatmadaw in Myanmar and English languages are hung along the road in front of the parade ground. — MNA/TTA

The parade columns are seen marching on the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day in Nay Pyi Taw.

Speech Delivered by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing at 78th Armed Forces Day Parade on 27 March 2023

Comrades,

Today is the 78th Anniversary of the Armed Forces Day of our Tatmadaw which has remained steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding the motherland, Myanmar, in successive terms and imbued with immense prestige. Since Tatmadaw in collaboration with the people made a tryst with destiny for Independence throughout 78 years and stood ahead of the country for letting her not relinquish Independence, the 75th Anniversary of Independence Day (Diamond Jubilee) marked the culmination of glorious victory in the present year and was etched in the annals of history for country and Tatmadaw.

Comrades,

Back in history, it is unquestionable that our country has a sole repository of sovereignty, territorial integrity and unique history. The Pyu city-states viz., Beikthano, Hanlin and Sri Kestra were founded before Bagan Dynasty. The historical context mentioned that the vast and first Myanmar Unified Empire was founded in the reign of King Anawrahta with a blaze of glory while the second Myanmar Empire in the reign of King Bayintnaung and the third Myanmar Empire in the reign of King Alaung Min Taya Gyi U Aung Zeya were also founded as a country of broadened territory and prosperous identity. Our country which embraced national solidarity came into disintegration at the instigation of western countries. The entire country and its people were annexed by British Imperialists with three incursions into our country in 1824, 1852 and 1885. Despite the effort of anti-colonial resistance across the country after relinquishing its Independence, the country was ultimately defeated by the Imperialists for the lack of a well-organized structure and the disproportion of weaponry power. Thirty Comrades led by Thakin Aung San tried to learn military tactics from the Japanese to establish a modern Tatmadaw for restoring the relinquished Independence. Burma Independence Army (BIA) with the lead of General Aung San, along with the Imperial Japanese Army, marched in columns into Myanmar and annihilated the British Imperialists in collaboration with the people. Although the British retreated, the Japanese failed to keep the promise of Independence and also brutally tortured the people. Likewise, our Tatmadaw in collaboration with the people launched the triumphal and historical anti-fascist movement on 27 March 1945. Afterwards, Armed Forces Day was denoted on this date and it has already been 78 years.

Comrades,

Burma Independence Army (BIA) which is the core of today Tatmadaw was constituted in sequence as Burma Defence Army (BDA) in 1942, Burma National Army (BNA) in 1943, Patriotic Burmese Force (PBF) in July and Burma Army in September 1945. The re-labelled Patriotic Burmese Force (PBF) successfully annihilated the Japanese Fascists in collaboration with the people as well. Despite the sequential transformation, it is also an institution hailed from the Independence movement because Tatmadaw together with the people had restored Independence from the regime of foreign countries.

Comrades,

Our country has been the sacrificial victim of British Imperialists and Japanese Fascists in World War II and has unexpectedly encountered internal insurgencies after post-Independence although the development process of the country was meant to be implemented with utmost effort. Those insurgencies brought the country into a shambolic situation around 1949 and let the government be ironically denoted as the "Yangon Government".

Our Tatmadaw defeated the foreign aggressions such as Kuomintang and Mujahideen, meanwhile, was prevailing over the multicoloured insurgents. Moreover, Tatmadaw, with an upright stance and nationalistic fervour, safeguarded the country and its people in times of the State of Emergency that happened in 1958, 1962 and 1988. Besides, Tatmadaw successfully annihilated the insurgents trying to violate the sovereignty of the country in the post-1988. Hence, it is a great honour to say that our Tatmadaw firmly stood ahead to safeguard the country in times of danger to date.

Comrades,

Our Tatmadaw put the implementation of the absolute necessity of the country and people's desire into a priority in the successive terms after the Independence. Tatmadaw took the responsibility of the Caretaker Government during the Political Crisis in 1958 and attempted to fulfil the absolute necessities of the country such as security, law enforcement, counter-insurgency and holding a free and fair election. At the time of taking the State's responsibility as Revolution Council in 1962, Tatmadaw, in accordance with the necessity of the country at that time, laid down the Burma Socialist Programme and strove for nation-building with the installation of a Socialist Economic System. At the time of upholding the State's responsibility after the collapse of government due to the 1988 Uprising with the inspiration of multiparty democracy, Tatmadaw, in pursuit of the people's desire, laid the cornerstone required for fostering a Multiparty Democracy System. The 2008 Constitution which is absolutely necessary for fostering Democracy System could be enacted through the nationwide referendum and the smooth transition of the State's responsibility to the winning party was also completed under the aegis of the Tatmadaw through the Multiparty Democracy Election in November 2010.

Comrades,

The 2008 Constitution of our country was not adopted in line with the consent of a person or an organization but was initiated with great consideration of the eight groups composed of more than 1,000 representatives through a National Convention. Not only the entire people but also our military personnel hailed from people have to abide by the 2008 Constitution since it came into existence through the wholehearted approval of the people. It can be seen that the existing 2008 Constitution claims "The Defence Services is mainly responsible for safeguarding the Constitution" in Section 20 (F). I would like to mention that Tatmadaw's commitment to upholding the Constitution and its upright stance is meant to be said that Tatmadaw is safeguarding the Constitution originated from democratic principles, in other words, is safeguarding the democracy desired by the people.

Comrades,

So goes the saying "Not to be victimized as the grass beneath the landslide" in Myanmar "တောင်လဲရာ မြက်ပြတ်" since the potential conflict ignited from the confrontation between super-power countries can negatively impact small countries, it is needed to design the preemptive strategies for the survival of our coun-

try through the sustainable learning on international affairs. Our country has a common aim to build up a Standard Army which can deal with conventional warfare and is endowed with combat capability and combat power to heighten the national defence. While the future Tatmadaw is being leveraged towards Standard Army, the cohesive forces are being designed to keep abreast of the state-of-the-art. Each military personnel also needs to undergo sustainable training to have proper utilization of modern military ordnance and to be competent in the respective fields. In this regard, it needs to achieve lean practice for individual and collective training in line with the training policies. Fulfilling daily tasks and duties in a proper manner means undergoing training. I would like to urge you to ripen into the full-fledged capacity for individuals as military capability is grounded in individual competence and is also integrated with the capacity of military ordnance.

Comrades,

Solidarity begets strength. Therefore, comrades of ethnic people's offspring have to put an emphasis on public organizational measures for achieving solidarity between Tatmadaw and people to strengthen the country's power as if the intra-unit solidarity is needed to be promoted to build up a great strength of Tatmadaw.

