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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Foreign Secretary Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla of External Affairs Ministry of India

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Foreign Secretary Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla of the External Affairs Ministry of India at the parlour of Zeyathiri Beikman on Konmyinthta of Yangon Command Headquarters yesterday morning.

At the meeting, they frankly exchanged views on exchange of goodwill visits of two governments and two armed forces of Myanmar and India, promotion of bilateral trade due to both side cooperation, situation to manage the direct trade between the two countries, direct maritime trade process, further cooperation in development of border regions, prospects of investment from India in necessary infrastructures for generating electricity in Myanmar, training and teaching, technological assistance of India in development of agriculture and livestock sectors, sales and contribution of vaccines by India for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, discharging of State responsibilities by the Tatmadaw under the Constitution (2008) due to voting fraud in the 2020



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary of the External Affairs Ministry of India at the parlour of the Zeyathiri Beikman on Konmyinthta of Yangon Command Headquarters on 23 December 2021.

general election, terror acts of terrorist groups in the country, efforts for counter-terrorism, response to terror acts against education and health staff, and efforts for ensuring peace and stability in the border regions

of both countries.

After the meeting, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Foreign Secretary Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla of the External Affairs Ministry of India exchanged commemorative gifts.

Also present at the meeting were Joint-Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo of the State Administration Council, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Re-

lations U Aung Naing Oo and officials. The Indian Foreign Secretary was accompanied by Ambassador Mr Shri Saurabh Kumar of India to Myanmar and officials from the External Affairs Ministry of India. — MNA

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL
India hands over 1 million doses of COVAXIN to Myanmar
PAGE-2

NATIONAL
Ethnic Affairs, Public Management and Services Committee holds 18/2021 coord meeting
PAGE-6

NATIONAL
Myanmar, Russia jointly organize 12th ADMM-Plus experts' working group on counter-terrorism meeting online
PAGE-7

LOCAL BUSINESS
Suspended trading turns about 1,000 cattle daily shipment on black market
PAGE-11

LOCAL BUSINESS
Myanmar maritime trade tops US\$4.75 bln as of 17 December
PAGE-11

Public Notice

1. The government seizes/uncovers illegal arms and ammunition, mines, communication equipment and other related materials in addition to terrorist attacks of NUG and CRPH, which were declared as terrorist groups in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and their subordinates PDF groups with homemade guns, gunpowder, mines and accessories, as well as arms and ammunition, mines, communication equipment and other materials imported via border areas by some ethnic armed organizations aiming to make political and military profits on a daily basis, and it also exposes the cases of the terrorists who possess firearms in various ways.
2. Moreover, some terrorists take advantage of the honesty of the people and they make them keep their illegal arms and ammunition, mines, communication devices and other related materials, including restricted materials using different ways and forms.
3. Therefore, in order to prevent unnecessary legal action against those who are not related to the terrorists, all the citizens should hand over the illegal arms and ammunition, mines, communication equipment and other related materials, including drugs banned by the government according to the law no later than 31 December 2021 to the respective wards/village administration offices/security forces if they keep these things in their houses, apartments and other places for various reasons and ways, and if they are found after the deadline, action will be taken against them under the existing laws.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Four national objectives of 74th Anniversary of Independence Day 2022

1. All ethnic nationals to safeguard non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, and perpetuation of sovereignty;
2. To ensure the emergence of a good and clean government and administrative system by implementing a genuine disciplined democracy;
3. All ethnic nationals to amicably and unitedly cooperate in the country development based on the genuine Union spirit;
4. To strive for restoring perpetual peace the entire people aspire.

276 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 December, total figure rises to 529,114

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 529,114 after 276 new cases were reported on 23 December 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 506,514 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,242 after 7 died.—MNA

India hands over 1 million doses of COVAXIN to Myanmar



The handover event to present one million doses of Covaxin donated by India to Myanmar in progress.

THE handover ceremony to deliver 1 million doses of COVAXIN donated by the Government of India to Myanmar was held on 22 December 2021 at the VIP Lounge of Nay Pyi Taw International Airport. At the ceremony, Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary of India, handed over COVID-19 vaccines to U

Myint Tun Han, representative of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of International Cooperation, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The Indian Foreign Secretary was accompanied by Shri Saurabh Kumar, Ambas-

sador of India to Myanmar and responsible officials from India.

It is learnt that consignment of donated vaccines will be transported by air in batches. The first batch arrived at the Yangon International Airport on 22 December 2021 by the relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines.—MNA

MoC facilitates daily imports of anti-COVID-19 devices, medical products

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

Anti-COVID-19 equipment was imported by three companies using four vehicles.

One oxygen plant, 40 oxygen concentrators, and 10 tonnes of masks were imported via the Muse 105th Mile Trade Zone, Myawady Trade Zone and Chinshwehaw Trade Zone

yesterday.

One oxygen plant was transported to Mandalay through the Muse 105th Mile Trade Zone.

Officials from relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures, including online registration for import processes.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments and treatment of COVID-19 as well as contact persons for inquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website —www.commerce.gov.mm.—MNA



One of the imported oxygen plants.

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Only working in unison can benefit all

If you wish for the country to be developed and prosperous, all of the country's resources – financial, natural and human – have to be used together for the equal development of all races.

If the Bamar does what it wants, if the Kachin does what it wants, if the Shan, Kachin and Chin do not all cooperate, there will be no benefit for anyone. Only when you try working in unison will you know its benefits.

(Excerpt from the speech made by Bogyoke Aung San at the Panglong Dinner on 11 February, 1947)



As a good follower will be an outstanding leader, systematic training must be given to trainees to become good followers



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the meeting with commandants, senior officer instructors and lecturers of the Defence Services Medical Academy, the Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Science and the Defence Services (Army) Officers Training School (Hmawby) in Mingaladon Station in Yangon yesterday.

AS a good follower will be an outstanding leader, systematic training must be given to trainees to become good followers. Trainers need to focus on giving training to trainees to have qualified ones rather than the quantities. As the military discipline is the backbone of the Tatmadaw, it is necessary to emphasize training for trainees to have good morals and discipline, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in meeting with commandants, senior instructor officers, senior officer lecturers and teachers from the Defence Services Medical Academy, the Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Science and the Defence Services (Army) Officers Training School (Hmawby) at the Convocation Hall of the DSMA in

Mingaladon Station of Yangon Region yesterday afternoon.

First, Military Appointment-General Lt-Gen Lin Aung and Armed Forces Training-General Lt-Gen Zaw Myo Tin reported on turning out of officers and lecturing of literature from DSMA, DSINPS and Defence Services (Army) Officers Training School (Hmawby) from 1999 to 2021 and current duty assignments.

In his speech related to the training session, the Senior General said the training is of importance in the Tatmadaw. Dynamic capability needs inclusive of the military, organizational and administrative capabilities. It is necessary to combine the knowledge and skills in addition to critical thinking. The Defence Services Academy, the Defence Services (Army) Officers Training School (Bahtoo) and the De-

As the tough training will save lives, it is necessary to systematically give training to the cadets to become skilful future leaders on whom the Tatmadaw can rely. They have actual skills in respective subjects at different levels and apply them in the practical fields. Training must be given in the correct ways and they all need special care of all things.

fence Services (Army) Officers Training School (Hmawby) are directly turning out the military leaders endowed with skills in respective subjects. Training depots also give military training as well as school education to the trainees. Defence services acad-

emies emphasize the full-time training system for respective subjects. In so doing, trainees need to rote some lessons and study others.

As the tough training will save lives, it is necessary to systematically give training to the

cadets to become skilful future leaders on whom the Tatmadaw can rely. They have actual skills in respective subjects at different levels and apply them in the practical fields. Training must be given in the correct ways and they all need special care of all things.

In training measures, priority must be given to the qualification of the trainees rather than quantities. As the ratio of trainees to the instructors has been adjusted, they need to turn out the qualified ones. Trainees must control themselves at different levels through the guardian system to have better morals and discipline.

Concerning the political changes in Myanmar, the Senior General said that Myanmar walked along the route of multiparty democracy in accord with

SEE PAGE-6

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends ceremony of collective Christmas wishes 2021

STATE Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends the ceremony of collective Christmas wishes to mark the 2021 Christmas at the home of Cardinal Charles Bo, Archbishop of Yangon Catholic Archdiocese, near the St Mary's Cathedral in Botahtaung Township of Yangon Region yesterday evening.

Also present at the ceremony were SAC members Admiral Tin Aung San, General Maung Maung Kyaw and Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Joint-Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Union Ministers, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, the chief minister of Yangon Region, the Commander of Yangon Command, the mayor, Cardinal Charles Bo, Archbishop of Yangon Catholic Archdiocese and officials, Catholic nuns,

Catholic youth teams and Christian town elders.

The Senior General and party were welcomed by the Cardinal and officials. Then, the Senior General and the Cardinal held a separate meeting to talk about peaceful and prosperous affairs.

Then, the Christmas wish followed at the hall of the Cathedral. Families of the Cardinal Home presented Christmas carols.

