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National Unity and Peace Restoration Central Committee holds meeting 1/2021

To observe democratic culture of solving issues through dialogue is so important: Senior General



State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing chairs the National Unity and Peace Restoration Central Committee meeting 1/2021 in Nay Pyi Taw on 3 March 2021.

THE National Unity and Peace Restoration Central Committee held its meeting 1/2021 at the office of the State Administration Council in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with an address delivered by Chairman of the Central Committee Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Also present at the meeting were Vice-Chairman of the Council Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win,

members of the Central Committee General Mya Tun Oo, Admiral Tin Aung San, General Maung Maung Kyaw, Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Mahn Nyein Maung, Daw Aye Nu Sein, Jeng Phang Naw Taung, U Sai Lone Hsaing, Saw Daniel, Union Minister for Home Affairs and Union Minister at the Government's Office Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Attorney-General of the Union Dr Daw Thida Oo, Lt-Gen Yaw Pyae, Secretary of the Central Committee Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dway, Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, members of the National Unity and Peace Restoration Coordination Com-

mittee Lt-Gen Sein Win, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Lt-Gen Aye Win and officials.

In his keynote address, the Senior General said it was the first meeting on the peace process after the Council had assumed the administrative duties of the State. The Central Committee, the work committee and the coordination committee were set up to carry out the peace process more extensively. As regards the peace, the Council has adopted the work programme "Emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement

(NCA) as much as possible" in its five future programmes, and it has also laid down the objective "Emphasizing of restoration of eternal peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)" in its political objectives.

In fact, NCA is the foundation of the design to build a Union based on the federal system and democracy, as aspired by all nationalities, through the ceasefire.

A comprehensive type of Union will appear only if we find answers through coordination and realize the agreements based on NCA. In this process, the observance of the democratic culture of solving an issue through dia-

logue is so important. However, the problem is huge it can be reduced through dialogue. The Senior General said he had requested the previous government in person for many times to hold the National Defence and Security Council meeting as stipulated by the Constitution with the wish to improve the civil-military relations. But the request was ignored again and again. Moreover, the repeated calls for holding dialogues between UEC and political parties, the special session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the NDSC meeting to solve the problem of vote-rigging were also rejected.

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Announcement of Union Election Commission

(3 March 2021)

Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Pyawbwe Township in Mandalay Region, together with the respective township election sub-commission, head of police, Immigration and Population and administrators according to the Hluttaw Election Law Section 53.

According to on the ground inspection, a total of 295 poll stations of Pyawbwe Township in Mandalay Region took out 250,538 ballot papers. It used 177,523 ballot receipts, and the remaining ballots were 70,117 instead of 73,015.

The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective poll stations, and the missing ballots were 2,898, which is lesser than the actual numbers of remaining ballots. The findings are as follows:

Inspection findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Pyawbwe Township

| Sr | Ballot Papers | Withdrawal | Used | Exact Remaining | Remaining on the ground | Difference | | Remark |
|-------|--------------------------|------------|---------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| | | | | | | missing | Extra-used | |
| 1 | Wards and Village-Tracts | 239,100 | 176,501 | 62,599 | 59,701 | 7,023 | 4,125 | |
| 2 | Townships | 1,022 | 1,022 | - | - | - | - | |
| 3 | Remaining numbers | 10,416 | - | 10,416 | 10,416 | - | - | |
| Total | | 250,538 | 177,523 | 73,015 | 70,117 | 7,023 | 4,125 | Difference (2,898) |

The wards/village-tracts of Pyawbwe township took out 239,100 ballot papers and used 176,501. It should remain 62,599, but it left only 59,701, and so 2,898 ballot papers were missing.

During the inspection of Pyawbwe, U Kyaw Swe, secretary of Sate Cho village-tract election sub-commission, returned unused ballot books for each Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw and State/Region Hluttaw on 26 February 2021 while U Thura, Chairman of Phayagyi village-tract election sub-commission and U Than Oo, secretary returned four unused ballot books for each Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw and State/Region on 27 February 2021 to Pyawbwe Township election sub-commission office.

Zajantaung village-tract returned one ballot book for Pyithu Hluttaw while Chaungmagyi village-tract four books with nine ballot papers, Sal Ywar Lat Pan Tine village-tract two ballot books and 15 ballot papers and unknown village-tract five ballot books to Pyawbwe Township election commission office.

According to the respective Hluttaw Election Rules and Rule 66(h), "The poll heads must pack the under-mentioned and must print his seal on the packs. The poll heads must express the pack's content, names of ward or village-tracts and poll station number. He can also allow the poll station representative for Hluttaw MPs or other election agents to print their seals and make a large bundle. -

1. Unused ballot papers, receipts and Form (16-1)
2. Voting lists of the polling station
3. Receipts for advance ballot papers
4. Invalid votes Form (17).

The Rules also instructed the poll head, deputy poll head, and members to carry out according to the stipulations mentioned above.

It was found that the number of ballots used was higher than the number of ballot papers issued in 52 village-tract polling stations. The use of extra ballots in these polling stations are as follows, and it is suspected that more ballots were printed.

List of extra-used ballot papers for poll station-wise of Ward/Village-tract in Pyawbwe Township

| Sr | Ward/Village-tract | Poll station | Issued | Used | Extra ballot papers |
|----|--------------------|--------------|--------|-------|---------------------|
| 1 | Mogaung | 2 | 600 | 608 | 8 |
| 2 | Twinywar | 3 | 950 | 1,000 | 50 |
| 3 | Twinywar | 5 | 1,100 | 1,150 | 50 |
| 4 | Shwenyaungphu | 1 | 750 | 800 | 50 |
| 5 | Zajantaung | 1 | 800 | 950 | 150 |
| 6 | Gwaypinyoe | 2 | 800 | 811 | 11 |
| 7 | Gwaypinyoe | 3 | 500 | 563 | 63 |
| 8 | Salywar Kyeti | 1 | 1,250 | 1,300 | 50 |
| 9 | Ohnpin | 2 | 750 | 785 | 35 |
| 10 | Ohnpin | 3 | 900 | 933 | 33 |
| 11 | Kantha | 1 | 450 | 500 | 50 |
| 12 | Kantha | 4 | 800 | 900 | 100 |
| 13 | Moenangone | 1 | 1,150 | 1,175 | 25 |
| 14 | Moenangone | 2 | 850 | 854 | 4 |
| 15 | Minlan | 5 | 1,000 | 1,050 | 50 |
| 16 | Htantawgyi | 1 | 1,150 | 1,154 | 4 |
| 17 | Htantawgyi | 2 | 850 | 852 | 2 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---|--------|--------|-------|
| 18 | Wahyindote | 1 | 700 | 750 | 50 |
| 19 | Dahatkon | 1 | 900 | 950 | 50 |
| 20 | Pinmyaing | 1 | 550 | 600 | 50 |
| 21 | Yintaw Ywama | 2 | 1,550 | 1,650 | 100 |
| 22 | Kyini | 2 | 1,100 | 1,150 | 50 |
| 23 | Shanpwe | 2 | 1,200 | 1,900 | 700 |
| 24 | Myoma | 1 | 950 | 1,000 | 50 |
| 25 | Mandalaytan | 2 | 600 | 635 | 35 |
| 26 | Shwepyi Yanaung | 2 | 1,200 | 1,300 | 100 |
| 27 | Pyithaya | 1 | 2,450 | 2,452 | 2 |
| 28 | Pyithaya | 2 | 750 | 754 | 4 |
| 29 | Yargyi | 2 | 1,250 | 1,350 | 100 |
| 30 | Yargyi | 3 | 500 | 550 | 50 |
| 31 | Thabyaypin | 1 | 900 | 931 | 31 |
| 32 | Thabyaypin | 4 | 750 | 765 | 15 |
| 33 | Tawtwinhla | 3 | 550 | 554 | 4 |
| 34 | Tawtwinhla | 4 | 350 | 400 | 50 |
| 35 | Lwepaukon | 1 | 750 | 760 | 10 |
| 36 | Shansu | 1 | 700 | 850 | 150 |
| 37 | Kangyi (north) | 1 | 1,350 | 1,400 | 50 |
| 38 | Kyi | 1 | 650 | 700 | 50 |
| 39 | Magyikon | 3 | 950 | 1,003 | 53 |
| 40 | Myinbat | 2 | 1,100 | 1,134 | 34 |
| 41 | Myothit | 1 | 950 | 1,000 | 50 |
| 42 | Shwepyi Yanlon | 1 | 1,250 | 1,300 | 50 |
| 43 | Taunglal | 1 | 1,300 | 1,400 | 100 |
| 44 | Taunglal | 4 | 1,300 | 1,381 | 81 |
| 45 | Myintel | 1 | 1,650 | 1,700 | 50 |
| 46 | Kantel | 3 | 1,250 | 1,300 | 50 |
| 47 | Bodigone | 1 | 1,050 | 1,100 | 50 |
| 48 | Sate Cho | 6 | 1,100 | 1,150 | 50 |
| 49 | Sabalkon | 1 | 850 | 900 | 50 |
| 50 | Yanaung | 1 | 1,250 | 1,323 | 73 |
| 51 | Yanaung | 5 | 1,150 | 1,224 | 74 |
| 52 | Nyaungone (north) | 3 | 550 | 600 | 50 |
| From Ward/Village-tract | | | | | 874 |
| Total | | | 50,050 | 53,301 | 4,125 |

Missing ballot papers at 106 Village-tract poll stations are as follows:

List of missing ballot papers for poll station-wise of ward/village-tract in Pyawbwe Township

| Sr | Ward/Village-tract | Poll station | Ballot papers Issued | Used | Missing ballot papers |
|----|--------------------|--------------|----------------------|------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Mogaung | 1 | 600 | 569 | -31 |
| 2 | Phaungtaw | 1 | 900 | 850 | -50 |

To observe democratic culture of solving issues through dialogue is so important: Senior General

FROM PAGE-1

So, the Tatmadaw has to inevitably assumed the duties entrusted by the Constitution. The government wishes to emphasize the point that national unity and peace can be restored through dialogue in accord with the democracy culture.