Military personnel have to abide by the 10 Codes of Conduct to People and fulfil the necessity of the people. As the following motto portrays "The nation's strength lies within", the national defence from every single aspect could be strengthened only if the people are entwined to the fullest extent. The people will be able to put a concerted effort in the collaboration only when the socio-economic status is secure so that all kinds of danger which can be harmful to the people must be protected without hesitation. I would like to say that the respective regional authorities are to conduct timely matters whatsoever indeed through the observation of the actual situation occurring in those regions and the nation. And it is needed to safeguard the entire ethnic people as the statement goes "Life Matters Most", "Health Comes First, Health Provides Education, Health Begets Occupation". I, here, would like to impart that military personnel are to shoulder the array of responsibilities while the government is putting its utmost effort into the prosperous identity, food self-efficiency and socioeconomics of the country, and the people-centred development process.

Comrades,

Based on the facts namely geographical entity, culture, custom and tradition, different countries around the world are laying down the appropriate political system and moving forwards. Let the country be led by any political system, the country will be developed only when serenity and stability exist. As democracy is intended to be unveiled by the collaboration of entire people without any absence, serenity and stability are quintessential in the respective sectors including conflict resolution, and in this regard, it needs to be intertwined by all nationalities.

Comrades,

The military personnel shouldering the national defence duty with much sacrifice of life, blood and sweat are the ones who desperately desire to achieve peace. Since the year 2022 was deemed as the year of peace, the leaders of Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) are invited to be able to negotiate by themselves for the termination of internal armed conflicts and for achieving eternal peace. In this regard, the negotiation with the representatives of 10 EAOs including seven signatory EAOs and three non-signatory EAOs is in progress, and the results that are able to move on to serenity through politics are also attained. The agreements in NCA are intended for the tranquillity, and the development of the Union and ethnic people in the future. The aforesaid is the affirmation for the country and the nationalities. Hence, it has to bequeath the bitter colonial legacy of ethnic parochialism. It is required to accumulate ideological differences with common conceptual similarities based on the Union spirit.

As it is necessary to show great magnanimity towards each other in the peace dialogue, the substantial result must be taken into consideration viewing what it can be and what it should be. I would like to assert that the peace process forwarding nation-building and national interest will become a profound contribution to future nation-building because it is a part of politics but not meant to be a weapon itself. Tatmadaw always paves the way for the Ethnic Armed Organizations to be able to sit on the peace dialogue to date.

Comrades,

The State Administration Council is a government that emerged in accord with the Constitution after declaring the State of Emergency due to politics and has been formulated to prevent any forcible means of seizing the country's power attempted by the previous NLD-led government through the instance of voting irregularities. It is witnessed that only peaceful protests occurred at the beginning of assuming responsibility for the country, but later, the terrorists intentionally launched violent attacks on innocent civilians and non-military targets. Here, I would like to address that no government would allow terrorism rooted in democratic diversity and no terror act could achieve Democracy as well. Those attacks are the act of conspiracy for the devastation of the country by terrorist organizations including PDF ignited from NUG formed with an intention for political concerns and some terrorist-supporting EAOs. Bear in mind that the damage caused by acts of sabotage by terrorists does not result in the collapse of the government, but rather, it undermines the future national interest of the country.

As per the Five-Point Road Map of the government, our Tatmadaw will put "an effort into achieving full law enforcement and tranquillity across the Union to ensure the socioeconomic security of all citizens". While pursuing these goals, I would like to leave a word that lawful actions will be decisively taken against NUG and the terrorist organizations, and some EAOs giving sponsors to terrorism.

Thus, martial law is increasingly being imposed in important townships that need to be controlled during the second phase of the State of Emergency. Here, I would like to mention that this imposition is not meant to restrict the people but to efficiently control the actions of terrorists who seek to ruin the interest of people.

Comrades,

The fact "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 responsibilities to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards" is clearly stated as the last point of the Five-Point Road Map of the government. Serenity and stability are vital to grant timely the people acquire an absolute right to democracy and the right to vote equitably without any space left under the provisions in the election. People aim to vote for their expectations in the general election. Therefore, the election cannot be perfunctorily conducted. There were a large number of reports although people voted with much sanguine on the polling day of the 2020 election. It became hideously awful throughout the history of Myanmar's Democracy because the instance of voting irregularities and voting with wrongful actions were found in the investigation. As the ensuing events became an extensive experience for the country, it has to act in a way not to occur similar event. As the general election is meant for the people of Myanmar and is going to shape the future of Myanmar, all of us need to act with cognitive reflection and great consideration. However, the criticism and condemnation towards the government made by some terrorist-supporting countries and some authorized persons of the International organizations, ignoring the terror acts being committed by CRPH, NUG, and its lackey groups so-called PDFs intended to pose instability of the country, are totally wrong. The terror acts of NUG and its lackey so-called PDFs are needed to be tackled for good and all. Tatmadaw and government also need to take an action against this terrorist group trying to devastate the country and kill the people. Here, I would like to urge the International community to collaborate with all the efforts of the current government in prudence to be on the right path to Democracy by paving equal rights to the sovereignty of member states as per the United Nations Charter. I would like to mention that our country as a member of ASEAN has to perform the ASEAN community affairs in line with the ASEAN Spirit, Outlook and Charter.

Comrades,

In the ongoing processes of achieving peace implementation, the sound fundamentals such as the 2008 Constitution and the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) will remain upright. Subsequently, the two political agendas such as to build a Union based on a democracy and federal system and to practise a genuine and disciplined multiparty democracy system are being currently pursued. In this pursuit, our Tatmadaw has to partake in assigned roles. Democracy is a system of government chosen by all the eligible members of the State, typically through elected representatives, and the federal system is a concept of dividing up the authoritative power on concerted efforts of the ethnic groups from regions and states. Therefore, not only First Past The Post (FPTP) already used in the election but also Proportional Representative (PR) have to be practised in harmony to represent the political parties and ethnic groups in a broader manner as a form of multi-dimensional representation. That is why, the Union Election Commission, as per the electoral process, has already enacted the Political Parties Registration Law.

Comrades,

Our Tatmadaw has already assured to build the Union based on a democracy and federal system along with the practice of a genuine and disciplined multiparty democracy system in justice and prudence. According to article 20 (F), it is stated that the Defence Services is mainly responsible for safeguarding the Basic Principles of the Constitution such as Our Three Main National Causes mentioned in section 6, section 7 and section 8, the multiparty democratic system, and the Union system. Therefore, I would like to highlight that Tatmadaw with the inculcation of the values of "Mother Figure People, Father Figure People" regardless of any epoch and government, will continuously be the Guardian safeguarding the interest of people and preserving the country to rigidly stand on the multiparty system.