Cardinal Charles Bo shared the Christmas good news and wishes with all. The Cardinal gave bless of Christmas for all Myanmar to enjoy happiness and prosperness on the auspicious Christmas occasion. The Cardinal prayed for all Myanmar people to have genuine peace and enjoy physical and mental wellbeing as well as peace, prosperity and happiness.



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets Cardinal Charles Bo yesterday.

In his greetings, the Senior General said he has attended the ceremony of collective Christmas wishes for the third time. He prayed for all people in Christianity to have peace, prosperity and happiness on the Christmas occasion. There are 87 per cent of Buddhists, six per cent of Christianity and five per cent of Hinduism in Myanmar. Data on percentage may be slightly different. But, Sections 362 and 363 of the Constitution (2008) grant the people freedom of religion and aid. Together with

Buddhism in which the majority of the people faith, Christians, Islamists, Hindus and those from other religions have been serving the interests of the State in unison through the cooperative measure. **The Tatmadaw actively participated in the national political safeguarding activities for ensuring the peace and prosperity of the State.** As an unavoidable event happened in the previous election, the Tatmadaw serves the State responsibilities. After forming the State Administra-

tion Council, the five-point road map was adopted for ensuring peace and tranquillity of the State and development.

In addition to the endeavours of the government, the Tatmadaw and relevant departmental organizations, religious and social organizations as well as the people need to participate in the peace and tranquillity of the nation. They all need to have the wishes to be peaceful and developed. As prosperity and food sufficiency is of importance, it is necessary to restore the peace at first. Hence, the Senior General requested individuals and groups to participate in the tasks to develop the nation with a conscience.

The Senior General prayed for all people in Christianity and all Myanmar people to enjoy happiness and pleasure and happily pass the New Year occasion, and urged all to work in concert in unison with compassion and tolerance under the guidance of respective religions for the interests of the State and the citizens.

The Senior General and the Cardinal cut the Christmas Cake together. The Senior General presented Christmas gifts and donated cash to the families of the Home of the Cardinal. The Cardinal also returned the Christmas gifts to the Senior General and party.

Auxiliary Bishop of Yangon Archdiocese John Saw Yaw Han gave a Christmas wish. — MNA

The Tatmadaw actively participated in the national political safeguarding activities for ensuring the peace and prosperity of the State.



The Senior General views the collective Christmas wishes to mark the 2021 Christmas, yesterday.

Directly different from democracy

THE violent attack on the people is vulgar, posing the threat to the people. Posing the threat to the people to be feared is directly different from democracy. The entire people and all the administrative bodies need to join hands in combatting terrorism.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 18/2021 of the State Administration Council on 13-12-2021)

SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win attends 1/2021 meeting of Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee



State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win addresses the 1/2021 meeting of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

VICE-CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, in his capacity as Chairman of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, presided over the 1/2021 committee meeting yesterday.

First, the SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister said according to the global illegal trade index 2008, Myanmar ranks 82nd out of 84 countries. When the global illegal trade index is measured with four indices, they are policy, demand and supply, transparent trade and customs procedures.

Illegal trade is one of the main obstacles to Myanmar's economic development. As long as the illegal trade sector is strong, it will hinder legal activities.

The reduction in cross-border trade has been linked to illegal trade. Comparing the trade figures between Myanmar and neighbouring countries, it can be seen that there is a big gap

between the illegal trades.

Due to the illegal entry of products via border areas, the MSMEs would face hardships in the long run and so it should conduct effective measures to fight the illegal trade in regions/states in border areas.

He then mentioned the effective policies, strategies, strategic plans, projects and short-and-long-term work plans to be drafted by the ministries concerned, work committee and sub-committees.

He continued that during the term of SAC, it organized the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods with order No 81/2021. Subparagraph (f) of paragraph (2) of the duties of the committee states to carry out not to occur illegal trade. Moreover, the subparagraph (dd) of paragraph (16) of the duties of Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods organized with order No 83/2021 also stated that measures to be conducted to prevent

illegal trades.

He also talked about the consumer protection and inspection on illegal trade, increase of state income with high trade volume via official route, competitive market, action to take against on illegal trade, plans to reward the organizations and informers regarding the illegal trade and add to state budget if there is no informer.

He also continued that the Yepu permanent checkpoint on the Mandalay-Muse Union Highway and the Mayan Chaung checkpoint on the Myawady-Yangon Union Highway under the leadership of the Customs Department inspect with OSS departments. The Mayan Chaung checkpoint seized K19,206.499 million worth of illegal trade during five years from 2016-2017FY to 2020-2021FY (May) while K27.281.789 million worth of illegal trade between the 2016-2017FY and the 2020-2021FY (May).

The Deputy Prime Minister

then highlighted the seizures of illegal trade by the anti-illicit trade task force formed previously during three years and four months from September 2018 to January 2021 and by the new task force during nine months from February to October 2021.

He then underlined the need to make efforts to reduce illegal trade and tax evasion while the government eases some restrictions in the trading sector, to improve the budget of the State, to draft plans to supervise the illegal trade via sea, air and border trade camp by the steering committee and other cooperation works with respective regions and states.

He also added that excessive shipments of goods at checkpoints with documents, transportation of products using other names occur while taxes are being levied on amounts less than they should be. The department concerned should adopt the procedures to achieve the receivable taxes for the country. Moreover,

the departments should make efforts to streamline the auction processes of seized items as per the procedures.

It also needs to set the floor price of the seized items as close as possible to the price on the ground. There should be coordination to amend the procedures of the relevant departments so as not to cause any damage due to delays in handing over the seized items.

The relevant departments must amend the procedures if necessary to distribute the bonuses as soon as possible for the anti-illegal trade associations.

The Ministry of Commerce is the Focal Ministry in Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee and the ministries should work together to reduce the illegal trade and to achieve the receivable taxes for the country.

Then, Committee Secretary Deputy Minister U Nyunt Aung reported on the formation of the committee and implemented works to fight illegal trade.

Deputy Director-General of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization U Oo Han presented a ground action plan to combat illegal trade (draft) and other officials clarified the remarks of 1/2021 meeting.

Next, Committee Vice-Chairs Union Minister Lt-Gen Soe Htut and U Win Shein and other committee members coordinated the discussion.

Then, the officials of checkpoint of respective regions and states reported on the roads to be blocked to prevent illegal trade.

The meeting came to an end with the concluding remark of Committee Chairman SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win. — MNA

As a good follower will be an outstanding leader, systematic...

FROM PAGE-3

the Constitution (2008) in 2011 in line with the aspiration of the people. Nobody turns a blind eye to the Constitution approved by eligible voter people with 92.4 per cent. The Tatmadaw cooperated with the government in serving its assigned duty in line with the law in the terms of 2011 and 2015 democratic governments. As it was found that the tasks of the ruling party were not in line with the law as of 2018, the Senior General, himself urged them to follow the disciplines and fairness in the democracy many times. But it was known that advance voting in the election was not in line with the law, and voter lists were wrong in the election according to information from some persons and political parties.

In scrutinizing the voter lists, wrongdoings were found. So, the Senior General himself urged officials of the government and the Union Election Commission to solve the problems of wrong voter lists many times. The Tatmadaw held coordination with officials many times but they did not address it. Hence, the State responsibilities were taken with the declaration of the emergency of State in accord with the Constitution (2008).

The Tatmadaw formed the State Administration Council in its serving the duties and appointed Union Ministers. Then, the five-point road map and nine objectives were adopted for the development of the State. The purpose and current works of the government lead to the prosperity and food sufficien-

cy of the State. Experienced and qualified civilians were appointed as Union Ministers. Although the Tatmadaw took the State responsibilities under the emergency situation, its governance goes forwards under the democracy. Hence, the Tatmadaw is taking peaceful and stable measures to minimize the least casualties. The government is striving to hold free and fair elections. It is necessary to avoid the wrong voter lists as much as possible, take care of losing the voting chances of the people and prevent the malpractice of voting. As issuance of citizenship scrutiny cards is being undertaken for all eligible voters but it hits just 25 per cent completion. So, the entire people need to cooperate in the issuance of CSC.

In realizing democracy, some organizations commit terror acts. In analyzing the organizations related to the armed conflicts in Myanmar, some ethnic groups held arms due to different attitudes in political affairs, ethnic affairs and doctrines from the post-independence era to the period before 2011. Some of them became the signatories of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in 2015, participating in the dialogues in the peace process. After the democratization process in 2011, some ethnic organizations held arms turning a blind eye to democracy. Some terrorists emerged due to voting frauds in the 2020 multiparty democracy general election in 2020. The Tatmadaw does not have any reason to hold talks

with these terrorist groups. The Tatmadaw tried to meet with political parties representing the people but they failed to meet with the Tatmadaw. Political parties represent their supporter people in groups but do not represent them personally. As political parties are political organizations representing the people, arrangements are being made to meet with them. A plan is underway to take action against some persons without turning a blind eye to democracy. No man is above the law. If one is not in line with the law, action will be taken against them. Depending on the peace and stability of the country, the Tatmadaw is striving for holding the multiparty democracy general election in August 2023 as much as possible. — MNA

Ethnic Affairs, Public Management and Services Committee holds 18/2021 coord meeting

THE Ethnic Affairs, Public Management and Services Committee held the coordination meeting 18/2021 yesterday afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, Ethnic Affairs, Public Management and Services Committee Chairman Union Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo made an opening speech.