As one of five future programmes of the State Administration Council mentions that emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible, all parts of tasks can be done apart from approvals at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Although it can be assumed that such tasks cannot be done due to lack of Hluttaw representatives and political parties, representatives of currently existing political parties will be elected representatives upon completion of the forthcoming election and the party which won the majority of seats must form the government to assume the duty. As such, the current political party group and government group can continue the political dialogue. By continuously undertaking the peace process, efforts can be made for restoring eternal peace all the people aspire.

Even though concepts are diverse in democracy and federalism in building the Union based on democracy and federalism, it is necessary to choose the system suitable for the country. With regard to democracy, it is necessary to follow the wish of the majority as well as to emphasize the wish of the minority. Somebody discriminate and commit punishment of social affairs against others as enemies whose concepts are not conformity with them to set aside the formers the society. Such acts are based on ideas of social discrimination in the slavery era, which does not totally conform with democracy. The extreme personal cult may cause disunity in the society, harming the national unity. Hence, it is necessary to consider personal cult and discrimination not to be practised in society.

Although everybody expresses various definitions and standards of federalism as they like, its essence is consolidation and harmony. The federal

means the practice in sharing of three powers over the consolidated regions, states, national races and ethnics. In so doing, regions and states will have the rights of self-administration, self-legislation and self-determination in accord with the respective region and

own names. The Senior General expressed his assumption that the emergence of a state based on a name representing all national races living inside, not a single national race, could contribute much towards national unity. So all are urged to consider and seek a solution to

the agreements, formation of peace committees, holding of exclusive meetings between the government and NCAs-EAO leaders and issuance of statements, holding of peace process-related meetings, signing of part 3 of the Union Agreement, step-by-step implemen-

formed at the state level and measures will be taken for the return of internally displaced persons and convenience of their living as soon as possible. Differences over the Tatmadaw will be discussed and the Tatmadaw is just performing the regular duties for national defence. Efforts will be made to pave ways for non-signatory EAOs to sign the NCA and it is necessary for EAOs to take the peace path. Democratic rights should be enjoyed by all national races.

At the current stages of the peace process, it is necessary to hold dialogues in four phases uninterruptedly. Informal and formal dialogues should be organized as may be necessary. To strengthen the ceasefire, it is necessary to hold bilateral talks continuously in accordance with provisions of the NCA until formal meetings and peace conferences can be held under the NCA. In the implementation of national unity and peace, it is important to implement five guidelines, including (a) building a Union based on democracy and federalism, (b) realizing national unity and peace by adopting the democracy culture of dialogues, (c) developing strategies for national unity, (d) formulating and materializing projects for rehabilitation and development together with the implementation of the peace process, (e) conducting research into root causes of divisions in the society to prevent them.

The work committee is required to develop timetables and strategies, which will be implemented by the coordination committee. The meeting of the central committee will be held occasionally as may be necessary. The work committee is required to implement matters related to development, IDPs, and the interim period included in Chapter (6) of the NCA in negotiation with relevant union ministers and chairmen of state and region administration councils. Detail negotiations are to be carried out by the coordination committee. In conclusion, the Senior General urged the committees to try to strike a balance between peace and development as they are directly proportional to each other.—MNA

As one of five future programmes of the State Administration Council mentions that emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible,

state constitutions by sharing powers among the Union, regions and states in accord with the State constitution. There is no region or state where a single ethnic people reside in Myanmar. All the regions and states are home to multiple national races. It can be seen that various ethnics are living in regions.

According to the national census of 2014 for example, Shan State has a population of over 5.8 million with ethnic Shan representing 35.23 per cent, Bamar 11.44 per cent, Pa-O 8.94 per cent, Palaung 7.06 per cent, Wa 6.41 per cent, Danu 4.4 per cent, Kokang 3.22 per cent, Lahu 4.05 per cent, Jingphaw 2.35 per cent and other ethnic groups 16.84 per cent. Likewise, Kachin State has a population of over 1.6 million with Bamar representing 29.2 per cent, Shan 23.6 per cent, Jingphaw 18.97 per cent, Lisu 7 per cent, Rawam 5.5 per cent, Lawwaw 3.33 per cent, Lacheik 2.89 per cent, Zaikwa 1.57 per cent and other ethnics 8 per cent. Shan State has just over 35 per cent Shan people and Kachin State just over 39 per cent Kachin people. The establishment of states based on national race has led to demands for their own states with their

this matter, he said.

Today's peace efforts are being made as a national duty in order to pass on a legacy of building a stable future and a developed world-class nation to the future generations to come. These efforts are not meant for self-interests or for the reputation of a person.

After the takeover of the country in accord with the Constitution, measures will be taken to ensure required peace and stability and help the election-winning party form a government. During the period, the ongoing processes including the peace effort in respective regions will continue without losing momentum. Moreover, the systems contrary to the constitution and the processes detrimental to national unity and national security will be mended in line with the Constitution and other existing laws. And these efforts mean that the Tatmadaw is doing national politics with the aim of protecting national interests, the Senior General added.

Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, joint secretary of the National Unity and Peace Restoration Central Committee, explained the holding of Union peace conferences and signing of

tation of future programmes beyond 2020, continuation of the remaining points for the basic principle agreements and discussion about the peace process between government, Hluttaw and Tatmadaw delegate groups.

Next, central committee members Jeng Phang Naw Taung, Mahn Nyein Maung, Daw Aye Nu Sein, Saw Daniel, and U Sai Lone Hsaing explained the need to form more peace task forces to facilitate the peace process in Kachin State, hold informal meetings frequently with ethnic armed organizations, return of displaced people to their homes, ensuring that all ethnic armed organizations sign the NCA under the State Administration Council, ensuring that Rakhine State achieves eternal peace through ongoing temporary ceasefire, returns of IDPs to their homes, the release of timely correct information against rumours and fake news, building of trust in the peace process, reconstitution of state-level committees and inclusive participation of all ethnic groups in the peace process.

Then, the Senior General discussed the peace process, saying the committees will be

Solar Powers

The use of irrigation water for the agricultural sector, generation of electricity from hydro and solar powers.

(Excerpt from the speech to the management committee meeting of the State Administration Council made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 26 February 2021)

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo attends second day of 27th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat Meeting



Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo joins the online second-day meeting of the 27th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat Meeting yesterday.

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo attended the second day of the 27th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat Meeting via video conference which was held on 3 March 2021.

In the Meeting, the Ministers exchanged their views on the implementation status of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) related activities of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), expansion of the list of essential goods from foods and agriculture sectors annexed to the MoU on Non-Tariff Meas-

ures under the Hanoi Plan of Action, to strengthen ASEAN business more integrated into the Global Value Chains and the status of the domestic process for the entry into force of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement.

Union Minister informed Myanmar's support for the establishment of the support unit of ACRF to monitor and evaluate the ACRF implementation and he also highlighted the important of sectorial cooperation for the success of the framework. Moreover, he confirmed that Myanmar will

try to complete the domestic process for the entry into force of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement as early as possible.

The Meeting was chaired by Dato Dr Amin Liew Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy of Brunei Darussalam and attended by ASEAN Economic Ministers, Senior Economic Officials (SEOM) and representatives from ASEAN Countries, the ASEAN Secretary - General and representatives from ASEAN Secretariat.—MNA

Extension of deadline for application submission for Myanmar Press Council's vacancy

MYANMAR Press Council members selecting team has advertised that the application forms for candidacy of vacant council's members can be taken out at Copy Rights and Registration Division of Information and Public Relation Department located at No (4) Wingabar Street, Bahan Township, Yangon Region from 9 am to 4 pm daily from 26.2.2021 (Friday) and 3.3.2021 (Wednesday), and the forms must be applied no later than 4 am of 3.3.2021 (Wednesday), in daily newspapers.