Comrades,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate you to keep on achieving the objectives of the 78th Armed Forces Day as follows:

— To serve primary duties of Tatmadaw for successfully safeguarding Our Three Main National Causes, and protecting the State Constitution and shielding the genuine disciplined multiparty democratic system.

— To emphasize agreements in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible for the restoration of the durable and perpetual peace across the nation as ceasing of armed conflicts is an actual requirement for realizing the multiparty democratic system.

— To safeguard the national interest of the State, lives and property of people, and to put a strenuous effort on respective corners in times of natural disasters.

— To provide the necessary assistance by Tatmadaw for holding a free and fair multiparty democratic general election upon completion of undertakings in accord with the provisions of the state of emergency for the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism.

❑

Families of Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) led by SAC Chairman Defence Services C-in-C Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing and wife pay respects to retired senior military officers who attended 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day Parade

State Administration Council Chair Defence Services C-in-C Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing, his wife and families of Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) pay obeisance to the retired senior military officers in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

FAMILIES of Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) paid respects to retired senior military officers who attended the Parade of the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day on 27 March 2023 at the hall of Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by 19 senior military officers and seven wives. Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye and wife, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) and their wives led by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla paid respects to those retired senior military officers and wives.

On the occasion, the Senior General spoke words of respect, saying that they all were successors to the duties in line with the traditions of the Tatmadaw, and the retired senior military officers were their parents and teachers. Hence, the Senior General said that they all pay respects to the retired senior military officers on the same occasion annually. The Senior General expressed his pride in the attendance of those retired senior military officers at the Armed Forces Day parade yearly. Paying respects to the seniors by juniors is a fine tradition of the Tatmadaw.

The Senior General and wife and senior military officers and their wives, on behalf of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air), paid respects to the retired senior military officers in line with the Myanmar traditions.

Then, the Senior General and wife, the Vice-Senior General and wife and senior military officers respectfully presented gifts to the retired senior military officers.

On behalf of the retired senior military officers, General Thein Sein and Lt-Gen Tun Kyi gave words of advice.

The Senior General and senior military officers had documentary photos taken together with the retired senior military officers and wives.

The Senior General and his wife cordially greeted retired senior military officers and their wives. — MNA/TTA

SAC Vice-Chair Dy C-in-C of Defence Services C-in-C (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife pay respects to Independence Mawgun award winners who attended 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day Parade

VICE-CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe paid respects to one Independence Mawgun second class award winner and four Independence Mawgun third class award winners who attended the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day Parade with a tea party at the hall of Bayintnaung Villa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the ceremony, the Vice-Senior General and his wife, the Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) and wife, and senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief asked after the health conditions of Independence Mawgun award winners individually and presented fortified edible bird nests and cash award to them.

Then, the Vice-Senior General and his wife joined the tea party together with the Independence Mawgun award winners. — MNA/TTA

The Vice-Senior General and his wife are pictured having the tea party together with Independence Mawgun awardees yesterday.

Dinner hosted in honour of 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day

The Senior General greets foreign dignitaries attending the honorary dinner yesterday.

STATE Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla hosted the reception and dinner in honour of the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day 2023 at the square of Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

At the start of the dinner, fireworks in commemoration of the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day were launched from the Armed Forces Day Parade Ground and Bayintnaung Villa.

Also present at the reception and dinner were SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye and wife, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung and wife, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung and wife, the SAC Secretary and wife, the SAC Joint Secretary and wife, SAC members and wives, Union level officials and wives, dignitaries, representatives from various organizations and guests.

Before and during the reception and dinner, the artistes from the Myawady Entertainment Troupe of the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare under the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and other artistes performed song entertainment.

After the dinner, the Senior General and party cordially greeted the attendees, and fireworks were launched in commemoration of the successful completion.

The Senior General, his wife and attendees watched dances and songs presented by male and female military personnel under the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare to the accompaniment of the Myawady Band in Thabin Hall of Zeyathiri Beikman.

After the entertainment, the Senior General and his wife presented the flower baskets to those entertainers and cordially greeted the attendees. — MNA/TTA

The Senior General, his wife and dignitaries watch the music and dance entertainment at the event yesterday.

The Senior General greets the attendees to the honorary dinner yesterday.

The Senior General and his wife present the bouquet of flowers to the performers at the event.

2 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 27 March, total figure records 634,075

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases recorded **634,075** after **two** new cases were reported on 27 March 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,496**, including **one** new recovery.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 27-3-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. — GNLM

OPINION

Remove the danger of narcotic drugs for the future of youths

SINCE the post-independence era, Myanmar has been emphasizing the eradication of narcotic drugs as a national duty. Tatmadaw launched Moe Hein, Nga Ye Pan, Taung Yan Shin, Taung Htaik Pann, and Aung Moe Hein military operations from September 1975 to April 1988, joining hands with Myanmar Police Force and the people.

As among 28 special drug eradication operations were conducted during the period from 2013 to 31 March 2020 when the synchronized operation namely "Operation 1511" was launched by six MoU countries. In a bid to eradicate narcotic drugs as much as possible, Tatmadaw, Myanmar Police Force, and the Drug Enforcement Division of MPF participated in the military operation. In this regard, an honourable achievement showed seizures of more than 193 million of stimulant tablets, more than 500 kilos of Ice, precursor chemicals used in refining drugs, and other related accessories worth more than K414 billion.

The narcotic drug is a terrible hindrance to enhancing the longevity of the entire people and uplifting of the education sector. Only when youths can avoid the danger of narcotic drugs will they achieve the success they have chosen. As such, the government and the people are to join hands in eradicating narcotic drugs as a national duty.

In the tenure of the State Administration Council, Myanmar, being a member of ASEAN, cooperates with other ASEAN member countries, joining the ASEAN drug enforcement ministerial meeting, drug enforcement ASEAN senior officer meeting, ASEAN aviation interception corps meeting, ASEAN seaport drug enforcement corps meeting, and the ASEAN drug surveillance network meeting.

Moreover, Myanmar seeks technical and equipment aid and exchange of information about narcotic drugs with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime-UNODC, Australian Federal Police-AFP, Drug Enforcement Administration-DEA, China National Narcotics Control Commission-NNCC, and Office of the Narcotics Control Board-ONCB of Thailand.

Drug trafficking poses threats to the prosperity and life of human beings. Narcotic drugs push some youths in the wrong ways. Those drug addicts dare to commit any crimes. If they see incentives to get narcotic drugs, they do not consider anything to be committed. Drug traffickers target the youths as their victims.

Myanmar has signed three conventions related to narcotic drug eradication, enacted laws related to combatting narcotic drugs, formed drug enforcement bodies, and drawn projects for fighting narcotic drugs. Currently, the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control has been formed with 19 members to control the enforcement of drugs. Relevant ministries operate 26 drug addict treatment departments, 47 drug addict treatment units, and 51 methadone-giving units for the rehabilitation of drug addicts.