Then, Secretary of the Committee Deputy Minister U Zaw Aye Maung reported on the decisions made at 17/2021 meeting.

Union Ministers U Myint Kyaing, U Saw Tun Aung Myint, Deputy Minister U Zaw Win and the directors-general explained matters submitted by the ministries to the committee, and the chairman of the committee approved matters to be implemented with the



committee decision.

Then, the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation explained the implementation works based

on motions of the committee members during 16/2021 meeting.

The SAC members Saw Daniel, Union Ministers U Ko

Ko, Dr Thet Thet Khine, Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Khun Thant Zaw Htoo, U Myo Hlaing, U Min Htein and officials among others presented ethnic af-

fairs-related matters, public management and services. Then, the committee chairman coordinated the discussion and concluded the meeting. — MNA



Union Minister receives Indian Foreign Secretary Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla

UNION Minister at the Union Government Office (1) Lt-Gen Yar Pyae received the delegation led by Indian Foreign Secretary Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla at his office in Nay Pyi Taw at 11 am yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed friendly relations be-

tween Myanmar and India, and issues of bilateral cooperation.

They also exchanged views on the issue of COVID-19 vaccination on the India-Myanmar border and the implementation of the Myanmar peace process.

Gifts were exchanged after the discussion. —MNA

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U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs receives Indian Delegation led by Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary of India

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received the Indian delegation led by Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India at 9:30 am on 22 December 2021 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

At the courtesy call, they cordially exchanged views on matters pertaining to the promotion of the existing friendly bilateral relations and multi-sectoral cooperation between the two countries in the areas, among others, trade and investment, border area development and the regional and international issues of mutual interests. They also discussed matters related to

ongoing projects of India in Myanmar such as Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project and operationalization of Sittwe Seaport, upgrading of 69 bridges of Tamu-Kyi Gone-Kalewa road, trilateral highway project, Integrated Check Post (ICP) in Tamu, strengthening people-to-people contact as well as India's assistance to Myanmar for prevention of COVID-19.

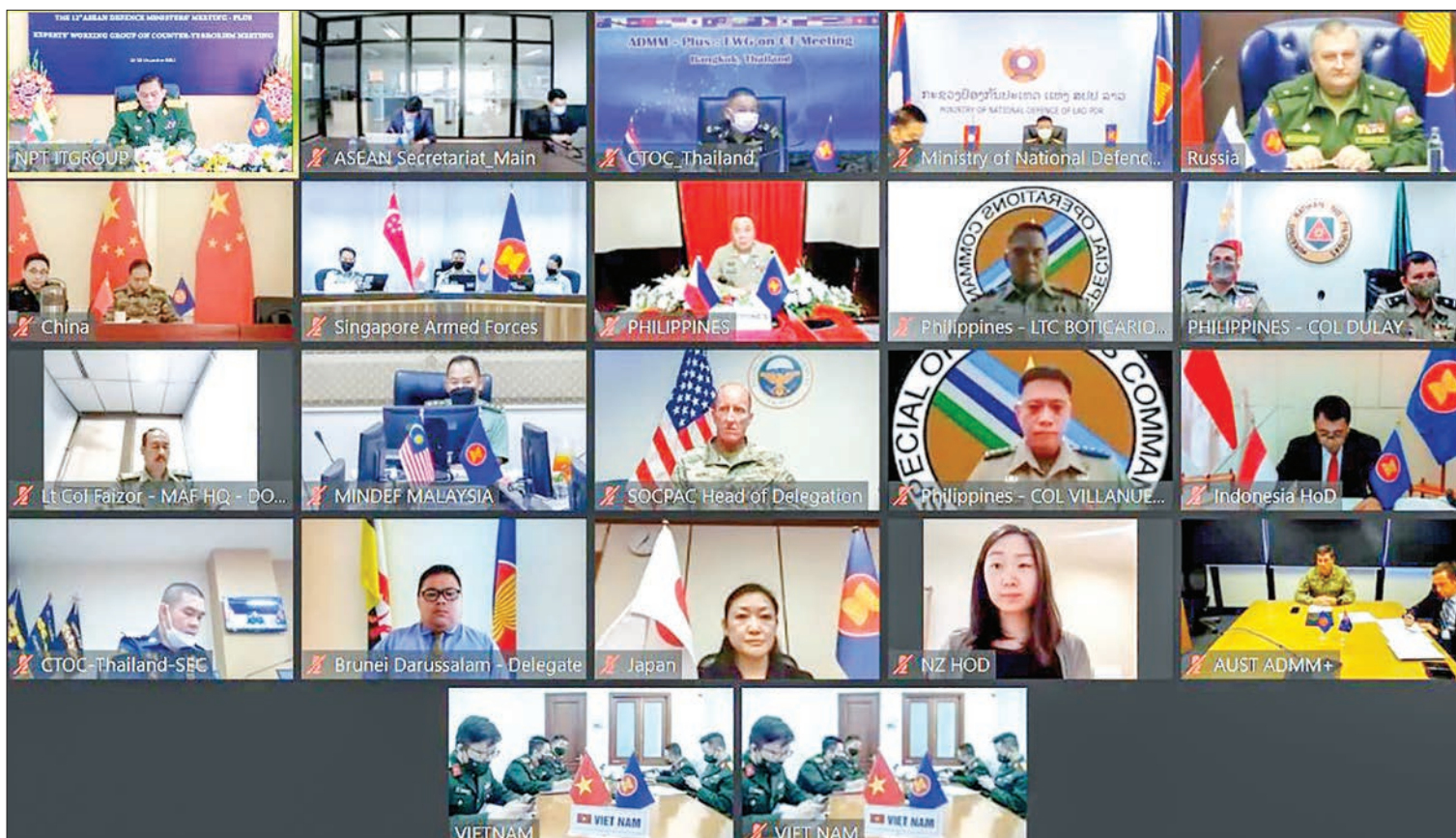
Present at the courtesy call were U Kyaw Myo Htut, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U Chan Aye, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar.

The Indian Foreign Secretary was accompanied by Shri



Saurabh Kumar, Ambassador of India to Myanmar, Smt. Smita Pant, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, and responsible officials from India.—MNA

Myanmar, Russia jointly organize 12th ADMM-Plus experts' working group on counter-terrorism meeting online



2021 and only then did security forces maintain the situation with minimum force, the official continued.

He added the formation of CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorist groups which targeted civilians, brutal killings perpetrated by their members after accusing innocent civilians as "traitors" under the opinion of "You are the enemy if you are different". They especially killed dutiful civil servants such as school teachers and township medical officers who were conducting COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, he clarified with evidence of the involvement by PDF terrorists and extremist NLD supporters.

The anti-government media has biased in covering terrorist acts of PDFs to keep the international community out of the public eye and to draw attention to them, he said. In addition, political-minded groups in Myanmar are fabricating false stories about what is happening in Myanmar with the help of media technology and financial support, and the misrepresentation of false information had led to political narratives and acts as a weapon of post-truth politics, he elaborated.

MYANMAR and Russia jointly organized the 12th ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter-Terrorism Meeting-EWG on CT Meeting on 21 and 22 December. The meeting was chaired by Myanmar through videoconferencing.

The meeting was attended by Joint-Chairmen of ADMM-Plus WEG-CT Deputy Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-

Gen Aung Myo Thant and Maj-Gen Grigory Turin of Russian Armed Forces, and representatives from ASEAN and its dialogue partners Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, the US and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat.

At the meeting, the Joint-Chairmen addressed the meeting and officials from the

member countries read and discussed papers on counter-terrorism. Myanmar discussed the topic "The terrorist attacks, threatening national security in Myanmar", highlighting the threats to the national security, including armed ethnic conflicts, drug issues and the terrorist activities of NUG and PDF, electoral fraud which led to the state of emergency de-

clared by Tatmadaw to maintain the State affairs, efforts of Tatmadaw in various ways to peacefully find a solution on vote-rigging, the NLD government's multiple rejections on the discussion and its intent to form a new government with controversial election results. There had been a gradual transition from peaceful protests into violence after 1 February

Change mindset to be professionals in relevant arenas

THE Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines the word of professionalism as the high standard that you expect from a person who is well trained in a particular job. Likewise, Wikipedia states a definition related to the word of professionalism: A professional is a member of a profession or any person who earns a living from a specified professional activity.

Somebody accepting themselves as professionals in specific jobs must have excellent skills in relevant jobs, proper decision-making skills and qualified manners in the relevant professions. Truly, the professionals need to follow the professionalism comprising the ethics, vision and qualification.