The deadline is extended to 4 pm of 27.3.2021 (Saturday) for the convenience of candidates.

For further information, people can contact 09-8604751 and 01-544583.

*Myanmar Press Council members selecting team
No (4) Wingabar Street, Bahan Township,
Yangon Region*

No payment for detainee's release; it's just rumour

GROUPS working in various ways to oppose the government are taking the youths to the streets and confronting the security forces and creating unrest in the country, according to a statement from the Myanmar Police Force.

Security forces in respective areas are focusing on minimizing civilian casualties and dispersing the crowds. Some protesters and vehicles that blocked the roads during the riots were detained and the detainees were subjected to background check and interrogated to identify whether he or she is the leader of the protests without being tortured in accordance with the procedures.

Based on the findings of the interrogation, only those leaders who were working

against the government and undermining the rule of law are being prosecuted. Most young people who are still studying and outsourcing employees are being released after signing the necessary confessions in order to protect their future and lives.

Although the government is doing so with compassion from all sides, some media are spreading rumours about how much each released person has to pay or how much to pay for a motorcycle or car.

In all cases of releasing the detainees, the news that money was paid was a rumour spread by the anti-government group, and that the media should stand up for the code of ethics and refrain from publishing one-sided misinformation.—MNA

Announcement for people not to join violent riots

THE anti-government rallies broke the law in some places of the country and also blocked the public roads with tires, concrete block, trees and made arson. They also attacked the security forces with elements like catapults and iron barbed wires, percussion lock firearm and air gun, and they arrested security forces and destroyed CCTVs and vehicles, according to the statement of the Myanmar Police Force.

According to the statement, the riots occurred in Sanchaung, Hlaing, Yan Kin, Tamway, Insein, Thakayta and Dagon Myothit (South) townships of Yangon Region, Chanayethazan, Pyigyidagun, Myingyan, Meiktila and PyinOoLwin of Mandalay Region,

Sagaing, Shwebo and Monwya of Sagaing Region, Magway, Salin and Taungdwingyi of Magway Region, Patheingyi, Myanaung and Wakema of Ayeyawady Region, Myeik and Dawei of Taninthayi Region, Hpakant of Kachin State, Hpa-an of Kayin State, Haka of Chin State yesterday and the security forces dispersed the protest crowds.

Although the government patiently waited and maintained peaceful protests to a certain extent, the current protests lead to riots in various ways.

The security forces used only crowd control weapons to keep the injuries to a minimum. Therefore, for security and safety, the public should not participate in the violence and keep awareness.—MNA



Peaceful protests turn to violent riots; Riotous protesters block public roads with tires, concrete blocks and iron barbed wires; Security forces use only crowd control weapons to keep the injuries to a minimum.



Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) Building of a Union based on democracy and federalism in practising genuine disciplined multiparty democracy in a full fairness manner
- (B) Emphasizing of restoration of eternal peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)
- (c) Continuous practising of the “principle” of peaceful co-existence among countries by holding up the independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy

2. Economic affairs

- (a) Further development of production based on agriculture and livestock breeding through modern techniques and all-round development of other

sectors of the economy as well

- (b) Stability of market economy and inviting international investments to develop the economy of entire ethnic people
- (c) Encouragement of local businesses to create employment opportunities to be able to produce many products of the State

3. Social affairs

- (a) For ensuring of dynamism of Union spirit which is genuine patriotic spirit
- (b) Following customs and traditions of all ethnic nationalities and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national characters
- (c) Enhancement of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Union Minister Dr Thet Khine Win meets department heads

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr Thet Khine Win held meeting with the relevant department heads yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union Minister re-explained the excerpts from the speech of State Administration Council Chairman and five future programmes of the SAC.

He discussed cooperation works among the officials of relevant departments, efforts of the ministry for healthcare workers and awards for postgraduate

degree holders. He also emphasized the civil services rules and regulations including ethics of medics and nurses, budget allocation for construction materials and medical equipment, effective use of budget and surplus budget for other sections.

He stressed the need to conduct without leaking the news that affect the State peace and tranquillity to foreign countries. He also highlighted the prioritized health sectors of the SAC.

He then instructed to op-

erate vaccination programmes in March and April as planned while the civil servants get injected this month and the healthcare workers of private sectors and others from religious sectors will be vaccinated next months and then people aged over 65 years from Stay at Home Townships and other townships.

He also discussed the medicines and medical equipment for hospitals, budget status, upgrade of hospital, X-Ray and

ICU, plans to conduct postgraduate/undergraduate courses by the Department of Human Resources for Health although they are currently suspend, the inspection of FDA for vaccines and real-time manners for the test of foodstuffs and medicines.

He also urged the Medical Research Department to keep doing research programmes, and emphasized the cooperation with National Health Laboratory for COVID-19 tests, registration and licence exten-

sion of traditional medicines by Department of Traditional Medicine, plans to hold outdoor sports events by the Department of Sports and Physical Education, the promotion of Myanmar’s martial arts and training for soccer in line with the COVID-19 health rules.

He also added the free healthcare services for the civil services and plans to solve the difficulties of government employees to be able to serve their duties peacefully.—MNA

MoSWRR discusses cooperative activities with ASEAN

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement held the coordination meeting for the cooperation with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

Union Minister Dr Thet Khine, Deputy Minister U Aung Tun Khaing, the Permanent Secretary, Directors-General and officials attended the meeting.

The respective departments discussed the participation of the Ministry as a focal point for ASEAN ministerial-level organizations under the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council (ASCC) and Myanmar’s hosting the 13th ASEAN Youth Ministers’ Meeting (13th AMMY) and the 12th ASEAN Youth Senior Officials Meeting (12th SOMY).

The Disaster Management

Department presented that the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management and related meetings and, ASEAN Disaster Management Committee meetings are hosted by the rotating chair and are usually attended by Union Ministers and officials. Myanmar has set up working groups to implement the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (2021-2025) and Myanmar is also co-chairing the Prevention, Response and Rehabilitation Working Group with other countries.

The meeting discussed the cooperation with ASEAN for the readmission of displaced persons in Rakhine State and the support to Myanmar in accordance with the agreements reached at the ASEAN Summits; implementing the recommendations of the 2019 Preliminary Needs Assessment Report by the members of the ASEAN Emergency Re-



Union Minister Dr Thet Khine chairs the MoSWRR coordination meeting on cooperation works with ASEAN yesterday.

sponse and Assessment Team; collaboration with AHA Centre for the Human Resource Development Project to provide humanitarian assistance to Myanmar; Negotiations to conduct a comprehensive study for the readmission process.

The Rehabilitation Department presented the volun-

tarily contribution to the Cambodia-based ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre, landmine awareness campaigns and humanitarian assistance to landmine victims.

The Union Minister said to continue the activities in accordance with the directives of the State Administration Coun-

cil, to present if it is necessary to reform the committees, to submit the necessary project proposal by departments, to give priority to research activities and to identify the activities of the ministry that should be involved in the development of Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA

Five future programmes of State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted to carry out tasks that should be done, including inspection of voting lists in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken for the prevention of current infectious COVID-19 with added momentum.
3. Efforts will be made to recover businesses that faced loss caused by COVID-19 in various ways as quickly as possible.
4. Emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible.
5. When missions will be accomplished in accord with provisions of the state of emergency, a free and fair multiparty democracy election will be held in accordance with the Constitution (2008), and further tasks will be undertaken to hand over State duty to the winning party meeting the standards of democracy.