The narcotic drug is a terrible hindrance to enhancing the longevity of the entire people and uplifting of the education sector. Only when youths can avoid the danger of narcotic drugs will they achieve the success they have chosen. As such, the government and the people are to join hands in eradicating narcotic drugs as a national duty.

ARTICLE

Higher Potential Boredom Threshold in Language Study

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)

SOMETIMES language learners have had enough of linguistic study for many different reasons. The two main reasons why these learners get fed up with this linguistic study may be that they have not yet achieved their expected outcomes of language learning, even though they are studying the language so hard, and that their language study time has taken much longer than needed. Whatever has happened, it is only human nature that the agent feels bored with doing the same thing every day, even if it does not matter to him whether he is used to it. On the other hand, it is often found that numerous linguistic learners are always conducting their evident language mislearning styles. Without adequate listening, some want to be great public speakers while others wish to be excellent writers with no sufficient reading. As it happens, they are on the threshold of higher potential boredom in language study when it sounds like they have not got an authentic study of language. So, I believe with my whole heart that this article can potentially resolve language learners' existing boredom threshold in linguistic study to such an extent.

First of all, language learners should have had some underlying attitudes towards linguistic study before devoting their heart and soul to that study. As we are all aware, language is absolutely serious, vast, and diverse in terms of both linguistic theory and stylistics. For instance, the sentence `It's raining heavily´ can be spoken as `It's raining cats and dogs´ or `The rain's pouring down´ or `The rain's coming down in torrents´ or `There's torrential rain now´ or `There's heavy rain now´ or whatever, following others' common expressions or the speaker's own words. Thus, any length of time, so much patience, reasonable diligence, and discontinuous determination have been required alongside continuous learning and life-long learning for language study since its beginning. As far as I can see, most linguistic learners study a language one day but do not another day, or they study the language only at the time when they are interested in learning it, or they have not acquired enough time for language study, or they spend too much time running into language difficulties and language barriers. Of course, it might be best if a learner has studied the language at the rate of one hour a day for at least six months on end, and perhaps that length of study time would contribute to his obvious linguistic achievement level. What is more, all learners must never be shy to study language, especially with regard to its final consonant sounds should the language have them. It is public knowledge that languages are different in either spoken or written forms from each other and learning vocabulary by heart with little care of final consonants most frequently leads to several spelling mistakes. Last but not at least, any learner had better set a target learning of language whether it is at an elementary, intermediate or advanced level, particularly for TOEFL, IELTS, university entrance exams, job requirements and the like. I am strong of the opinion that a large number of language learners behave as though they had enough linguistic study, just knowing the language after a fashion. All the same, a language study journey looks endless more often; this is like doing the crawl across a Tharawal river horizontally, which means no easy matter studying languages. Above all, it is highly improbable to study a language from A to Z apart from doing as enough study of language as its learner can afford.

After the description of linguistic or stylistic concepts, study time, patience, diligence, determination, resolution, non-shyness, and enough study as the underlying attitudes to language study, effective and efficient ways of overcoming boredom in the language study will be shown as the best as I can. To start with all language learners ought to study linguistic matter that may interest them, for example, comics, poems, short stories and even literature. For readers with a little bibliophobia, comics are likely to be the first step towards language study in that those comic books usually catch the readers' attention with colourful pages, cartoons, drawings or paintings. Poems are mostly short and to the point as well as arousing wishful or lateral thinking and emotional feelings of importance in life to readers. Like the poems, news headings and highlights can also be read within a short time. These parts of any news tend to provide meaningful action verb usages and a news theme respectively. Then, short stories are generally supposed to have passed through the golden age of the global literature world, for story lovers like to be engrossed with the characters and circumstances from all walks of life in which their living conditions _ physical, oral, or mental – significantly differ from theirs. In order to pass boredom over language study, more studies should be finished in a shorter time as well, especially with a great deal of concentration. If and when there are too many studies in number readers need to do them page by page or chapter by chapter. Most importantly, every concentration on subject matter or technique and any time for study must include a love of language indeed.

As a matter of fact, language is not a kind of boredom; language is of very interest to each and every individual learner. **PHOTO: ILLUSTRATION: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/FREEPIK**

And again, the effective way to fend off linguistic study boredom, to my certain knowledge, join hands with authentic language study quite regularly. Of all the language skills, the listening skill is the first to develop, so some people commence learning to speak accurately and fluently at first, along with their listening skills. As regards the listening skill, not only language learning but also language acquisition should be thought about carefully. Since language acquisition is more authentic than language learning in the eyes of the language, language learning must go hand in hand with language acquisition. It goes without saying that native speakers have familiarized themselves with their language acquisition since their childhood, not making a special effort to do it. But then for foreign learners, meeting a language learning partner, creating a private enjoyable learning environment, visiting a language-speaking country, watching TV news, seeing movies, and listening to the radio or podcasts can give their language acquisition to a greater or lesser degree. Here, it will not have escaped our notice that news, movies and podcasts very occasionally seem less authentic simply because some documentaries have been pre-arranged in a systematic order before being broadcast on air. Just after the listening skill must come the speaking skill. After hearing a song, again and again, someone would like to sing that song whether in a good voice or not. Similarly, learners get expressing a desire to speak a language bit by bit after listening to that language over and over again. As to the speaking skill of language, most people, as usual, talk about accents, for example, British and American accents in English. Really, private or public utterances do not have the same accent even on the only subject matter of love or money. Curiously enough, there are unnoticeably various accents in a language from region to region even between native speakers. Hence, I think that language learners will be able to do nothing but only imitate native speakers' accents till their optimum conditions for effective learning.

So as to lessen linguistic boredom, short-cut language study can still be carried out, where the term `short-cut language study´ is similar to intensive language learning that will offer heaps of linguistic knowledge within a well-planned duration. In the English language, short-cut study is suitable for grammar learning and dictionary habits. Some English users, experienced teachers in particular, can give some advice that language learners at the beginner level should throw their own dictionaries away, and they do not need to study grammar separately if they have read a lot. It can't, however, be denied that this sort of advice would be good and proper for the teachers who have ever acted upon a wide range of book reading or even the learners who are totally lazy to study grammar and impatient to look up words in dictionaries without much book reading. In actual fact, language learners need to study grammar and dictionaries part-time whether or not they have got reading knowledge. Unless this language is their mother tongue, they must exert strength in these linguistic aspects. Actually, devotees of language will manage to absorb the taste and essence of any subject matter to the full on condition that they understand the grammar by which it has been written and know the relevant meanings of vocabulary with which it has been described. As my English teacher U Hla Kyi that passed away once said, when somebody wonders if somebody else has been proficient in English, the former can see and guess the latter's use of articles, tenses, and choice of words. He, too, added that even great teachers of English make careless mistakes with articles sometimes. Make no mistake, tenses are the life of verbs in English as they can tell 50 per cent about the verbs' literal meaning. Amazingly, it is found that the vocabulary choice of authorities on efficient writing, mainly in classic works of literature, could not be replaced by anything else. Whichever is made for grammar or vocabulary, this can be accomplished by underlining or highlighting the respective parts in any reading passage through coloured pens with fun very quickly.