Any professionals must be qualified for a wider knowledge of their professions, high talent and skills, responsibility and accountability for serving their professions. They have been capable of operating their jobs with responsibility and accountability for any complaints and disorders.

In any profession, the professionals have got the highest level of salaries or honorariums deserved to operate relevant assignments. They have to value their jobs as well as pay gently respect to workmates at different levels without discrimination even though workmates are lesser capable than theirs'.

Primarily, the majority of professionals need to adhere to the restricted ethics and rules of professionalism as well as accountability based on morals. Before signing the agreements for operating the relevant jobs, the professionals recognize the norms and standards related to the ethics for job arenas on a wider scale.

For example, medical doctors from the majority of countries across the world including Myanmar abide by the Hippocratic Oath as the professional ethics. They need to follow the Hippocratic Oath in all medical fields in providing healthcare services to patients. They have to take responsibility for all things they did.

They must be able to show off their professional skills in relevant professions. They have to accept professionalism without fail. It is because those professionals possess the highest skills and talent than others. While managing the specific work arenas with the strengths of subordinates and assistants, those professionals themselves need to take responsibility for operating the assignments to be accomplished.

Everybody working at relevant workplaces is hoping for securing the positions of professionals one day with regard to prestige and integrity, income, pride and so on. So, they don't forget a Myanmar saying goes: "Never do things by halves".



Sinbyu-kyun Aung Thein or Sithu U Kyi Aye (The winner of National Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement for 2007)

By Maung Hlaing

“...TO be frank, I'm not a best-selling writer. Simply because most of the writers today are trying to attract young men and women. They're making money. But, I'm not. My (literary) work is rare in the literary field. To write in the interest of the people and the nation is not easy. There is no profit in it. But, those of the younger generation who are interested in 'realism' accept my works. "The S.E.A. Write...is a dream, an important event in my life. I do not write in the expectation of getting literary awards. But if the State and the people honour my performance, I proudly welcome (their decision).

"I like the theme of rural life because I myself was born in Upper Myanmar (Anyar) in Magway Division (now Region). And I'm interested in the lives of these people...They toil from dawn to dusk...Sinbyu-kyun is the name of the place I was born in, and to honour it, I adopted the pen-name 'Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein'..."

Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein said so when he was interviewed by Manote Tripathi, a journalist from 'The Nation' which was (is) one of the highly reputable papers being published in English in Thailand. The date was 22 September 1998. The interview took place in the lobby of the Oriental Hotel (48, Oriental Avenue in Bangkok).

Manote was a vivacious journalist who was (then) aged about over thirty. The interview with Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein appeared in the Nation (of 27-9-1998) issue.

"Aung Thein's short stories vividly depict the socio-economic realities of life in the countryside in Anyar or Upper Burma. Many touch on the dynamism of patriotism and anti-colonial feelings and are rich in the vocabulary of rural folk. His portraits of the countryside have earned him both critical and commercial acclaim. A two-time winner of Burma's National Literary Award (in 1990 for his short story collection 'Ko Say Yoe No.4 and again in 1997 for No.6), he was Chosen for the S.E.A. Write (Award) based on his lifetime's oeuvre by a 30-strong committee comprising well-known writers, Journalists, scholars, literary critics, editors and poets".

The Nation wrote so while Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein was in Bangkok to receive the S.E.A.

WRITE AWARD in 1998.

Actually, Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein was the first and foremost recipient of the S.E.A. WRITE AWARD, renowned as a prestigious literary prize among the ASEAN member countries.

In order to enable the readers to get the picture of the S.E.A. WRITE AWARD, I must first tell you about the brief history of the emergence of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The ASEAN was originally founded with five-member nations--Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand--on 8 August 1967. Brunei Darussalam on 7 January 1984, Vietnam on 28 July 1995, Laos and Myanmar on 23 July 1997 and Cambodia on 30 April 1999 became the ASEAN members respectively. Consequently, the winners from ten member nations could be awarded from 1999 onwards.

The sponsors are those from private foundations, business companies, economic enterprises and so on. Besides the return tickets and hotel accommodations (including meals) given to the awardees, each winner received Baht 100,000 as a cash prize. Each awardee can bring a companion who

Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The award presentation ceremony has been held in Bangkok, Thailand every year since the time when the award came into being.

The award presentation ceremony held at the Oriental Hotel on the night of 25 September 1998 was the first occasion that Myanmar Laureate Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein attended. The ceremony held in 1998 coincided with the 20th Anniversary (1979-1998).

Sayagyi Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein, a true Anyathar (man from upcountry), was born of a true farmer U Shwe San and Daw Ngwe Zin on 3 November 1928 in Ywa Thit Gyi Village of Sinbyu-Kyun in Salin Township, Minbu District (Magway Region). Among the four children, he was the third and his real name was (U) Kyi Aye.

Kyi Aye completed his primary and middle school education at the U Po Thein Middle school in Sinbyu-Kyun. During World War II, he attended the Saya Nwae High School in Sinbyu-Kyun for his high school education. After passing the eighth standard, he could not continue his education due to the war



Members of Myanmar writers delegation (from left to right) Mis. Cheng(CWA), Hane Latt, Maung Kyin Nwe, Hla Tun (Twantay), the author, Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein seen at the Great Wall.

ing the pen-name 'Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein', his first short story titled 'Sut-Kyae' or 'Vest' appeared in the 'Thway Thauk Magazine' in 1952. His first novel was 'Lawn Yamon Oo' published by the Sarba-chi House in 1957.

Between 1950 and 1953, U Kyi Aye served as a private in the Artillery Regiment (I). Between 1957 and 1959 he worked as an Executive Editor for the magazines of 'Yoke-shin Padetha' 'Yoke-shin Loka' 'Ya-ne Yoke-shin' and 'Nat-shin Naung'.

Besides, he earnestly participated in the Myanmar Writers Association, Writers Club, Writers Union of the Union of Burma, Myanmar Literature Dissemination Association, Myanmar Literary Fans Organization and World Peace Congress (Myanmar). In 1980, he was elected as a member of the Leading Committee of Myanmar Writers and Journalist Association.

He wrote over 200 books on various titles, over 3000 articles. He won the National Literary Award three times for his short-story collection of 'Ko Say Yoe No.4' (1990), 'Ko Say Yoe No.6' (1997) and 'Nay-min Tahtaung (Thousand Suns), his masterpiece which formed eight volumes, published by Bagan Publishing House.

In 2007, Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein won the 'National Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement, the highest literary award in My-

anmar.

The maturity of the Literary experience of a writer can be seen in his works which are rich in vocabularies used by rural folks. His works vividly depict the social life of country people living in Anyar or Upper Myanmar. The main objective of the writer is to impart what he knew and felt in order to lead the readers to the world of reality.

As a matter of fact, the trip to Bangkok was the laureate's second trip to a foreign country. Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein had visited the People's Republic of China in May 1992 at the invitation of the Chinese Writers Association (CWA). He was one of the members of the Myanmar writers delegation. The five Myanmar writers who represented Myanmar were U Hla Tun (Hla Yun-Twantay), the leader of the delegation, U Maung Maung Oo (Hane Latt) U Kyi Aye (Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein), Poet U Maung Nyunt (Maung Kyin Nwe) and myself.

As we were guests of the Chinese Writers Association, we visited historical places in four cities--Beijing, Hangzhou, Shanghai and Kunming. Thanks to their arrangements, we had literary discussions with responsible personnel of the Chinese Writers Association. The discussions covered various subjects ranging from literary problems of traditionalism and modern styles encountered in the two countries to the facts about

China that we wanted to know. The exchange of views on literary matters was quite beneficial to us of both sides.

Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein liked 'plain living and high thinking'. People from all walks of life loved him and his literary works because of his simple and honest nature.

Before I joined the Sarpay Beikman, I called him 'Sayagyi'. When I became an editor of Sarpay Beikman, I called him 'Aba' or 'Aba Hsin', or 'Saya Hsin'. Because of his experience in the literary field, however, the name 'Hsin Gyi' was most popular among young writers who loved him.

Sinbyu-Kyun Aung Thein or 'Aba Hsin, who won the love of the reading public of Myanmar... who brought honour back to his motherland...whose works enlightened us was taken away by fate on 15 July 2021.

- Ref: (1) မောင်ခေတ်ထွန်း၊ ကိုဆေးရိုးကို ဖန်တီးသူ၊ ဘဝသရုပ်ဖော် သက်တော်ရှည် စာရေးဆရာကြီး ဆင်ဖြူကျွန်းဆောင်သိန်း၊ စံတော်ချိန် နေ့စဉ် ၂၀၂၁ ခုနှစ်၊ ဇူလိုင်လ ၄ ရက်နှင့် ၅ ရက်။ (2) Maung Hlaing, Myanmar Writers and the S.E.A. Writer Awards, the Global New Light of Myanmar, 29 April 2021. (3) The Guests of Chinese Writers Association, the Working People's Daily, 16, 17 August 1992.