FROM PAGE-2

| Sr | Ward/Village-tract | Poll station | Ballot papers Issued | Used | Missing ballot papers |
|----|--------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 3 | Phaungtaw | 3 | 800 | 700 | -100 |
| 4 | Twinywar | 1 | 1,200 | 1,154 | -46 |
| 5 | Twinywar | 4 | 1,050 | 998 | -52 |
| 6 | Shwenyaungphu | 2 | 800 | 600 | -200 |
| 7 | Shwenyaungphu | 6 | 1,050 | 1,000 | -50 |
| 8 | Zajantaung | 2 | 300 | 250 | -50 |
| 9 | Zajantaung | 3 | 300 | 250 | -50 |
| 10 | Zajantaung | 4 | 1,350 | 1,300 | -50 |
| 11 | Zajantaung | 5 | 600 | 550 | -50 |
| 12 | Zajantaung | 6 | 350 | 300 | -50 |
| 13 | Phayagyi | 1 | 400 | 340 | -60 |
| 14 | Phayagyi | 2 | 450 | 343 | -107 |
| 15 | Phayagyi | 3 | 500 | 467 | -33 |
| 16 | Gwaypinyoe | 1 | 300 | 235 | -65 |
| 17 | Salywar Kyeti | 4 | 250 | 200 | -50 |
| 18 | Kyutawwa | 3 | 600 | 500 | -100 |
| 19 | Gwayzee | 2 | 500 | 492 | -8 |
| 20 | Gwayzee | 3 | 300 | 250 | -50 |
| 21 | Ohnpin | 1 | 600 | 550 | -50 |
| 22 | Ohnpin | 4 | 600 | 569 | -31 |
| 23 | Ohnpin | 5 | 450 | 393 | -57 |
| 24 | Kantha | 2 | 550 | 500 | -50 |
| 25 | Kantha | 3 | 850 | 848 | -2 |
| 26 | Kantha | 5 | 300 | 250 | -50 |
| 27 | Kantha | 6 | 600 | 550 | -50 |
| 28 | Moenangone | 3 | 1,050 | 1,002 | -48 |
| 29 | Minlan | 4 | 450 | 400 | -50 |
| 30 | Thanakataw | 3 | 550 | 500 | -50 |
| 31 | Thanakataw | 4 | 550 | 548 | -2 |
| 32 | Kyogone | 2 | 750 | 700 | -50 |
| 33 | Wahyindote | 2 | 650 | 600 | -50 |
| 34 | Dahatkon | 2 | 700 | 650 | -50 |
| 35 | Dahatkon | 5 | 800 | 750 | -50 |
| 36 | Pinmyaing | 2 | 900 | 850 | -50 |
| 37 | Yintaw Ywama | 1 | 1,550 | 1,450 | -100 |
| 38 | Eikayitgone | 2 | 600 | 581 | -19 |
| 39 | Chaungmagyi | 1 | 950 | 915 | -35 |
| 40 | Chaungmagyi | 2 | 900 | 857 | -43 |
| 41 | Chaungmagyi | 3 | 900 | 857 | -43 |
| 42 | Chaungmagyi | 4 | 400 | 390 | -10 |
| 43 | Chaungmagyi | 5 | 500 | 400 | -100 |
| 44 | Chaungmagyi | 6 | 850 | 817 | -33 |
| 45 | Kyini | 1 | 1,350 | 1,150 | -200 |
| 46 | Thabyayyoe | 1 | 550 | 500 | -50 |
| 47 | Thabyayyoe | 2 | 900 | 878 | -22 |
| 48 | Nyaung Shwe | 2 | 1,950 | 1,900 | -50 |
| 49 | Shanpwe | 1 | 1,400 | 1,050 | -350 |
| 50 | Shanpwe | 3 | 1,700 | 1,350 | -350 |
| 51 | Myoma | 2 | 850 | 754 | -96 |
| 52 | Mandalay Tan | 1 | 950 | 915 | -35 |
| 53 | Shwe Pyi Yan Aung | 1 | 1,600 | 1,500 | -100 |
| 54 | Yar Gyi | 1 | 850 | 700 | -150 |

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|---|--------|--------|--------|
| 55 | Thabyaybin | 5 | 350 | 300 | -50 |
| 56 | Hta Yan Kar | 2 | 700 | 650 | -50 |
| 57 | Hta Yan Kar | 4 | 400 | 350 | -50 |
| 58 | Hta Yan Kar | 6 | 450 | 350 | -100 |
| 59 | Taw Twin Hla | 5 | 750 | 650 | -100 |
| 60 | Shan Su | 2 | 400 | 350 | -50 |
| 61 | Shan Su | 3 | 300 | 250 | -50 |
| 62 | Shan Su | 4 | 550 | 500 | -50 |
| 63 | Kangyi (north) | 4 | 450 | 400 | -50 |
| 64 | Kyi | 4 | 300 | 250 | -50 |
| 65 | Magyi Kone | 1 | 800 | 650 | -150 |
| 66 | Magyi Kone | 2 | 300 | 250 | -50 |
| 67 | Mae Tee | 1 | 550 | 500 | -50 |
| 68 | Mae Tee | 2 | 600 | 500 | -100 |
| 69 | Mae Tee | 3 | 250 | 200 | -50 |
| 70 | Myinbat | 1 | 1,450 | 1,414 | -36 |
| 71 | Myothit | 2 | 1,150 | 1,000 | -150 |
| 72 | Myothit | 3 | 1,200 | 1,100 | -100 |
| 73 | Shwe Pyi Yan Lone | 2 | 1,350 | 1,300 | -50 |
| 74 | Shwe Pyi Yan Naing | 1 | 1,500 | 1,498 | -2 |
| 75 | Sal Ywar Lat Pan Tine | 1 | 750 | 733 | -17 |
| 76 | Sal Ywar Lat Pan Tine | 2 | 550 | 450 | -100 |
| 77 | Sal Ywar Lat Pan Tine | 3 | 450 | 390 | -60 |
| 78 | San Taw | 1 | 800 | 750 | -50 |
| 79 | San Taw | 4 | 800 | 750 | -50 |
| 80 | Taunglal | 2 | 500 | 475 | -25 |
| 81 | Taunglal | 3 | 400 | 350 | -50 |
| 82 | Taunglal | 5 | 550 | 500 | -50 |
| 83 | Taunglal | 6 | 750 | 600 | -150 |
| 84 | Myintel | 2 | 1,550 | 1,500 | -50 |
| 85 | Kantel | 2 | 1,500 | 1,450 | -50 |
| 86 | Nyaungone (south) | 2 | 1,350 | 1,250 | -100 |
| 87 | Gal Gyi | 1 | 900 | 850 | -50 |
| 88 | Gal Gyi | 2 | 700 | 650 | -50 |
| 89 | Gal Gyi | 3 | 700 | 650 | -50 |
| 90 | Bawdi Kone | 3 | 1,200 | 1,000 | -200 |
| 91 | Pay Pin Shay | 1 | 1,050 | 1,001 | -49 |
| 92 | Pay Pin Shay | 2 | 1,100 | 1,050 | -50 |
| 93 | Pay Pin Shay | 3 | 900 | 859 | -41 |
| 94 | Pay Pin Shay | 4 | 550 | 536 | -14 |
| 95 | Tha Phan Chaung | 4 | 250 | 200 | -50 |
| 96 | Tha Phan Chaung | 5 | 800 | 750 | -50 |
| 97 | Tha Phan Chaung | 6 | 500 | 450 | -50 |
| 98 | Sate Cho | 5 | 800 | 750 | -50 |
| 99 | State Cho | 4 | 550 | 548 | -2 |
| 100 | Sate Cho | 5 | 750 | 700 | -50 |
| 101 | Sabalkon | 2 | 950 | 800 | -150 |
| 102 | Yanaung | 2 | 1,000 | 960 | -40 |
| 103 | Yanaung | 3 | 600 | 590 | -10 |
| 104 | Yanaung | 4 | 400 | 359 | -41 |
| 105 | Yanaung | 6 | 400 | 343 | -58 |
| 106 | Nyaungone (north) | 4 | 450 | 300 | -150 |
| Total | | | 80,000 | 72,977 | -7,023 |

Union Election Commission

Save our wetlands

Scientists have shown how droughts are threatening the health of wetlands globally. Scientists highlight the many physical and chemical changes occurring during droughts that lead to severe, and sometimes irreversible, drying of wetland soils.

With the remarkable ecological diversity and species richness, our country's coastal wetlands provide multiple ecosystem services such as fish breeding grounds, protection against water-related disaster risk, carbon absorption, etc.

Meanwhile, our inland wetlands such as floodplains, rivers, lakes and swamps, function like sponges, absorbing and storing excess rainfall and reducing flood surges. During dry seasons in arid regions, wetlands provide refuges for wildlife and supply water for communities and stock.

Wetlands maintain food webs for living creatures, and provide aquatic products as livelihood benefits for millions of Myanmar people.

In addition, the coastal wetlands also have cultural, spiritual and/or historical values associated with people.

Wetlands such as peatlands and marshes, as well as coastal and marine areas like estuaries, lagoons, mangroves and coral reefs, are essential to regulating the global climate along with forests and oceans.

Nowadays, the existence of coastal wetlands is being threatened by many issues, ranging from over-exploitation of biological resources to negative impacts of climate change.

Now is the time to understand conservation, effective management and sustainable use as they are primary objective of preserving the biological resources in our country.

It is crucial to clearly understand the status and threats of the areas for sustainable management of the coastal wetlands.

Coastal and marine wetlands, including salt marshes, mangroves and sea grass beds are similarly critical carbon storage grounds.

Wetland loss turns a natural carbon sink into a source of emissions that adds to global warming.

Coastal wetlands, including mangroves and coral reefs, absorb the shock and reduce the impact of storm surges and tsunamis on coastal communities.

The world has already understand the wetlands' relationship to climate change. We must start now by ending the destruction and degradation of wetlands and restoring lost ones.

Communities, businesses and governmental departments concerned need to work together to protect these amazing ecosystems which, in turn, will help us adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Where there is a will, there is a way. With wetlands, we have a way to save our planet.