To avert language study boredom still requires a brief pause for one month or so in my estimation. As mentioned above, doing only one thing day after day may drive agents bored to death when it is getting longer. During the break time of language study, learners can get another language they want to be done temporarily. I, this article's writer, take it in turn to read English and Myanmar which have been both of my favourite languages since I was in my primary student life. By the time I think that I am pretty cheesed off with reading English, I enjoy picking up the nearest books in Myanmar. If the truth is known, making comparisons between languages enables learners to study a close or distant relation between them and to help appreciate languages including literature. As far as I can remember, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean are related languages, or, more precisely, Japanese comes from Chinese, and Korean is derived from Japanese. Despite this, it is strange that only Chinese and Korean are similar in their name-giving systems, whereas that of Japanese varies considerably from theirs, although Chinese might be considered its very language family. Broader usages of pronouns will be seen in the English language rather than in the Myanmar language. Even in British English and American English, there are noteworthy differences arising between them. Black cats, for example, have associations with good luck in Britain but with bad luck in the USA, Cambridge says. It also states that the most commonly shared association of the word `dog´ in English is `faithfulness'; however, the phrase `a dog's life´ is used to refer to a very unhappy and unpleasant life. Not being activated, the ability to memorize naturally falls into a gradual decline, that is, it never stops. In this connection, a brief pause in language study should not be too long, chiefly in years.

As a matter of fact, language is not a kind of boredom; language is of very interest to each and every individual learner. That is why there is a lot to study in a language and it can perform functions of various kinds possibly unnoticed by most people. The language describes unseen things such as mental beauty and inscribes unbelievable facts like science. Literature is the life of language or vice versa. They are getting interdependent on each other. Thanks to literature, most languages must be living exactly and firmly until today. Languages pass on human history and culture to people from one generation to another so that they will be able to take hold of the chance to perceive a country's national characters, patriotism, worship, art, viz. singing, dancing, composing, and playing, customs, traditional values, cultural norms and many, many others like these. Furthermore, language study has to be approached from the point of view of skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing, or a tool for communication, or forms – spoken and written. Not only that, it is vital that language should be studied through each of the six senses: 1) sight, e.g. `glanced´ and `observing´, 2) hearing, e.g. `silent´ and `loud´, 3) taste, e.g. `sweet´ and `bitter´, 4) touch, e.g. `poked´ and `handle´, 5) smell, e.g. `pungent´ and `aromatic´, or 6) extrasensory perception involving a) telepathy, experiencing someone else's feelings even though we are apart, b) premonition, knowing something is going to happen before it occurs, c) intuition, instinctive understanding, and d) déjà vu, an inexplicable feeling that we have already been somewhere or experienced something before. As my final tip, young or adult learners ought to study a language provided that they are certainly keen to do it. Always remember to upgrade your language skills day by day. Never ever be greedy and hurry up in language study. May this article's reader be free from experiencing a higher potential boredom threshold over language study. Enjoy the language!

■

The following documentary photos are portraying the Parade on the 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day held in Nay Pyi Taw on 27 March 2023: -

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Palm oil market sees steep plunge in price before Thingyan holidays

THE prices of palm oil have fallen unexpectedly during the two weeks before the Thingyan holidays (Myanmar New Year Festival), said edible oil sellers.

The delivery order prices were K6,400-6,500 per viss on 27 March in the Yangon market, decreasing from K6,600-6,700 per viss recorded on 24 March.

The majority of the sellers purchased palm oil at above K7,000 per viss. They are making losses due to the decrease in market price. Before the Thingyan holidays, approximately 20,000-30,000 tonnes of palm oil are expected to be brought into the country. Demand outstrips supply. There were only 10 days remaining to sell them to customers from regions outside Yangon.

Malaysian palm oil price is around 3,504 ringgit per tonne. The international oil price was still low at US$930 per tonne on 24 March. The price decline is attributed to the large volume of supply although the holidays are approaching.

However, the DO price is still K2,000 higher than the wholesale reference price for Yangon. The mobile market scheme has been carried out in the respective townships over months. The sellers stored the stocks at a high price yet the price moved down.

The traders who send the oil to regions outside Yangon pointed out that it is hard to guess the price fluctuation in the domestic market.

In the last week of December 2022, the price difference between the reference price and the market price was only K800 per viss. In early March, the difference widened to K2,000 per viss. Some vendors still generate profit from it. – TWA/EM

The picture shows an edible oil shop located in Latha Township.

MoC issues contract licences to 124 companies

THE Ministry of Construction issued contract licences to 124 companies. Out of them, 27 are companies of quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC), two engineering consultancies, 93 construction companies, and two supply companies (construction materials).

The local construction company which wants to apply must be a company that has not yet expired the registration period and must apply at the Ministry of Construction.

The applications must be sent to the Building Department, together with detailed information about the company and the facts and figures required by the Building Department. — TWA/MKKS

Applications for admission to master classes at YUE invited

THE Yangon University of Economics called for applications for admission to four Master's Degrees – Executive Master of Business Administration EMBA (regular course), Executive Master of Public Administration EMPA (online course), Executive Master of Development EMDevS (online course) and Executive Master of Banking and Finance (online course) – for the 2023-2024 academic year. Applicants must have a degree from a university.

For EMBA (normal course), if applicants are government employees, they must have at least eight years of experience as a gazetted officer, and if they are employees from international organizations or private businesses, they must have eight years of experience at the executive level.

For EMPA (online course) and EMDevS (online course), if applicants are government employees, they must have at least two years of experience as a gazetted officer, and if they are employees from international organizations or private businesses, they must have two years of experience at the executive level.

For EMBF (online course), applicants must have at least five years of experience at the executive level in the banking field.

Those who wish to attend the courses must be 30 years old on 1 July 2023 and must not be the ones attending other courses at a particular university.

Entrance exams for the EMBA course will be held on 28 May, for EMPA online course on 18 June, for EMDevS online course on 25 June and for EMBF online course on 4 June. —TWA/KZW

Onion price plummets in regional markets

THE Pakokku onion market received 65,000 visses of onion from various regions on 26 March and the onions from Yaw and Pale regions only cost K900 and K825 per viss respectively at the highest.