Sri Lankan Ambassador to Myanmar agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr J.M. Janaka Priyantha Bandara as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in succession to Dr Lindamulage Nalin Kumar de Silva.

Mr J.M. Janaka Priyantha Bandara was born on 1 February 1968. He graduated from the University of Colombo with a Bachelor of Arts in 1993. From 1995 through 2008, he served as an Attorney in private practice, as a Magistrate and Additional District Judge, and as the Public Trustee of Sri Lanka. In 2008, he served as Presidential Advisor on Religious Affairs to former President Mr Mahinda Rajapaksa. He served as Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United Arab Emirates from 2008 to 2009 and as Governor of Sabaragamuwa Province from 2009 to 2010. From 2010 to 2015, he was a Member of Parliament (National List), where he was also the Chairman of the Parliamentary Public Petitions Committee and a member of the Speakers panel. During the post-election period of 2015, he worked as a coordinator for former President Mr Mahinda Rajapaksa. He worked as a senior legal counsel in private bar since 2016. He served as a Private Secretary to former President Mr Mahinda Rajapaksa when he was the Minister of Finance from November to December 2018. From December 2019 to July 2021, he served as a Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister Mr Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Since 19 July 2021, he has been serving as High Commissioner-designate of Sri Lanka to Federal Republic of Nigeria. He is married.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 23 December 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 24 December, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Mandalay Region and Kachin, Northern Shan States, isolated in Upper Sagaing Region, (Southern and Eastern) Shan States and isolated in Sagaing Region and Eastern Shan State. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of continuation of scattered rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, (Northern and Eastern) Shan States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 December, 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 December, 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 December, 2021: Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

State Administration Council Press Release

Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who reside in various regions for many reasons

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, with worries, have evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries due to the incitements and intimidation of NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful associations and terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, stimulation of CDM, and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities on 1 February 2021.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of unlawful association and terrorist group CRPH and NUG, and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in those areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. **The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.**
4. As those who evade their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from the evaded areas to various parts of Myanmar.
5. As such, the information was released that if those who evaded to various areas, except for persons who committed any kinds of crime, wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord due to multiple worries, the citizens abroad can contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates in accord with the easing restrictions under the law.

*Information Team
State Administration Council*

THE State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Commerce Directive No 1/2021 2nd Waning of Nadaw 1383 ME 20 December 2021

The Ministry of Commerce has issued this directive exercising its authority under sub-section (b) of Section 83 of the Consumer Protection Law (2019 Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. 9).

Instructions for Businesses to follow in labelling trademarks regarding vegetable oil (cooking oil)

1. According to Sub-section (b) Section 1, of the Consumer Protection Law, the provisions on the trademarks in Chapter 18 of this Law came into force on 16 March 2020, the first anniversary of the enactment of the law.
2. To make it easy for businesses to comply with the trademark provisions, Myanmar Consumer Protection Commission issued Directive No. 2/2019 dated 3 December, "Instruction for businesses to follow in labelling goods either in Myanmar or in combination with another language", along with a detailed analysis of the product labels in the Myanmar language for each product group. Of the eight product groups in the detailed analysis of this directive, it has been stated that it is necessary to specify the names, quantity, size, net amount, the storage instruction regarding the various edible oil in the food commodity groups.
3. Some of the edible oils on the market are now being marketed as Vegetable Oil or Cooking Oil. The term "Vegetable Oil, Cooking Oil" is not a product name according to the trademark provisions, but a generic name that is not based on the original ingredients.
4. Therefore, the relevant businesses should specify the types of vegetable oils, cooking oils, distributed in the market to avoid misleading consumers and to satisfy their basic needs.
5. In marking labels on the types of vegetable oil, cooking oil, distributed in the market,
 - (a) The name of the product based on the original ingredient must be specified in Myanmar. (Example: Vegetable oil (palm oil), or Vegetable oil (advanced palm oil).
 - (b) The net weight and size of the goods must be expressed in Myanmar Weight Units such as Viss, Kyattha, in the Myanmar Language.
6. This directive will come into force six months after its issuance, and businesses will be prosecuted under Consumer Production Law if they fail to comply with Article 4 of this directive.

*Sd/Dr Pwint San
Union Minister*

Myanmar, Russia jointly organize 12th ADMM-Plus ...

FROM PAGE - 7

Myanmar, as a sovereign nation, has been complying with its anti-terrorism laws and has informed global and regional anti-terrorism organizations, including INTERPOL. He also highlighted the fact that the encouragement of some countries in the world to these terrorist groups is the act of spurring

terrorism. He said he couldn't understand why some powerful democratic nations are finding it difficult to name CRPH, NUG and PDF as terrorist groups, even though they are aware of their acts of terrorism. He also called on the international community for cooperation to end acts of terrorism that are

based on political gain, in order to ensure regional stability.

Russia discussed under the topic "Threats to the national security of the Russian Federation emanating from the activities of international terrorist organizations, adding the neighbouring countries of the country which are threat-

ening the national security of Russia, terrorism and terrorist organizations in the middle east. Afterwards, members of the ASEAN and dialogue partners gave their opinions on the papers.

Along with the Deputy Chief of the Armed Forces Training from Myanmar, Di-

rector-General of the Ministry of Defence U Zaw Win Naing, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) attended the meeting. Myanmar and Russia have been the Joint-Chairs of the ADMM-Plus EWG on CT from 2021 until 2023. — MNA

MoC notifies edible oil manufacturers of labelling obligatory

TO ensure consumer rights, all the edible oil companies and manufacturers to prepare the full label in the Myanmar Language on their goods by six months after this directive dated 22 December 2021, in the exercise of the authority conferred by Section 83 (B) of the Consumer Protection Law 2019.

The Consumer Affairs De-

partment under the Ministry of Commerce will take action against those businessmen who violate food safety rules under the Consumer Protection Law.

The provisions stipulated in the Consumer Protection Law 2019 has been effective from 16 March 2020 (one year after the ratification of the law) and the companies must strict-

ly adhere to the rules including mandatory labelling requirements (Chapter 18).

Companies need to provide product info in the Myanmar Language and another one or more languages on the label, as per the notification (2/2019) of the Myanmar Consumer Protection Commission dated 3 December 2019.

Regarding edible oil, types

of goods, net size, quantity, net volume, instructions on how to store the product are required on the label.

Some edible oil is being distributed without proper labels. They bear only vegetable oil or cooking oil which lacks types of goods and ingredients. Such products make the consumers confused about products and buy wrong com-

modities.

In a bid to ensure food safety and quality, the edible oil distributed in the market must be affixed the label in Myanmar language, with net size, volume with Myanmar standard measurement units such as viss and tickle and types of goods. The companies must provide information enough to identify the goods. — GNLM

Suspended trading turns about 1,000 cattle daily shipment on black market

ABOUT 1,000 cattle have been shipped to China daily on the black market despite the legitimate market of the cattle trading is suspended, said U Soe Naing, chairman of the Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association.

The legitimate cattle export market has halted till now since 2020.

Although the legal cattle trading market is currently closed, the cattle around the Chinese border areas are imported from Myanmar and the heads of live cattle are conveyed to China daily through illegitimate channels.

“It’s just like that for now.



The Ministry of Commerce permitted live cattle export in late 2017 intending to eliminate the illegal export market, creating more opportunities for breeders and promoting their interests.

We are not trading the cattle through legal channels because those legitimate routes are currently closed. It has been closed

since the last November 2020. It has been over a year. So, the cattle trading are growing on the black market, with around

1,000 cattle daily, U Soe Naing clarified.

Myanmar’s live cattle export relies heavily on the China market due to its reasonable price. However, Myanmar has other external markets such as Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, and Bangladesh.

The Ministry of Commerce permitted live cattle export in late 2017 intending to eliminate the illegal export market, creating more opportunities for breeders and promoting their interests.

The Ministry of Commerce grants a permit to each company for 100 cattle export and the permit is valid for three

months. The companies can be taken legal action if they do not sell them during the three months.

According to the 2018 pilot project of livestock census, there were 1.8 million buffalo and 9.7 million cattle, totalling 11.5 million, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation stated.

Of them, 1.1 million cattle are old enough to be placed on the market every year.

Among them, the country needed about 400,000 heads of cattle for domestic consumption and the remaining cattle are exported to international markets, it is learnt. — NN/GNLM

Successful eggplant cultivation brings happiness to farmers through daily income

LOCAL farmers from Hsipaw Township, Kyaukse District, Shan State (North) are growing varieties of crops in the winter. But tomato growers have succeeded its plantation in Naungkat village and they are earning daily income by selling them.

The eggplants are cultivated five feet apart from each other and the soil land is made to facilitate irrigation. The pesticides should be sprayed when

there are insects. The fertilizer is also used only when it is necessary. The plant could be yielded every day or occasionally.