Communities, businesses and governmental departments concerned need to work together to protect these amazing ecosystems which, in turn, will help us adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Infodemic' of COVID-19 disinformation bad for Ukrainians health, study for UN finds

Ukrainians' health could be damaged by an ongoing "infodemic" of false and misleading information about the novel coronavirus pandemic, research carried out for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has found.

From March to November 2020, researchers tracked more than 30 million social media messages using the advanced social media monitoring and analytics platform SemanticForce. The study identified over 250,000 messages with disinformation narratives related to COVID-19 in Ukrainian online media, forums, blogs, messenger and social networks. The study found that false narratives decrease people's willingness to comply with public health guidance (wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, etc.) and make them less likely to recommend vaccination to vulnerable people in their social circle. Moreover, an uncontrolled infodemic had the potential to significantly increase exposure to the COVID-19 disease, the study concluded.

The false narratives identified included fake information related to wearing masks, con-

spiracy theories about the origin and even existence of the novel coronavirus and COVID-19 disease, and false rumours about the effectiveness of coronavirus testing and vaccines.

UNDP Resident Representative in Ukraine Dafina Gercheva said the study showed the infodemic is a real threat to public health in Ukraine, and that it was important for the government to join efforts with non-government organizations, fact-checkers and social media influencers to fight it.

"Conspiracy theories, rumours and malicious disinformation can quickly go viral on social media, especially when there is a low level of public trust in state institutions," Gercheva said.

"Our study found that by combining the efforts of government, the media, influencers, and other trusted sources, the spread of reliable information can be promoted, and the danger of disinformation about COVID-19 countered."

In combination with the social media monitoring, the study quizzed 1,000 Ukrainians in a survey of the public's views of the pandemic. Among the survey's findings were that around a third of Ukrainians believe their chances of contracting the novel

coronavirus are low. The public's top three preferred information sources are social media (42 per cent), TV (26 per cent), and doctors and medics (24 per cent). Despite that, Ukrainians said the sources they trust the most are personal doctors and medics (39 per cent) and doctors and healthcare professionals (via media) (29 per cent), while only 27 per cent trust social media as a source of reliable information.

UNICEF Representative in Ukraine Lotta Sylwander underlined that the risks of misinformation have never been higher.

"The infodemic threatens to augment vaccine hesitancy, which in turn could complicate the introduction of new vaccines and erode public trust in the healthcare system," Sylwander said.

"As the pandemic continues to create uncertainty and anxiety, there is an urgent need for stronger action and a coordinated approach to address fake news and disinformation," she added. "Without the appropriate trust and correct information, immunization campaigns will not meet their targets, and the virus will continue to thrive."

The study offered a range of recommendations for government, media and social media



An elderly woman wearing a face mask to protect against the coronavirus disease sells flowers in the centre of the Ukrainian capital of Kiev on a hot summer day on July 21, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

platforms on how to fight the COVID-19 infodemic. The government was recommended to set up a centralized COVID-19 Command Centre to coordinate key groups (the government, non-governmental organizations, fact-checking organizations, media, influencers). To counter the

high level of distrust in the government, it should systematically engage influencers of various categories to promote public health messaging, the study said.

Other recommendations include leveraging humour to increase the spread of important public health information,

supporting fact-checking organizations with grants, media collaborations and special sections on web sites, and encouraging social media to customize their algorithms to tag disinformation and reduce its occurrence in social media users' news feeds.

SOURCE: UN News

CO2 pollution bounces back, climate goals at risk: IEA

Global CO2 emissions have returned to pre-pandemic levels and then some, threatening to put climate treaty targets for capping global warming out of reach, the International Energy Agency said Tuesday.

Energy-related emissions were two per cent higher in December 2020 than in the same month a year earlier, driven by economic recovery and a lack of clean energy policies, the IEA said in a report.

"The rebound in global carbon emissions toward the end of last year is a stark warning that not enough is being done to accelerate clean energy transitions worldwide," IEA executive director Fatih Birol said in a statement.

"If governments don't move quickly with the right energy policies, this could put at risk the world's historic opportunity to make 2019 the definitive peak in



More than half of that decline in CO2 emissions in 2020 was due to less use of fuel for road transport, shipping and aviation. PHOTO: ANP/AFP

global emissions."

A year ago, the intergovernmental agency called on governments to put clean energy at the heart of economic stimulus plans, but the appeal appears to have fallen on deaf ears for the most part.

halt the virus' spread.

China -- which accounts for more than a quarter of global CO2 output -- was the only major economy to grow in 2020.

Other countries are also now seeing emissions climb above pre-Covid crisis levels, the report found. In India, they rose above 2019 levels from September as economic activity increased and Covid restrictions relaxed.

The rebound of road transport in Brazil from May drove a recovery in oil demand, while increases in gas demand toward the end of 2020 pushed emissions above 2019 levels in the final quarter.

US emissions fell by 10 per cent in 2020, but by December were approaching levels from the year before.

Decoupling growth and emissions

"If current expectations for a global economic rebound this

year are confirmed -- and in the absence of major policy changes in the world's largest economies -- global emissions are likely to increase in 2021," Birol said.

A sharp surge in economic activity -- and the pollution that comes with it -- is more the norm than the exception after an economic downturn. Annual GDP growth and CO2 emissions, for example, both spiked after the Great Recession of 2008.

But as pressure builds to tackle the climate crisis, there are encouraging signs that major emitters are taking steps to decouple economic growth from planet-warming carbon emissions, Birol noted.

China's surprise commitment to become carbon neutral by 2060, the Biden administration's ambitious climate agenda along with the US reentry into the Paris Agreement, and the European

Union's Green New Deal all point in the right direction, he said.

"India's stunning success with renewables could transform its energy future," he added.

Global emissions plunged by almost two billion tonnes in 2020, the largest absolute decline in history.

More than half of that decline was due to lower use of fuel for road transport and aviation.

The 2015 Paris Agreement enjoins nations to cap the rise in global temperatures "well below" two degrees Celsius compared with preindustrial levels, and to strive for a ceiling of 1.5C if possible.

Earth's surface is already 1.1C warmer on average, enough to increase the frequency and intensity of deadly heatwaves, droughts and superstorms made more destructive by rising seas.

SOURCE: AFP

Objectives of 76th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

FOR the Tatmadaw to join hands with the entire nation to safeguard democracy, which is the aspiration of all the nationalities of the country, from deviating from its path, in accord with the basic principles of the Constitution, while observing Our Three Main National Causes, which is the national policy;

To protect the people from all dangers including natural disasters at any time and in any situation and to provide all-round assistance for ensuring social security of the people;

To restore eternal peace based on NCA, without deviating from Our Three Main National Causes, as the cessation of armed conflicts is the principal requirement in realizing democracy;

To build a strong and compact Standard Army, which has the combat prowess and combat power; to effectively safeguard the State peace and stability and sovereignty.

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Heads of Service Organizations confirmed

The following persons are confirmed as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names after the one-year probational period.

| Name | Appointment |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Professor Dr Hla Win Myint | Rector University of Medicine (Taunggyi) Department of Human Resources for Health Ministry of Health and Sports |
| 2. Professor Dr Aye Aye Khin | Rector University of Medical Technology Department of Human Resources for Health Ministry of Health and Sports |



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 3 March 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 3 March 2021: Region and isolated in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Naypyitaw, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Rakhine State and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

Agree to disagreement

By Ko Yay Chan

Most government employees have spent their time in employment until they reach the retirement age of 60. They also have different expressions like pride, happiness, and joy while serving the country and people's responsibilities and promoting their respective fields. They might face their ups and downs as well.

Social status of government staff

The government staff have unforgettable happenings throughout their lives, like their efforts in their working fields and other challenges to change their lives step by step. They are such a force for achievements. They are also their social status. If I say from my political point of view, the staff remain normal no matter how the governance system changes. That is due to the fact that the civil servants are not associated with the political parties.

Suppose they are a member associated with party politics. In that case, they might face some actions like they have to sacrifice their duties or are retired or suspended from their duties. I also heard such cases in the 1988 uprising. Now, Myanmar has a change in political culture. Those who do not accept the changes stage a strike. Now, the protest has been occurring for more than four weeks. Some demonstrators protest in line with the

disciplines, but some without them.

All you have noticed today's protest is different from the old ones. Some of the political activists from local and foreign instruct the strategies to destroy the government's mechanism and community peace and tranquillity online. They use the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), which urges the staff not to go to their work. And another is the "Than Bone Tee" (banging tin materials for noise barrage) campaign. Therefore, those who want democracy can think about whether such activities conform to democratic norms.

Democracy also means freedom of expression. Some government servants join the protests with their own desires or feelings, and we can understand their activities. However, it can be supposed that they are involved in politics. We do not want to blame the freedom of a person. But there are only a few numbers of government staff who have taken to the street to protest. Some government staff do not participate in the protests, and some keep doing their work as usual.