Around 100,000 visses of onion from various regions entered the Pakokku onion market from 22 to 25 March daily, causing the price drop from 25 March. Likewise, the Myingyan onion market saw massive entry of onion daily and the price ranged between K600 and K1,100 per viss, according to the market reports.

In the Myingyan market, high-grade onion fetched around K1,000-K1,100 per viss. On the other hand, the price of low-grade onion was only K600-K800 per viss. According to market reports, the prices of low-grade onion became lower due to the difficulties in long-distance transport and the approach of the Thingyan holidays.

Just as onions from all around the region entered the two large local markets, the Bayintnaung market accepted 1,206,000 visses of onion from various regions within the six opening days of this week.

The Pakokku onion market.

On 28 March, the opening day of the Bayintnaung market in Yangon after two consecutive closing days, there may be more onions coming in than usual and the price may also drop, said an onion trader.

However, it is said that the price of onion at the end of March 2023 will still be high compared to the same period of the previous year. — TWA/CT

Tencent Cloud International powers up Cambodia's Canadia Bank to roll out new mobile banking app

TENCENT Cloud International, one of the world's leading cloud companies, has supported Canadia Bank to launch the bank's new mobile banking app in Cambodia, said a joint news release on Monday.

The one-stop mobile financial technology platform, Tencent Mobile Framework (TMF), has provided Canadia Bank with support throughout the development, maintenance, and implementation of the bank's mobile banking app, the news release said.

TMF's technologies facilitate the seamless flow of the app, timely offering easy-to-use features, as well as maintaining prompt responses during transaction processing at all times, it said.

Poshu Yeung, senior vice-president of Tencent Cloud International, said the company was pleased to join hands with its partner Yusys Technologies to support Canadia Bank for the launch of its new mobile app, which aims to provide its users with easier and more convenient mobile banking options.

"We value this opportunity to demonstrate our capabilities in providing high-performance, high-value services and solutions to banks, companies, and businesses in more regions around the world," he said.

Canadia Bank is one of the largest commercial banks in the Southeast Asian country.

Howard Lau, chief information officer of the Canadia Bank, said the launch of the new Canadia Bank App was a significant milestone in the bank's major digital transformation roadmap. — Xinhua

Sri Lankan govt approves more foreign companies entering fuel retail market

SRI Lanka's cabinet has agreed to award licences to more foreign companies that intend to enter the fuel retail market in the country, a minister said on Monday.

In a Twitter message, Minister of Power and Energy Kanchana Wijesekera said China's Sinopec, United Petroleum of Australia and RM Parks of USA in a collaboration with Shell Plc will now enter the fuel retail market in Sri Lanka.

Wijesekera said the Energy Committee and other procurement committees had given their approval to award operation licences to these companies.

The foreign companies will be each allocated 150 dealer-operated fuel stations that are currently operated by the state-owned Ceylon Petroleum Corporation.

A worker fills petrol in an motorbike at a fuel station on 21 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

The minister added that the companies will be granted a licence to import, store, distribute and sell petroleum products in Sri Lanka for 20 years.

The companies will also be allowed to establish 50 new gas stations each in new locations. — Xinhua

German business morale improves again in March

GERMAN business confidence climbed for the sixth straight month in March, a key survey showed Monday, but analysts warned that recent banking turmoil could still rattle Europe's biggest economy.

The Ifo institute's monthly confidence barometer, based on a survey of about 9,000 companies, jumped to 93.3 points, up from 91.1 points in February.

The improvement was better than expected, with analysts surveyed by Factset predicting a reading of 91.2 points.

"Despite turbulence at some international banks, the German economy is stabilizing," said Ifo president Clemens Fuest.

Lower energy prices and the reopening of China's economy have boosted confidence in recent months, as Germany proved more resilient than initially feared to the fallout from the Ukraine war.

But the economy is not out of the woods yet, said ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski.

"We fear that the latest financial turmoil will reach the real economy in the coming months," he said, in a nod to recent stress in the global banking system. — AFP

Asian markets mixed as banking fears persist

A man walks past an electronic quotation board displaying the closing numbers of share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange (L) in Tokyo on 20 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

ASIAN stocks were mixed Monday in a cautious start to what could be another rocky week for global markets, after a rout in banking shares renewed fears for the sector.

Chinese markets were downbeat in morning trade, but Tokyo's key Nikkei index and stocks in Sydney and Singapore were up following a slightly higher close on Wall Street.

US President Joe Biden and European officials had sought to calm investors as bank shares tumbled on Friday, triggered by concerns over troubled lender Deutsche Bank.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz assured traders that Deutsche Bank is "very profitable" after its shares nosedived by as much as 14 per cent before closing 8.5 per cent lower.

The German bank returned to financial health last year following a major restructuring after years of problems.

After markets closed on Friday, Biden said banks are "in pretty good shape" following the recent financial sector turmoil.

Clifford Bennett, chief economist at ACY Securities, said Monday that it was unlikely the German government would allow Deutsche Bank to collapse or face restructuring.

But the situation shows "the continuing and growing pressure on the banking system among the major Western economies", he wrote in a note.

"No bank is immune in the current climate. The forces that lead to the crisis so far seen, of higher rates and depositor uncertainty, only continue to grow."

Hong Kong was nearly two per cent lower in Monday morning trade, with Shanghai down 0.7 per cent. Taipei and Seoul both lost 0.5 per cent, and Jakarta was down 0.4 per cent.

But Tokyo was up 0.3 per cent at the break, Singapore rose one per cent and Sydney gained 0.2 per cent.

Markets had rallied last week after financial authorities took steps aimed at preventing contagion from the collapse of US regional lenders this month.

But sentiment soured following decisions by central banks in the United States, Britain and Switzerland to hike interest rates, despite concerns about the impact of the monetary tightening on banks. — AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Appeal for US$2.7 bln to help drought victims in Horn of Africa

THE Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an east African bloc, on Monday appealed for 2.69 billion US dollars in funding to save millions of people at risk of starvation in Kenya, Uganda and Somalia due to drought.

The situation continues to worsen, with 47 million people being highly food insecure and some at risk of dying of starvation, IGAD Executive Secretary Workneh Gebeyehu said.

"Some 70 per cent of these 47 million people live in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia," he said in a statement released in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

"This is why, today, we solemnly call on the international community to help us prevent a major humanitarian disaster by committing requisite resources to save lives and livelihoods in the short term, and continue investing in resilience building in the medium and long term."