The eggplant price is ranging between K800 and K1,000 per viss in the retail market. Now, the eggplant growers are happy, making a good profit, said U Sai Hla Win, an eggplant grower from Naungkat village. —Khin Lay (Hsipaw IPRD)/GNLM



The eggplant price is ranging between K800 and K1,000 per viss in the retail market. Now, the eggplant growers are happy, making a good profit, said U Sai Hla Win, an eggplant grower from Naungkat village.

Myanmar maritime trade tops US\$4.75 bln as of 17 December

THE value of Myanmar’s maritime trade between 1 October and 17 December of the current mini-budget period 2021-2022 soared to US\$4.75 billion according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The figure reflected an increase of \$449 million as against last FY. Sea trade rose from \$4.3 billion during the year-ago period according to the Ministry of Commerce.

While maritime exports were valued at \$1.7 billion, imports had registered \$2.5 billion. Compared to the same period in the 2020-2021 financial year, imports fell by \$34.6 million, while exports registered an increase of \$484 million.

Meanwhile, the value of trade through the border this FY was estimated at \$1.25 billion, which plunged drastically from \$2.207 billion registered last FY.



Overseas-going merchant vessels are seen loading and unloading at Yangon Port.

Myanmar’s sea trade generated \$19.8 billion out of an overall trade value of \$29.5 billion in the FY2020-2021, the Ministry of Commerce’s statistics indicated.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, fishery products, minerals, livestock, forest products, finished industrial goods, and other products, while it imports capital goods, consumer goods and raw industrial materials.

The country currently has

nine ports involved in sea trade. Yangon Port is the main gateway for Myanmar’s maritime trade and includes Yangon inner terminals and outer Thilawa Port.

Yangon inner terminals and the outer Thilawa Port received over 152 larger ships of above 30,000 DWT (deadweight tonnage) in the past five months (February-June) this year after the draft limit is extended up to 10 metres with the new navigation channel accessing to inner Yangon River. — KK/GNLM

Omicron threatens tech's big return to in-person megaconference



The Las Vegas-based Consumer Electronics Show (CES), seen here in 2020, plans to make its grand return to in-person attendance in January 2022, but the omicron variant threatens its viability.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

SEVERAL major companies as of Wednesday have cancelled or will limit their attendance to the 2022 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) — the tech industry's annual mass-gathering in Las Vegas — due to Covid-19 variant Omicron's rapid spread.

The popular four-day conference, which had planned for a grand return next month, is still scheduled to start January 5, with the press getting an early peek two days before.

But on Tuesday, a number of major tech firms such as Facebook parent company Meta, Amazon, T-Mobile, and Twitter

cancelled their appearances.

Key tech world publications including CNET, The Verge, and TechCrunch said they will no longer send reporters to cover the event, adding to growing suspicions that CES might have to be delayed or canceled.

"After careful consideration and discussion, T-Mobile has made the difficult decision to significantly limit our in-person participation at this year's Consumer Electronics Show," the telecom company said in a press release, adding that its chief executive, Mike Sievert, will cancel his keynote address. "While we are

confident that CES organizers are taking exhaustive measures to protect in-person attendees," they noted, "we are prioritizing the safety of our team and other attendees with this decision."

Representatives for General Motors told AFP that the US automaker has not changed its plans for CES, which is expected to have an abundance of car tech on display. GM plans to reveal a new electric model of the Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck, and chief executive Mary Barra is slated to give a keynote presentation on a vision for the mass adoption of electric vehicles.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US trucking's conundrum: Driver shortage or retention problem?

THE tight US labor market has not spared the trucking industry, where "help wanted" pleas are plentiful, wages are on the rise, and drivers recently have scored signing bonuses of up to \$20,000.

In an economy that hauls more than \$12 trillion in freight annually, the problems facing trucking have drawn the attention of President Joe Biden, who is seeking to restore his political fortunes as United States faces the highest inflation in nearly 40 years.

Biden's White House has convened a task force to examine the supply chain snarls partly blamed for the price increases and shortages, including in shipping and trucking.

But debate is raging in the largely non-union trucking industry over whether the challenges are exceptional in a competitive pandemic labor market, and what policy changes would have the biggest impact.

On one side, the American Trucking Associations (ATA), where large hauling companies are influential, has said the combination of aging drivers and rising demand from e-commerce suggest the shortage will be long lasting and could reach crisis proportions within a decade.

But the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) has argued that remarkably high turnover in some trucking segments points to a "flaw" in working conditions, and has called for steps to resolve driver frustrations such as unpaid waiting time.—AFP ■

'People keep coming': Crisis-hit Turks queue for bread

UNDER a heavy winter sky, the grimly silent queue of people stretches around the corner from Bayram Duman's kiosk, which offers discount bread for Istanbulites hurt by Turkey's economic malaise.

Turkey's cultural and historic capital has been offering cheaper bread for the poor at "Halk Ekmek" ("People's Bread") shops since the 1970s.

But with prices soaring on everyday items as Turkey battles one of its gravest economic crises in decades, Duman says the queues are especially long this year.

"The prices have risen significantly at the bakeries. People keep coming," the 50-year-old says.

The queues are a worrying sight for Turkey's veteran President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is trying to fight inflation by slashing interest rates. As economists had predicted, Erdogan's solution is not working out.

Countries usually raise borrowing rates to slow spending and bring down prices — a policy mix the Turkish leader, a pious Muslim, rejects citing Islamic laws against usury. According to official data, which many Turks are starting to question, prices last month rose by 21 per cent compared to November 2020.—AFP ■

Cyprus resumes energy search with ExxonMobil

CYPRUS announced on Wednesday it has resumed searching for oil and gas with US energy giant ExxonMobil after drilling operations stopped for more than a year because of coronavirus.

The search is focused on Block 10 of Cyprus's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Joint venture ExxonMobil and Qatar Energy have an exploration licence for Block 10. Work has begun there on appraisal drilling in Glafcus 2, where natural gas has been detected.

"With the appraisal drilling in Glafcus 2, the drilling programme resumes in the EEZ of Cyprus," Energy Minister Natasa Pilides tweeted on Wednesday. "We worked with our licensees to ensure the safety of their activities



Stena IceMAX is the world's only 6th Generation Ice-Class Harsh Environment dual-activity dynamically positioned (DP3) drillship, capable of drilling in water depths up to 10,000ft.

PHOTO: DRILLINGCONTRACTOR.ORG/AFP

amid the pandemic." The energy ministry said drilling conducted by the drillship Stena Forth would be "monitored continuously" by

officials. It is the first drilling operation off the Cyprus coast since the Covid-19 pandemic began in March 2020.—AFP ■

Czech, Slovak economies take hit from carmakers' Covid woes

HEAVILY dependent on car production, the Czech and Slovak economies are set to take a blow this year as the Covid-19 pandemic has crimped imports of chips from Asia.

Local producers had expected a recovery after the coronavirus forced suspensions in 2020, but their plans were marred by intermittent closures at semiconductor production centres.

Made largely in Asia, semiconductors are a key component in both conventional and electric vehicles.

The shortage wreaked havoc on the two countries that were Czechoslovakia until a peaceful split in 1993, and which are



Car production makes up 41 per cent of industrial output in Slovakia. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

home to a total of seven large car plants.

"The problems in the car industry slashed our GDP growth

(for 2021) by 1.1 percentage points," Helena Horská, an analyst at Raiffeisenbank in Prague, told AFP.—AFP ■

Japan PM asks business circles to raise wages next year

PRIME Minister Fumio Kishida on Thursday called for wage hikes ahead of annual labour-management negotiations early next year in Japan as he seeks to achieve his policy goal of wealth distribution.

In a meeting of Japan's powerful business lobby known as Keidanren, Kishida said, "To distribute (wealth) by raising wages

is to invest in the future." The prime minister, who took office in October with the slogan of creating a new form of capitalism, sees accelerating wage growth in Japan as holding the key. He has been calling for an over three per cent pay hike by companies whose earnings have recovered to pre-pandemic levels as annual "shunto"

wage negotiations end before the next business year begins in April.

Keidanren, formally known as the Japan Business Federation, does not plan to seek wage hikes across the board or set a numerical target for member companies.

"What's important is for each company to consider (how much they can

raise wages)," Keidanren chief Masakazu Tokura told the meeting attended by corporate executives who serve as the organization's councillors. Manufacturers have staged a faster recovery than non-manufacturers, especially service providers hit by anti-virus measures, from the COVID-19 pandemic fallout.—Kyodo ■



Workers dismantle the Unit 2 reactor at Chubu Electric Power Co.'s Hamaoka nuclear power plant in Omaezaki, Shizuoka prefecture. PHOTO: KYODO / FILE

Kyrgyzstan 'open to out-of-court settlement' in gold mine row

KYRGYZSTAN is open to settling its differences with the Canadian investor that operated its giant Kumtor gold mine before authorities took it over earlier this year, a top official said Wednesday.

Kyrgyzstan justified its May seizure of the mine, which accounted for 12.5 per cent of GDP in 2020, by citing company Centerra Gold's alleged violations of environmental laws and safety norms.