But the slang "Don't go of- fice" is such a threat or force for the government staff who serve public services, and they should not do such things.

Urging healthcare workers not to do their duties is such a sorrowful manner. All

walks of life, especially families with ordinary incomes and the grassroots, only rely on public hospitals.

Healthcare services

Committing incitement intentionally to the healthcare workers makes more hardships for the poor people. Some of the staff protesting on the streets are doing so due to their emotions. Most of them are young. Some of them do so as they could not help denying and, they just follow others. It affects the old, young and well-experienced government staff. The young government employees commit incitement or use force or threaten the senior staff are sorrowful manners.

Civil services are the organizations to serve and fulfil the needs of the people. Some organizations serve people's needs daily no matter what the country faces different situations, for examples, hospitals, fire brigade, security and news agencies. If these operations fail, the people are the first ones to suffer. Therefore, although the government staff take part in the protest, it is needed not to affect people's interests.

Currently, some unscrupulous persons are committing negative manners making the government servants dare not enter their worksites, not to open the industries. It can be said these cases occur due to the destructive political ele-

We should appreciate the efforts of government servants serving their duties for the people despite the incitements, riots, pressures and difficulties during this period. Those far away from their workplace are also requested to return to their duties in the interests of the country and people, without prioritizing their personal feelings.

ments rather than the wishes of government staff. These doings become crimes, according to the Civil Service Personnel Law and Rules.

According to the democracy system, everybody has rights -- the freedom of expression and freedom of speech. But, they should not affect others. One must allow others for argument freely and must not prevent or break the rights of others. That is the principle of 'Agree to disagreement'. However, some people violate the law by committing incitement online or riots to the government staff and those who want to stay peacefully. They can protest in line with the disciplines according to the democratic system. But if they violate the disciplines, democracy can abolish.

We should appreciate the efforts of government servants serving their duties for the peo-

ple despite the incitements, riots, pressures and difficulties during this period. Those far away from their workplace are also requested to return to their duties in the interests of the country and people, without prioritizing their personal feelings.

It is now seen that arrangements are underway to take serious action against those who threaten or break others' rights among the civil service personnel or the public. Therefore, such forces and threats do not conform to the law and go against their own rights and freedoms.

Therefore, if you love democracy, you should appreciate freedom of expression. It needs not to affect the desires and lives of other people. It also should be a democracy that brings interests and prosperities for the country and people.

Translated

Democracy also means freedom of expression. Some government servants join the protests with their own desires or feelings, and we can understand their activities. However, it can be supposed that they are involved in politics. We do not want to blame the freedom of a person.

Respect and abide by the rules and professional ethics

By Ko Tun Khin

“I go to work. I serve my country, not representing any government. I go to work for I don’t have hundreds of thousands of kyats in my bank account. I go to work, for I am not a business owner. I go to work for I have neither relatives’ background nor financial support. I go to work to support my parents and my family. I go to work with the duty and responsibilities to serve the country following the country’s rules and regulations. I respect your individual choice and ideas, and I am proud of you.” I read this post written by a civil servant on social media recently.

I have been thinking about the role of the civil service personnel after reading this post. Do you also believe you should go to work as a public servant? You do not need to answer, however. There will be different emotions and beliefs.

However, civil service personnel assigned to a civil

to be the people-centred and ethical civil service personnel who serve the people, to support the development of the State are the points each and every civil servant should be aware of.

The civil service personnel have to be respectful and loyal to the State and follow the State Constitution and existing laws. They have to work in the interest of the State and its citizens. They have to maintain the State-owned assets and funds and not to misuse or abuse them. They have to perform the duty and responsibilities assigned completely. They have to abide by the rules and regulation of the staff as well as the workplace regulations, orders and instructions of the respective departments. They have to be free from party politics. They have to attend the training courses conducted by the Civil Service Board. They have to avoid manners lack of decency and to avoid abusing

Civil service personnel assigned to a civil service organization of the State are the people connecting the government to the public.

service organization of the State are the people connecting the government to the public. In implementing the government’s duties and responsibilities, it is needed to cooperate with loyalty dutifully and appropriately with the system.

For a civil servant, there are codes of ethics and rules to follow, and to improve existing services for the public,

the authority for personal gain and bribery. They all need to respect the public. All these things are the duties of civil service personnel.

Since the civil service personnel are respected as honest and ethical persons, their attitude and belief must be genuine. It is a rare opportunity to be a public servant in Myanmar as the number of civil servants is only about

The civil service personnel have to be respectful and loyal to the State and follow the State Constitution and existing laws. They have to work in the interest of the State and its citizens. They have to maintain the State-owned assets and funds and not to misuse or abuse them.

1.4 per cent of the country’s population.

Civil service personnel’s role is crucial to the country, as the heart, liver, and lungs are for the human body. Although the body needs to sleep, those essential parts of the body do not rest for a moment. While a person is sleeping, the heart is beating to show that it is alive. When those critical parts of the body could not work for some reason, the person will not be healthy anymore, and when the heart stops beating, the body will die as well.

Therefore, the civil service personnel, the crucial parts of the State, must perform the duty to function the State’s machinery by following the civil service laws, rules, and regulations to develop the country.

At present, people who do not want the nation’s development are targeting public servants with incitement to destroy the morale of the civil service personnel by taking advantage of the country’s current situation. Considering others who are different from them as the enemy, they take photos of the public servants and share them on social me-

dia to humiliate and threaten.

The civil service personnel have to overcome to fail their plan with zealous determination and unwavering faith. We have to see those challenges and difficulties as the test in our life story, and we have to write our own history with the value, respect and dedication to work.

Let me conclude this

article with the urge to participate, as the power of civil service personnel, to the union of our nation from our workplaces and environment since the development of the State is directly proportional to the ethical and efficient public servants as well as there is no difference between the State and the civil service personnel.

Translated.

Therefore, the civil service personnel, the crucial parts of the State, must perform the duty to function the State’s machinery by following the civil service laws, rules, and regulations to develop the country.

Malika express vessels resume Sittway-Rathedaung-Buthidaung route



On 2 March, the express vessels operated the Sittway-Rathedaung-Buthidaung route beginning from 7 am with 13 passengers. **PHOTO: HLA KYAW (IPRD)**

MALIKA Express vessels suspended beginning from 22 August 2020 due to the pandemic resumed Sittway-Rathedaung-Buthidaung route regularly starting from March.

On 2 March, the express vessels operated the Sittway-Rathedaung-Buthidaung

route beginning from 7 am with 13 passengers. The ships reached the jetties in Buthidaung Township at noon. On 3 March, the vessels run the same course on the same schedules with 45 passengers. The Township Health Department conducted medical examinations

on the passengers as per the COVID-19 guidelines. The express vessels operating on Buthidaung-Rathedaung-Sittway routes were suspended on account of COVID-19. Now, the ships are running, as usual, effective 2 March. —Hla Kyaw (IPRD)/GNLM

Fresh, ripe tamarind sells at regular price in harvest season

ACCORDING to the tamarind growers, the local people are selling the fresh, ripe tamarind at regular price in the harvest season in Mese township in Kayah State.

The tamarind trees grow mostly in tropical regions. They can be harvested only once a

year in summer. Myanmar people use tamarind in their daily cuisines besides using them in producing traditional medicines. The tamarind is fully grown in March, and it earns the family an extra income.

“Last year, the tamarind with seeds was sold for K700



Last year, the tamarind with seeds was sold for K700 per kilo to Thailand. **PHOTO: WIT YEE (IPRD)**

per kilo to Thailand. Currently, the bilateral trade routes are closed temporarily, and the tamarinds are sent only to Loikaw town. The tamarinds with seeds are sold for K500 per viss, while the tamarinds without seeds are sold for K3,000 per viss. But in this harvest season, the tamarinds are sold only at the regular price,” said a tamarind seller.

Some tamarinds produced in the regions are thick in the skin with small seeds, while some are thin in the skin with larger grains. Myanmar tamarinds are exported regularly to Bangladesh and India every year. Tamarind trees are mostly found in the central regions of Myanmar — Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway. Tamarind is also a lucrative export item. —Wit Yee (IPRD)/GNLM

Fewer passengers cause hardship to fruit growers in Chin State

DURING the pandemic period, suspension of passenger buses causes hardship to the growers of oranges and other fruits in Chin State. The profitability in selling their products depends much upon the number of passengers.

“The people from Sozan village in Tiddim township are growing oranges and other fruits on a manageable scale. The fruits sold well to the tourists last year. However, the local growers are now facing difficulty this year. Despite abundant yield in this season, there were fewer tourists during the pandemic period,” said Chin Mountain oranges and other crops’ growers.