According to the bloc, Somalia needs 1.6 billion dollars to provide food and non-food items to the drought-affected communities and the internally displaced people (IDPs); Ethiopia needs 710 million dollars to provide support to key sectoral needs in the coming four months; and Kenya requires 378 million dollars to provide food, water, and vaccination to the affected counties until October.

A woman stands next to a jerrycan of water at the village of El Gel, 8 kilometres from the town of K'elafo, Ethiopia, on 12 January 2023. The last five rainy seasons since the end of 2020 have failed, triggering the worst drought in four decades in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. **PHOTO: AFP**

IGAD said the drought has led to terrible consequences, including severe water and pasture shortages, a million displaced people and over 10 million livestock and wildlife deaths, and reduced crop and livestock production, all of which are increasing food insecurity.

Gebeyehu said that recovery will require resources and time, and the institution is working to prevent future disasters from having such severe impacts. — Xinhua

Migrants tortured, forced into sex slavery in Libya: UN

MIGRANTS stuck in Libya while trying to reach Europe are being systematically tortured and forced into sexual slavery — a crime against humanity, a United Nations investigation said Monday.

The probe said it was deeply concerned at the deteriorating human rights situation in the conflict-torn North African country.

"There are grounds to believe a wide array of war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed by state security forces and armed militia groups," the investigators concluded.

"Migrants, in particular, have been targeted and there is overwhelming evidence that they have been systematically tortured" in detention centres, the UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya said.

The report said there were reasonable grounds to believe that sexual slavery, a crime against humanity, was committed against migrants.

And the investigators voiced concern about the deprivation of liberty of Libyans and migrants throughout the country, in what they said could also amount to crimes against humanity.

They found numerous cases of "arbitrary detention, murder, torture, rape, enslavement, sexual slavery, extrajudicial killing and enforced disappearance, confirming their widespread practice in Libya".

People held in detention were regularly subjected to "torture, solitary confinement, held incommunicado, and denied adequate access to water, food, toilets, sanitation, light, exercise, medical care, legal counsel, and communication with family members", the investigators said.

But they said nearly all the survivors they interviewed did not lodge official complaints out of fear of reprisals, arrest, extortion and a lack of confidence in the justice system. — AFP

Kremlin says won't change plans on Belarus nuclear weapons

THE Kremlin on Monday said Western criticism would not change plans announced by President Vladimir Putin to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in neighbouring Belarus.

The West condemned Putin's weekend announcement on placing the weapons in EU and NATO-bordering Belarus, triggering calls for new sanctions on Moscow.

Ukraine said it was seeking an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council over the move.

"Such a reaction of course cannot influence Russian plans," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Speaking during a televised interview on Saturday, Putin said Moscow would station the tactical nuclear weapons "without violating our international agreements on nuclear non-proliferation".

He said this was "nothing unusual".

"The United States has been doing this for decades. They have long placed their tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of their allies," Putin said. The Russian leader said he spoke to his Belarusian ally Alexander Lukashenko and that they had "agreed to do the same".

Putin's announcement came over a year into his grinding offensive in Ukraine. — AFP

Macron holds crisis meeting as more France protests loom

PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron summoned government ministers for a crisis meeting on Monday, as tensions ran high a day before another major day of strikes and protests against his pension reforms.

Nearly two weeks after Macron rammed the new law through parliament using a special provision sidestepping any vote, unions have vowed no let-up in mass protests to get the government to back down.

They have called for another big day of action on Tuesday, the 10th such mobilization since protests started in mid-January against the controversial law, which includes raising the retirement age to 64 from 62.

A man empties garbage at overflowing dumpsters littering the sidewalk as a sector of the city's garbage collectors observe an ongoing strike against the pension reform, in the southern port city of Marseille on 27 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Macron, whose approvement ratings in opinion polls are at a low point, said last week he accepted the "unpopularity" that came with the reform.

His prime minister, Elisabeth Borne, meanwhile said that while there was no plan to drop the legislation, she was ready for fresh dialogue with unions.

"We have to find the right path... We need to calm down," she told AFP in an interview on Sunday.

Starting on Monday, Borne has scheduled talks over three weeks, including with members of parliament, political parties, local authorities and unions.

A state visit to France by Britain's King Charles III, which had been due to begin on Sunday, was postponed because of the current unrest. — AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Indian parliament adjourned following protests over Gandhi's disqualification

INDIA'S parliament was adjourned on Monday as lawmakers belonging to the Indian National Congress (INC) protested against the disqualification of senior opposition leader Rahul Gandhi from the lower house of the parliament.

A former INC president, Rahul Gandhi had been a lawmaker since 2004. He is the son of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, grandson of former prime minister Indira Gandhi, and great-grandson of the country's first prime minister Jawahar Lal Nehru.

Monday was the first day when the parliament resumed after Gandhi's disqualification from parliament on Friday. He represented the Wayanad parliamentary constituency in the southern state of Kerala in the lower house. Violent protests by INC members were witnessed over the past three days over his expulsion from the parliament.

Gandhi told the media on Saturday that his fight for democracy in the country would continue and he would also continue asking questions to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his "association" with business tycoon Gautam Adani.

Gandhi's expulsion from the parliament was a result of an order by a court in the western state of Gujarat sentencing him to a two-year imprisonment in a defamation case wherein he had passed certain objectionable comments against the community that Modi belongs to. — Xinhua

India's Congress party activists and supporters protest against conviction of Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi in a criminal defamation case, in New Delhi on 26 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

North Korea fires short-range ballistic missiles

NORTH Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles on Monday, South Korea's military said, the latest in a flurry of weapons tests that Pyongyang says are in response to major US-South Korea defence drills.

The two allies were conducting a joint amphibious landing exercise on Monday, days after concluding Freedom Shield, their largest combined military drills in five years.

North Korea views such exercises as rehearsals for invasion, and has repeatedly warned it would take "overwhelming" action in response.

"Our military detected two short-range ballistic missiles fired from around Chunghwa area in North Hwanghae province from 07:47 am (2247 GMT) towards the East Sea," South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

The missiles each flew around 370 kilometres (230 miles), it added, calling their launch a "serious act of provocation damaging peace and stability of the international community as well as the Korean peninsula". — AFP

This picture taken on 22 March 2023 and released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 24 March 2023 shows North Korean leader Kim Jong UN (2nd R) guiding a launching drill of the strategic cruise missile units "Hwasal" at an undisclosed place in North Korea. **PHOTO: STR / KCNA VIA KNS / AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tanker ship catches fire off Indonesia's West Nusa Tenggara, 3 missing

THREE people were reportedly missing after a tanker ship caught fire off the coast of Indonesia's West Nusa Tenggara province on Sunday, a rescuer said.