Centerra has strongly denied the accusations and the two parties are currently locked in international arbitration pro-



Kyrgyzstan's giant Kumtor gold mine accounted for 12.5 per cent of GDP in 2020. PHOTO: AFP

ceedings in Stockholm.

Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Edil Baisalov said in a statement early Wednesday that Kyrgyzstan is

"open to reaching an out-of-court settlement that satisfies all parties".

"However, we are also ready to pursue legal arbitration to its proper and

just conclusion," he added.

Baisalov said government investigators "continue to investigate compelling evidence of corruption involving Centerra from 2004" as well as other alleged violations.

Centerra has called the investigation an excuse to justify the mine's nationalization. In September the company warned that since its eviction, Kyrgyz authorities have "failed to adequately protect the mine's infrastructure from flooding and other threats and may be facing production difficulties".—AFP ■

TRADEMARK CAUTION NOTICE

Dabur India Limited, a company organized under the laws of India and having its principal office at 8/3, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi 110002, India is the owner and proprietor of the following trademarks;



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The above trademark is used in respect of "Hair care preparations including hair shampoo, hair oil, hair conditioner, hair lotions, hair cream, hair gel, serum and skin care preparations including skin lotions, skin cream, bleaching preparations and other cosmetic preparations" included in International Class 3.



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The above trademark is used in respect of "Air freshener, room freshener, perfumery preparation, disinfectant, bleaching preparations and other preparation for cleaning, soaps, essential oils" included in International Class 3.



The above trademark is used in respect of "Ayurvedic medicinal preparations" included in International Class 5.



The above trademark is used in respect of "Non-alcoholic drinks; fruit drinks and fruit juices and other preparations for making beverages" included in International Class 32.

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U Bo Bo

Advocate (Reg. No. 10664)

For Dabur India Limited

C/o Fame Myanmar Law Firm

No. 45/C, 2nd Floor, 50th Street (Lower Block), Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar.

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The following three pesticides distributed by **Taw Win Dar CO., LTD** and here we would like to pesticide trade name change advertising. Anyone who would like to object or inquiry about new trade name contact within 14 days to Joint-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon.

Taw Win Dar CO.,LTD 09-448027852.

Sr.	Old Trade Name	New Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Registration No.
1.	Mahar Fighter	Thia King 50% WDG	Thiamethoxam 50% WG	P2021-5229

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NORDMAAS VOY.NO. (148S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NORDMAAS VOY.NO. (148S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-12-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NASSJO VOY.NO. (150W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NASSJO VOY.NO. (150W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-12-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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Shipping Agency Department
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Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD.

NEWS
IN BRIEFEthiopia's warring
sides locked in
disinformation
battle

SINCE clashes erupted between Ethiopian forces and northern rebels more than a year ago, another war has flared up online as the rivals spread false claims to control the conflict's narrative.

Digital activists have been engaged in a fierce battle to discredit their opponents, from pro-government sites claiming to promote independent fact-checking to opponents sharing doctored content of alleged attacks.

Experts warn that these online campaigns have fed into an already explosive situation in a country with a history of ethnic polarisation.

"Inflammatory messages have worsened the situation in Ethiopia by sowing fear and confusion and further igniting tensions," Ethiopian media and human rights law expert Yohannes Eneyew Ayalew told AFP Fact Check.—AFP ■

Spanish police
thwart raffle of
holiday drug basket

SPANISH police have arrested two suspected drug dealers who were raffling off a Christmas basket containing cocaine, hashish, alcohol — and a leg of cured ham, they said Tuesday.

Officers discovered the unusual lottery when they raided a drug den allegedly operated by the two men, a Spaniard and an Argentinian, in the eastern city of Murcia, the police said in a statement, without adding when the arrests took place.

On the wall they found a list of clients taking part in two raffles to win a "narco-basket", one on Christmas Day and the other on Epiphany on 6 January, a major holiday in Spain, it added.

"The basket... included cocaine, hashish, tobacco, cash and even an eight-kilo cured ham," police said.

Tickets cost five euros (\$5) for the Christmas lottery and 10 euros (\$11) for the second draw, according to pictures released by police of handwritten signs found on the walls of the drug den.—AFP ■

Libya delays long-awaited election seen
as key to peace

AUTHORITIES overseeing war-torn Libya's first presidential election have confirmed that holding it on Friday as scheduled is "impossible" and suggested a month-long delay.

The vote was intended to mark a fresh start for the oil-rich North African country, a year after a landmark ceasefire and more than a decade after its 2011 revolt that toppled and killed dictator Moamer Kadhafi.

But speculation of a delay had been mounting for weeks. There were bitter disputes over the vote's legal basis, the powers of the winner and the candidacies of several deeply divisive figures.

On Wednesday, the chairman of the parliamentary committee overseeing the vote wrote to the



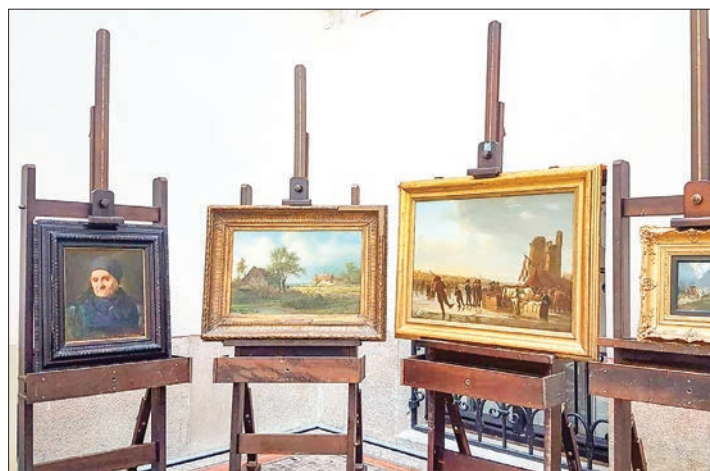
Libyan activists had gathered outside the Tripoli Municipality on 15 December 2021, to protest any possible postponement of national elections, but the delay happened on 22 December 2021, two days before the scheduled vote. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

assembly's speaker saying that "after consulting the technical, judicial and security reports, we

inform you of the impossibility of holding the elections on the date of 24 December 2021".

It did not propose an alternative to Friday, a date set last year during UN-led peace talks in Tunis.

The election, intended to go hand-in-hand with parliamentary polls, was part of a United Nations-led peace process, yet the UN's special envoy Jan Kubis resigned just weeks before the ballot. Among the controversial candidates were Kadhafi's son Seif al-Islam, whom the International Criminal Court accuses of war crimes, and eastern military chief Khalifa Haftar, who led a failed assault on Tripoli. Interim prime minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah's candidacy also sparked controversy as he had pledged not to run as part of his original leadership bid.—AFP ■

Art stolen in France by
Nazis back to Jewish
owners: ministry

Four works of art looted in France by the Nazis during World War II have finally been returned to their Jewish owner's legal heirs. PHOTO: BAYERISCHE STAATSREGIERUNG/AFP/FILE

FOUR works of art looted in France by the Nazis during World War II have finally been returned to their Jewish owner's legal heirs, the culture ministry announced Wednesday.

The aquarelles and drawings by French 19th-century artists were seized in 1940 from Jewish-Egyptian businessman Moise Levi de Benzion, along with hundreds of other works.

The works were part of a major collection that he had assembled at his home in France, where he died in 1943, during the war.

For years the Louvre and Musee d'Orsay museums

in Paris had custody of the works, by Georges Michel, Paul Delaroche, Auguste Hesse and Jules-Jacques Veyrassat.

They were part of a collection of 2,200 works being kept until the owners or their heirs could be traced.

In 2018, the then prime minister Edouard Philippe set up a special unit to try to track down the rightful owners of such works rather than waiting for them to come forward.

Until these four works were returned, only 169 such works of art had been restored to their owners since 1951 out of all those held by the French state.—AFP ■

Mexico says refugee
requests tripled in 2021

APPLICATIONS for refugee status in Mexico have roughly tripled this year compared with 2020, the government said Tuesday, in the face of a relentless influx of US-bound migrants.

The Latin American nation has received 123,187 requests in 2021, up from 41,230 last year, Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard told reporters, describing the increase as "enormous".

The government and the United Nations were supporting the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance to deal with a backlog of applications, he said, adding that the organization needed more personnel and funding.

Mexico has a relatively sim-

ple asylum process and approves more than 95 per cent of applications, Ebrard added.

In recent months, tens of thousands of migrants fleeing poverty and violence have arrived in Mexico, where many are seeking asylum while waiting to try to enter the United States.

Human traffickers commonly hide undocumented migrants in trucks bringing them from Guatemala into Mexico, from where they head north to the US border.

Underscoring the dangers facing them, a horrific road accident on 9 December left 56 undocumented migrants dead after the truck transporting them overturned.—AFP ■



Representational image: Applications for refugee status in Mexico have roughly tripled this year compared with 2020, the government said Tuesday, in the face of a relentless influx of US-bound migrants. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Russia awaits security talks with US and NATO amid Ukraine crisis



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, left, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg are seen at a news conference at the European Union headquarters in Brussels on 16 December. **PHOTO: JOHN-THYS/AFP**

RUSSIAN Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Wednesday he expects negotiations with the United States over Moscow's security demands to begin in January, with growing

concerns over the conflict in Ukraine.