“Last year, the roads were closed in Kale and Tiddim town because of COVID-19 starting from the end of March. Till now, the passenger buses are suspended. So, only one or two trucks

loaded with cargo are running daily. The oranges are not selling well like in previous months. The regular customers are also demanding less number of oranges,” said U Paung Chan Mon, a local farmer from Sozan village on Kale-Tiddim Road.

He added that last year growers sold a 10-piece bag of oranges for K3,000 and earned around K70,000 daily. Now, one bag of oranges is sold for K1,500 in the COVID-19 period, and it is hard to make K10,000 per day. The seasonal fruits from Sozan and other villages are sold mainly to the tourists and sent to Kale and Tamu towns.

Last year, the oranges were sold to the tourists visiting the heart-shaped Reed Lake on the India-Myanmar border and the Chin ethnic visitors. — Chindwinthar/GNLM



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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “**Letter to the Editor**” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Central Bank of Myanmar holds coordination meeting

THE Central Bank of Myanmar held the coordination meeting with Yangon Branch and Mandalay Branch yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was attended by Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Than Nyein, Vice-Governors U Win Thaw and Daw Than Than Swe, Directors-General and Deputy Director-General.

At the meeting, the Governor said the instructions of the Chairman of the State Administration Council are distributed to the relevant departments.

He said it is important to act in good faith within the rules to ensure that the work of all departments is not interrupted while the State is being normalized and to successfully implement the State policies. He added it is important for the staff to be free from party politics and to co-



CBM Governor U Than Nyein presides over the coordination meeting from the officials with the Yangon and Mandalay branches on 3 March 2021.

operate with the relevant departments.

The Central Bank of Myanmar has been making efforts to stabilize the financial system and strengthen efficient and effective payment and clearing systems as the development of a secure

and efficient national payment system plays an important role in Myanmar's financial and economic system.

The National Payment System Strategy (2020-2025) has been enacted to support the development of payment

systems and the payment system law has been drafted. The Inter-Bank Payment System (CBM-NET) System Second Phase and Automated Clearing System (ACH) have been implemented to facilitate payments and clearing systems for

large-scale payments, allowing digital payment enhancement services.

The Governor said Myanmar is cooperating with the ASEAN member countries for the development of payment system and at present, the Central Bank of Myanmar

has instructed banks to take temporary action to improve the cash management of banks and non-bank financial institutions.

The Vice-Governors and officials also discussed matters related to their responsibilities.—MNA

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1134S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1134S/N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-3-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (0YA14S1NC)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (0YA14S1NC)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-3-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:
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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY. NO. (205N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY. NO. (205N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-3-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMIT** 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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V LIBRA HONOR

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V LIBRA HONOR VOY. NO. (2101)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-3-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT-5** 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: **2301928**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:
**M/S ELDER TRIUMPHANT SHIPPING LINES
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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V FAST

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V FAST VOY. NO. (2006681)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-3-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **IBTT** 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: **2301928**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:
M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Russia warns West after 'unacceptable' sanctions

MOSCOW hit back at Western countries Wednesday for sanctioning senior Russian officials over the poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, warning its foes "not to play with fire".

The Kremlin accused Washington and Brussels of interference after the US and the EU introduced fresh penalties Tuesday over Navalny, who was jailed last month when he returned from Germany where he was recovering from exposure to a nerve agent.

The sanctions further erode ties between Moscow and the West since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

"We believe such measures are absolutely unacceptable because they significantly damage already bad relations" with Washington and Brussels, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Wednesday.



The sanctions further erode ties between Moscow and the West since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. PHOTO: AFP

He said the new sanctions amounted to "interference" in Russia's domestic affairs and vowed to take action in response, without specifying measures.

His comments echoed for-

eign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova who warned the West earlier "not to play with fire" and said Russia would respond according to "the principle of reciprocity".

"We will continue to systematically and resolutely defend our national interests and rebuff aggression," she said in a statement published late Tuesday. —AFP ■

Migrants protest at US-Mexico crossing, pleading for asylum



Migrants trying to get into the United States protested at the border with Mexico, begging to be allowed to start the asylum process. PHOTO: AFP

MIGRANTS from central America, Cuba, Haiti and Mexico blocked two lanes of the US-Mexico border crossing in

Tijuana, begging President Joe Biden's administration to allow them to apply for asylum in the United States.

Biden has moved to dismantle some of the harshest immigration policies of his predecessor Donald Trump, but the process has been slow and only those who have already applied for asylum are being considered for immediate entry.

Many of those protesting on Tuesday did not meet that condition, but told AFP they still wanted to make their case.

"We ask you with all our heart that you help us, that we be heard," Mexican national

Maria Guadalupe Torres said.

Along with around one hundred others, Torres knelt about 20 metres (65 feet) from the entrance to the San Ysidro crossing, where US border agents stood guard.

As if praying, she pleaded: "We want an answer from your president, we want someone to come out and give us an answer."

Under Trump's "Remain in Mexico" program, tens of thousands of non-mexican asylum seekers -- mostly from Central America -- were sent back over the border pending the outcome of their applications. —AFP ■

Syria camp for IS relatives records 31 murders this year

AT least 31 killings have rocked a camp holding Islamic State group relatives in Syria since early January, a Kurdish official said Wednesday, with aid groups warning of a "nightmare".

It was the latest evidence of deteriorating security at Al-Hol camp in the Kurdish-run northeast, where Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) had to temporarily suspend operations this week after the killing of one of its team members.

"Since the start of 2021, 31 people have been killed -- six of whom were murdered with a sharp object, while the rest were shot dead," said camp official

Jaber Sheikh Mustafa.

The toll has more than doubled since February 8 when it stood at 14, according to Kurdish authorities.

"We believe that IS sleeper cells are behind these murders" that especially target Iraqi residents of the camp, Mustafa told AFP. But a humanitarian source said recently that tribal score-settling between residents could also be to blame for some murders.

Al-Hol holds almost 62,000 people, mostly women and children, including Syrians, Iraqis and thousands from Europe and Asia accused of family ties with IS fighters. —AFP ■



Children and their mothers make up the great majority of the nearly 62,000 suspected relatives of Islamic State group fighters interned at Syria's Al-Hol camp, where authorities say at least 31 people have been murdered since early January. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australian attorney general denies rape allegation

AUSTRALIA'S attorney general outed himself as the unnamed cabinet minister accused of raping a 16-year-old girl, denying the decades-old allegation Wednesday and seeking to draw a line under a crisis consuming the country's conservative government.

After a speculation-filled week that has roiled Australian politics, 50-year-old Christian Porter -- the government's top lawyer and a former state prosecutor -- tearfully denied wrongdoing, saying "what is being alleged did not happen".

He stands accused of raping a fellow student in 1988 while they attended a debating competition at the University of Sydney. —AFP ■

One dead in rocket attack on Iraq base hosting US troops

AT least 10 rockets slammed into a military base in western Iraq hosting US-led coalition troops on Wednesday, security sources said, leaving one civilian contractor dead.

The attack on the sprawling Ain al-Assad base in Iraq's western desert comes after several weeks of escalating US-Iran tensions on Iraqi soil.

It also comes just two days before the first-ever papal visit to the country by Pope Francis, who said he would still make the visit so as not to "disappoint" the Iraqi people.

Ain al-Assad hosts both Iraqi forces and US-led coalition troops helping fight the Islamic State group, as well as the unmanned drones the coalition uses to surveil jihadist sleeper cells. Coalition spokesman Colonel Wayne Marotto confirmed that 10 rockets hit the base at 7:20 am (0420 GMT) while Iraqi security forces said they had found the platform from which 10 "Grad-type rockets" hit the Ain al-Assad base. Western security sources told AFP the rockets were Iranian-made Arash models, which are 122mm artillery rockets and heavier than those seen in similar attacks. —AFP ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

New law allows first UK minister to take maternity leave

THE British government's most senior legal adviser on Tuesday became the first Cabinet minister to go on maternity leave, following a change in the law.

THE Attorney General for England and Wales, Suella Braverman, said she was "excited about making a little bit of history" to become the first "minister on leave", calling it "a landmark moment for the UK government".

BRAVERMAN will be replaced during her absence by one of her deputies, solicitor general Michael Ellis, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office announced.

"THE Prime Minister gives the Attorney General his very best wishes for her maternity leave and looks forward to welcoming her back in the autumn," Downing Street said in a statement. — AFP ■

Poland falls foul of EU court for judicial reform

THE EU Court of Justice on Tuesday found Poland's judicial reform "liable to infringe EU law" by preventing judges turned down for supreme court posts from having the decisions reviewed.

THE verdict, handed down by the EU court's Grand Chamber of 15 judges that hears cases against member states, adds to previous rulings against Poland for changes over the past six years to its judicial system, seen by critics - and the European Commission - as undermining judges' independence.

IT states that "guarantees of independence and impartiality required under EU law presuppose the existence of rules governing the appointment of judges".