The vessel was operated by the Indonesia's state-owned oil firm PT Pertamina, and the accident occurred just off the coast of the firm's oil storage located in Mataram city of the province, said Wahyu Efendi, head of the provincial search and rescue office. – Xinhua

Six killed in suicide blast in Afghan capital

A suicide attack on Monday near Afghanistan's foreign ministry killed six civilians and wounded several others, the interior ministry said.

Security has dramatically improved since the Taliban stormed back to power in August 2021, ousting the US-backed government and ending their two decade insurgency, but the Islamic State group has proved an increasing threat.

The attacker was identified by Afghan forces who shot at him in front of a business centre near the foreign ministry, interior ministry spokesman Abdul Nafy Takor tweeted.

"With his killing, the explosives carried by the attacker also exploded which killed six civilians and wounded a number of others," he said.

Italian NGO Emergency, which operates a hospital in the capital, confirmed it had received two dead and 12 wounded, including a child. – AFP

14 mln personal documents stolen from Aussie financial firm in cyber attack

AUSTRALIA'S financial service provider Latitude confirmed on Monday that about 14 million personal records have been stolen from the company due to a recent cyber attack.

In its update on the cyber theft incident, Latitude said that approximately 7.9 million Australian and New Zealand driver licence numbers were stolen, of which approximately 3.2 million, or 40 per cent, were provided to the company in the last 10 years.

According to the update, the "malicious attack" exposed 53,000 passport numbers, while less than 100 customers had reported a monthly financial statement leaked. Latitude promised to reimburse customers who choose to replace their ID documents.

Meanwhile, the company also identified that an additional 6.1 million records, dating back to at least 2005, were stolen, of which approximately 5.7 million, or 94 per cent, were provided prior to 2013.

These records include some but not all of the following personal information, such as name, address, telephone and date of birth.

"It is hugely disappointing that such a significant number of additional customers and applicants have been affected by this incident. We apologize unreservedly," said Latitude Financial Services CEO Ahmed Fahour.

"We continue to work around the clock to safely restore our operations. We are rectifying platforms impacted in the attack and have implemented additional security monitoring as we return to operations in the coming days," he added.

The incident is currently under investigation by the Australian Federal Police, with no suspicious activity observed in Latitude's systems since 16 March.

Latitude first reported the cyber attack on 16 March, acknowledging that it resulted in the theft of over 300,000 customer documents. The attacker was believed to have used the employee login credentials to steal the data that was held by the company's service providers. — Xinhua

SPORT

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Appeal for US$ 2.7 bln to help drought victims in Horn of Africa

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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Twelve 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 prioritize 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.
(d) To ensure peace, stability, rule of law, and the safe and smooth functioning of transport networks across the Union.

2. Economic affairs

(a) To enhance development based on agriculture and livestock using modern production techniques and to 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 assure support for the sustainability of Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) that prioritize import substitution, export production, and the use of domestically produced raw materials, in order to increase domestic production and generate employment opportunities.
(d) To advance the socioeconomic life of the people, in order to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.

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 people and preserve and safeguard their faiths, beliefs, culture, and characteristics of patriotic nationalism.
(c) To strengthen basic health care in order to achieve the emergence of a health system that enhances the longevity and health of the entire nation.
(d) To comprehensively promote the education sector to make it capable of producing the human resources necessary for building a modern, developed, and progressive democratic nation.

Shan United technical director to handle Myanmar U-19 football team

Shan United technical director U Aung Naing (left) is seen with fitness coach U Soe Min Oo. **PHOTO: SUFC**

SHAN United technical director U Aung Naing has been offered as a head coach for the Myanmar National U-19 football team, according to a statement from the Shan United Football Club.

Upon his success, the Shan United team has expressed their feeling.

"It's a great honour to get an offer to take responsibility for the U-19 team which has once been part of positive progress in the Myanmar football development course.

"These are all fruits of success which U Aung Naing has got in both his football player life and his coach life as well.

"He has been a major leader during our Shan United's Championship journey for three consecutive years as in 2019, 2020 and 2022.

"His leadership for us as a head coach in 2019 and 2020, and as a technical director last year, is definitely unforgettable.

"The most special part about it is, not only in 2019 but also in 2022, Shan Team has made it to become undefeated league champions.

"Moreover, he has trained us to get thinking of when to approach a football match in regular style and when to approach it in a more energetic style.

"We deeply would like to wish U Aung Naing and Myanmar National U-19 football team great success and Myanmar Football sector all great success," team officials stated. — KZL

Ronaldo 'very important' for Portugal, says Martinez

CRISTIANO Ronaldo remains a "very important" player for Portugal, coach Roberto Martinez said on Sunday after the veteran striker scored a second successive brace in Euro 2024 qualifying against Luxembourg.

The 38-year-old opened the scoring for the Euro 2016 winners by turning in Nuno Mendes' header and slotted home another in the 31st minute as Portugal won 6-0.

Ronaldo, who also netted twice against Liechtenstein on Thursday, increased his records of most men's international appearances and goals to 198 and 122 respectively.

"Cristiano is a unique player in the world, with the highest number of international caps," said Martinez, who has restored Ronaldo to the starting line-up after he was dropped during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

"The experience he has for the dressing room is very important.

"All players have an important role. The younger ones due to their willingness to play and players like Cristiano Ronaldo, Rui Patricio and Bernardo Silva bring experience. "It's important to have a complete dressing room." — AFP

Spurs focus on saving season after Conte departure

Tottenham Hotspur's Italian head coach Antonio Conte reacts during the English Premier League football match between Southampton and Tottenham Hotspur at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, southern England on 18 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOTTENHAM chairman Daniel Levy admits the Premier League club have a "fight" on their hands as they scramble to save their season after Antonio Conte's turbulent reign came to an end.

The Italian's departure appeared almost inevitable after his extraordinary post-match rant following a 3-3 draw at bottom club Southampton earlier this month. But Sunday's divorce by "mutual agreement", with just 10 Premier League games remaining, is a gamble by the Spurs hierarchy, who are desperate to secure a place in the lucrative Champions League next season.

Tottenham are fourth in the Premier League table but are just two points ahead of Newcastle having played two games more — finishing in the top four guarantees entry into Europe's elite club competition.

Cristian Stellini, Conte's assistant at Spurs, will take charge for the rest of the campaign, with former midfielder Ryan Mason working as his deputy.

With the club out of all cup competitions, at least Stellini can afford to put all of his eggs in one basket.

"We have 10 Premier League games remaining and we have a fight on our hands for a Champions League place," Levy said in a club statement issued late on Sunday.

"We all need to pull together. Everyone has to step up to ensure the highest possible finish for our club and amazing, loyal supporters." — AFP