His comments come after US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Karen Donfried told reporters on Tuesday that she also understands talks with Russia will begin in January, warning that some Russian proposals were "unacceptable".

Moscow last week made sweeping security demands on the West in two draft documents, one addressed to NATO and the other to the United States.

"It was agreed that at the very beginning of next year, the first round (of talks) should be bilateral contact between our

negotiators and the Americans," Lavrov said in an interview with Russian news network RT.

Lavrov said plans were in place for these talks to be followed by negotiations between Russia and NATO, saying "we also want to do this in January".

On Wednesday, the European Union called on the United States and NATO to defend its interests, saying in a statement: "Today, the security of Europe is threatened".

Lavrov had warned the United States against extending negotiations and reiterated that while Russia does not want conflict, it is ready to take steps to defend itself.—AFP ■

US forces did not conduct virus tests for personnel leaving US

US forces in Japan did not test their personnel for novel coronavirus infections upon departure from the United States, going against Tokyo's request to follow its border control measures, the Japanese government said Thursday.

A government official earlier said the entire US forces in Japan did not conduct PCR tests on personnel upon departure, but later stated that whether it was a practice by all of them is still being checked.

The revelation came after a group infection was reported at the US Marine Corps' Camp

Hansen in Okinawa Prefecture earlier in the month and put under the spotlight how troops there did not conduct PCR tests on personnel upon departure.

A total of 227 people at Camp Hansen have been found infected with the virus as of Thursday morning, according to the government.

"We have requested the US side to thoroughly implement the maximum measures to prevent the spread of infections," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said during a regular news conference. Matsuno said he has received an explanation that the



Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno holds a press conference in the prime minister's office in Tokyo on 23 Dec 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

US forces in Japan have not conducted PCR tests upon departure and instead conducted them on the fifth day after arrival given the troops have already been vaccinated and would not leave the premises of the base facili-

ties until after their movement restrictions are lifted.

He added that final arrangements are being made to test those found infected with the novel coronavirus for the Omicron variant.—Kyodo ■

Iran announces anti-missile system for its tanks



Iran will be mounting an anti-missile system on the turrets of T-72M tanks to protect them against attacks. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

IRAN is to mount an anti-missile system on the turrets of T-72M tanks to protect them from attack, the Fars news

agency reported on Wednesday.

The report came during Iranian military exercises, and after the United States said it was preparing "alternatives" in case negotiations to revive a deal to curb Iran's nuclear programme collapse in Vienna.

"The system has been tested and will be installed on the tank turrets. It will be able to deflect all types of missiles by jamming their systems," Fars said, on the third day of land and sea military manoeuvres in three of the Islamic republic's southern provinces.

The agency also reported Iran's Revolutionary Guards land forces chief, General Mohammad Pakpour, as saying the tanks' main gun has a three-kilometre (1.9-mile) range and precision night-time capabilities.

On Tuesday, Iran's military fired several missiles from land and sea as part of the five-day exercise.

The drills are taking place in three Gulf coastal provinces, including in Bushehr, not far from the country's only nuclear power plant.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US Navy seizes guns it says heading from Iran to Yemen

THE US Navy has seized 1,400 AK-47 rifles and ammunition from a fishing boat it claimed was smuggling weapons from Iran to Huthi rebels in war-torn Yemen.

US Naval Forces Central Command, or NAVCENT, said it boarded the boat on 20 December in the North Arabian Sea, seized the weapons cache and five crew members — who identified themselves as Yemeni — before scuttling the vessel.

Yemen has been wracked by civil war since 2014, pitting Iran-backed Huthi rebels against the internationally-recognized government.

"US 5th Fleet ships seized approximately 1,400 AK-47 assault rifles and 226,600 rounds of ammunition from a stateless fishing vessel," a US navy statement Wednesday read. "The stateless vessel was assessed to have originated in Iran and transited international waters along a route historically used to traffic weapons unlawfully to the Huthis in Yemen."—AFP ■

Biden says a Trump candidacy would motivate second term run

THOUGH he isn't even a year into his first term, US President Joe Biden says one factor could help convince him to run again in 2024: a rematch against 2020 rival Donald Trump.

"That would increase the prospect of running," Biden told ABC News on Wednesday. When asked about whether he would stand for re-election, the 79-year-old Democrat responded that he would. "But look," he said. "I'm a great respecter of fate. Fate has intervened in my life many, many times. If I'm in the health I'm in now, if I'm in good health, then in fact I would run again."

And if that means facing off once more against 75-year-old former president Trump, who launched a no-holds-barred campaign against Biden last year? "You're trying to tempt me now," Biden said with a smile.

"Sure, why would I not run against Donald Trump if he were the nominee?"—AFP ■

Drawing-lots event for 3rd round Asian Cup Qualifiers to be held today

THE drawing-lots event for the 2023 Asian Cup Third Round Qualifiers in which Myanmar national men's football team are participating will be held today.

The qualifiers will be held from 8 to 14 June 2022 with a total of 24 teams divided into four groups of six.

According to the format of the tournament, the top six teams from each group and the top five teams from second

place, a total of 11 teams, will advance to the next stage.

There will be 24 teams competing in the final round of the 2023 Asian Cup, with 13 teams already out, including host China, leaving only 11 teams in the third round.

Myanmar, Kuwait, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, the Philippines, Jordan, Bahrain, Palestine, India, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Turkmenistan, Maldives, Nepal, Hong Kong, Singapore, Af-

ghanistan, Mongolia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Indonesia are participating in the tourney.

The team Myanmar started from the second round and was ranked as one of the top three teams, so it was possible to play the third round directly.

The Myanmar team has been paused training after the Suzuki Cup and will resume the training before the tourney.

—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Klopp, Conte keen for one-legged League Cup semi-finals



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp wants the League Cup semi-finals played over one-leg. PHOTO: OLISCARFF/AFP

LIVERPOOL manager Jurgen Klopp and Tottenham boss Antonio Conte have called for January's League Cup semi-finals to be switched to one-legged ties to ease fixture congestion.

Spurs have a backlog of three Premier League fixtures

due to postponements for bad weather and coronavirus outbreaks among the squad, while Liverpool have also been impacted by four positive cases of Covid-19 over the past week.

Six of the scheduled 10 Premier League games last weekend were called off and

more are expected in the coming weeks as the authorities have decided to press ahead despite record numbers of positive cases across Britain.

The two-legged semi-finals of last year's League Cup were cut back to one game due to the backlog caused by a late start to the season by the pandemic.

As it stands Liverpool will face Arsenal in the first two midweeks of January with Conte facing his old club Chelsea in the last four.

"I think it would be better with one game absolutely, but obviously what I say is not too important," said Klopp, who revealed a Premier League managers' meeting will take place on Thursday to address a series of coronavirus concerns.

"If there are two games, then we will play two games. But it would be helpful if there was only one, true. —AFP ■

Gerrard says Villa player 'reluctant to get out of car' due to Covid fears

ASTON Villa manager Steven Gerrard said fear of Covid-19 is so heightened that one of his players was reluctant to get out of his car.

An outbreak at Villa saw their match against Burnley last Saturday postponed at short notice, with Gerrard warning Wednesday that it will be a "nightmare" if the Midlands club have to tackle two matches in two days with just 14 players

available.

"We had a situation at the weekend where one of the players was reluctant to get out of his car because he had some symptoms and he's got a young family, and you can totally understand his view in his situation," Gerrard said.

"This is a guy who's got a young family, it is Christmas time, and that's the situation everyone is in."

The former Liverpool and England midfielder added: "No-one wants to get this virus. Everyone wants to protect their own families. This is our job and your priority is always going to be your family, of course it is.

"Thankfully he was tested after and he didn't have a situation, but that player would not have been available for me on the day, and these are the little situations that people don't see. —AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

- To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

- To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

- To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
- To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Real round off year on a high as Atletico suffering continues

KARIM Benzema scored the goals in Real Madrid's 2-1 win at Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday to send Carlo Ancelotti's side into the winter break eight points clear atop La Liga.

As Real ended the year with a bang, city rivals and defending champions Atletico Madrid suffered their fourth straight defeat, a 2-1 reverse at Granada, to leave them fifth but a yawning 17 points adrift.

Benzema ultimately put the fixture out of reach of Re-

al's Basque hosts in a matter of minutes, Oihan Sancet pulling one back with his speedy 10th minute reply which hit the woodwork before evading Thibaut Courtois.

Benzema's 14th and 15th goals of the season consolidated his position at the top of the league's goalscoring chart.

Earlier Atletico's shaky defence of their La Liga crown took another big hit with injured duo Antoine Griezmann and Stefan Savic absent.—AFP ■



Benzema celebrates his opener. PHOTO: AFP