POLAND'S supreme court referred the case to the EU court to settle a question of law over how to proceed with challenges lodged by five judges who were rejected for supreme court seats by the National Council of the Judiciary (KRS in its Polish initials) in 2018. —AFP ■

Macron admits France murdered Algerian independence figure

PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron has admitted for the first time that French soldiers murdered a top Algerian independence figure then covered up his death in the latest acknowledgment by Paris of its colonial-era crimes.

Macron met four of the grandchildren of Ali Boumendjel and admitted "in the name of France" that the lawyer had been detained, tortured and killed in Algiers on March 23, 1957, his office said Tuesday.

French authorities had previously claimed that he had committed suicide while in detention, a lie that his widow and other family members had campaigned for years to see over-



Malika Boumendjel, widow of Algerian lawyer Ali Boumendjel gives an interview at her home in Puteaux, on her husband's death during his 43 days detention by the French army on March 23, 1957. PHOTO: AFP

turned.

"Looking our history in the face, acknowledging the truth,

will not enable us to heal all of the still open wounds, but it will help to create a path for the fu-

ture," the statement from Macron's office said. As the first French president to be born in the post-colonial era, Macron has made several unprecedented steps to face up to France's brutal fight to retain control of its north African colony, which won independence in 1962.

In 2018, he admitted that France had created a "system" that facilitated torture during the war and acknowledged that French mathematician Maurice Audin, a Communist pro-independence activist, was also murdered in Algiers. In July last year, he tasked French historian Benjamin Stora with assessing how France has dealt with its colonial legacy. —AFP ■

Explosive goes off near COVID-19 test centre in Netherlands

AN explosion occurred Wednesday near a COVID-19 test centre in the Netherlands, shattering windows but causing no apparent injuries, police said.

"Near the local health service's testing centre in Bovenkarspel, an explosive went off at 6:55 am. Police are investigating. The perimeter has been sealed off," the police said in a statement.

A bomb squad was sent to determine whether any ex-

plosive material remained at the scene, public television network NOS reported.

In January a COVID testing centre was set on fire in the Dutch village of Urk as protests broke out over the start of an overnight curfew in the Netherlands introduced as part of measures intended to rein in the virus.

The Netherlands suffered several nights of rioting, the most violent the country has seen in decades. —AFP ■



The scene of the blast in The Netherlands. PHOTO: AFP

Italy eyes more school closures as UK variant runs riot



All schools in the highest risk regions will switch to distance learning under new rules to come into effect from Saturday, whereas previously only secondary schools in so-called red zones were shuttered. PHOTO: AFP

ITALY'S new government ordered more school closures Tuesday after data showed the majority of coronavirus cases to be of the more contagious British variant.

All schools in the highest

risk regions will switch to distance learning under new rules to come into effect from Saturday, whereas previously only secondary schools in so-called red zones were shuttered.

Regional authorities will

also have new discretion to suspend face-to-face teaching in areas within lower risk orange and yellow regions where the coronavirus situation is particularly bad, according to a decree lasting until April 6.

New data from the national ISS health institute revealed that 54% of coronavirus cases in Italy were now of the so-called British variant, which is considered more contagious.

"The British variant has a particular ability to penetrate the younger generation," Health Minister Roberto Speranza told a press conference.

"This has led us to make a choice, which is that school of all levels in red zones will be distance learning."

Under the latest classification that came into force Monday, only two of Italy's 20 regions were red: Basilicata and Molise in the south. Lombardy, which comprises the city of Milan, Marche and Piedmont are orange.

When he took over last month, new Prime Minister Mario Draghi promised to use "all means" to deal with the pandemic which has claimed almost 100,000 lives in Italy and devastated the economy. —AFP ■

SUFC face strong teams in ACL group stages

SHAN United FC, back-to-back Champions of the Myanmar National League 2020 season is facing tough teams in the Preliminary Stage of the 2021 Asian Champions League (ACL 2021), which is being organized by Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

In the Preliminary Stage, Shan United will play an away match against Australian Melbourne City FC on 7 April. Next, in the Play-Off Stage, Shan United will face Japanese club Cerezo Osaka FC on 14 April.

Only those who win both matches will advance to the ACL 2021 Group Stage.

Reaching the group stage, Shan United will face Chinese club Shandong Luneng FC, Thai club Port FC, and Hong Kong club Kitchee SC in Group J of the tournament. The ACL 2021 group stage matches will

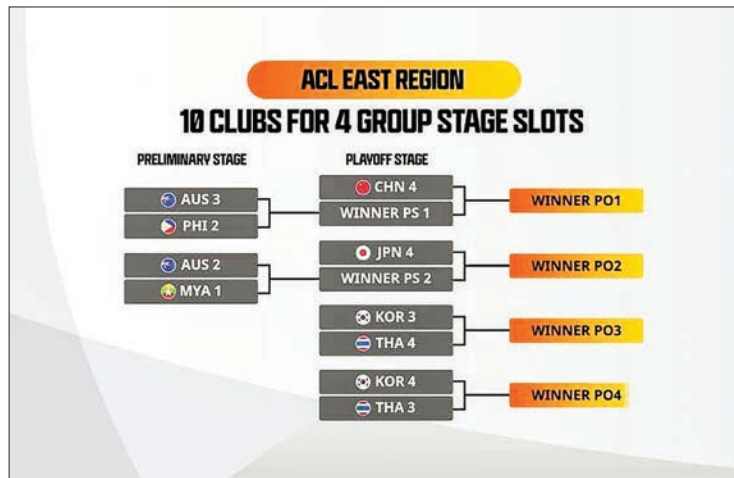


PHOTO: AFC

be held from 21 April to 7 May, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic condition, all Asian Champions League (ACL) and AFC Cup group matches will be played in a single country (centralized venues) designated by the country or the representing club or Asian Football Confederation.

Due to the lack of a home-

away system, the ACL group stage is limited to the Double Round-robin system and AFC authorities are arranging the tourney in a single round-robin system. Fans will be notified when the venue and country are announced by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), according to the football officials. —GNLM ■

Colombia to allow 30% attendance of Copa America



The Copa America due to kick off in June 2020 in Argentina and Colombia was postponed by a year to 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO: AFP

BOGOTA — Colombia said Wednesday it would open its stadiums to the public for the 2021 Copa America it will co-host with Argentina, with a 30-percent maximum attendance due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“A Copa America without an audience would make no sense,” Sports Minister Ernesto Lucena told Caracol Radio.

“We are already working on the sanitary protocol to have a capacity of about 30 per cent,” he added. That number may be upped if Colombia’s vaccination campaign goes according to plan, and the number of coronavirus cases drops, said the minister.

To date, 149,000 people have received a shot out of

35 million the country wants to vaccinate in 2021. The 47th edition of the Americas Cup, which was postponed last year due to the pandemic, will be played from June 11 to July 10, the first time it will be hosted by two countries.

Colombia’s sports stadiums have been closed to the public since March last year.—AFP ■

Pele gets COVID-19 vaccine, hails ‘unforgettable’ day

SAO Paulo -- Brazilian football great Pele, 80, received a Covid-19 vaccine Tuesday, a moment he described as “unforgettable” while urging people not to let down their guard against the deadly virus.

“Today was an unforgettable day. I received the vaccine!” the man considered one of the greatest footballers of all time wrote on his Instagram account.

The message included a photo of Pele wearing a mask and giving a thumbs-up while he received his shot.

“The pandemic is not over. We must remain disciplined to save lives because many people have not yet

been vaccinated,” he wrote, and advocated mask-wearing, social distancing and hand-washing as virus protection.

“This (the pandemic) will pass if we think of each other and help each other,” he said.

Pele’s press team did not respond to questions about which vaccine he received, and whether it was the first or second dose.

The only player to win three World Cups — in Sweden in 1958, Chile in 1962 and Mexico in 1970 — Pele has self-isolated at his house in Sao Paulo state since the start of the health crisis which has left more than 255,000 people dead in Brazil, where vaccination has been slow to start. —AFP ■



In this file photo taken on April 02, 2019 Brazilian football legend Pele speaks during a meeting with Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and France national football team forward Kylian Mbappe at the Hotel Lutetia in Paris. PHOTO: AFP

Arsenal boss Arteta dismisses Barcelona speculation

LONDON -- Mikel Arteta says he is fully focused on doing “much better” at Arsenal after he was linked with the Barcelona manager’s job.

Reports surfaced in Spain this week claiming presidential candidate Joan Laporta was eyeing a move for Gunners boss Arteta if he won the race to return to Barca.

It was during his previous spell in the role that Laporta appointed Pep Guardiola as the head coach and ushered in an era of sus-

tained success.

Arteta went on to work under Guardiola at Manchester City and took over as Arsenal manager in December 2019.

Having come through the famed La Masia academy at Barca, Arteta is now said to be on a managerial shortlist for Laporta, should he be elected on March 7, although sources close to the campaign have reportedly distanced themselves from a move for the 38-year-old. —AFP ■