

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

New Community-based Tourism destination Galmoe Pond created in Kyaukpadaung Tsp

THE Galmoe Pond has become a community-based tourism destination with the potential natural and cultural resources of the local community.

The Galmoe Pond is located between Legwa and Latpantai villages, two miles and three furlongs north from the Kyatmauktaung Dam, which is seven miles away from the Kyaukpadaung-Meiktila Road in Kyaukpadaung Township, Nyaung-U District, Mandalay Region.

After Deputy Director U Win Aung of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Bagan Branch) and officials concerned conducted many observations about the potential Galmoe Pond, the Community-Based Tourism destination is created. The undamaged ecosystem in the south of Mount



Galmoe Pond – one of the DOHT-explored ecotourism destinations in Kyaukpadaung Township. **PHOTO: KO HTEIN, KPD**

Popa and the natural and cultural features of the site will attract local travellers and tourists. It will create job opportunities for the residents and promote natural resources conservation as well, U Myo Min Aung, the assistant director (Bagan Branch) explained.

The 90-year preserved body of the monk U Canda can be seen. The visitors can go on an adventure tour to the rocky ravine with Galmoe, Latngachaung, Gaetalonso, Sakawwine and Byawbyawkya ponds. The travellers can pay homage to the pagodas

in Legwa and Latpantai.

To enhance the livelihoods of the local community, new CBT and ecotourism destinations are being explored in Kyaukpadaung Township for the post-COVID period, the DOHT stated. – Ko Htein, KPD/ GNLM

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Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn replies to queries raised by reporters from South China Morning Post from China, Nikkei Asian News, Kyodo News, TBS and Asahi Shimbun from Japan

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Objectives of 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

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

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*

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Local products need more attractive packaging for travellers in Sagaing Region



PACKAGING for local products should be made attractive to and easy to carry for travellers, said

U Aung Thu Oo, the head of the Sagaing Region Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

“Most of the travellers purchase souvenirs from everywhere they visit. For example,

when visitors arrive in Mingun, locals need to display from now on which products are from this area. There are many local products in Myanmar. But the products should make attractive to and easy to carry. When people get to a place, they like to take the memory of that place. The regions have also received revenue from tourists and they are buying some products of the region. Then, they love to come back to the place again,” he added.

The Sagaing Region Directorate of Hotels and Tourism is making effort to develop the tourism sector depending on the situation in cooperating with the officials. Revenues from the tour-

ism sector did not come from hotels and lodges, he was quoted as saying.

“No matter what, the travellers are spending their money not only in the hotels but also in the local foods. The domestic tourism services also generate revenue. The pagodas are also received the donation money. The souvenirs shops are also selling well their local products if they make sure their products are more attractive to the travellers,” U Aung Thu Oo elaborated.

He assumed that the tourism sector will be more developed if they can gradually cooperate, it is learnt. — Lu Lay/GNLM

2,938 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 24 February, total figure rises to 578,446

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **578,446** after **2,938** new cases were reported on 24 February 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **528,717** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **19,353** after **4** died.—MNA

Promote education as a priority for strengthening democracy

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

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

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

21 FEBRUARY 2022

SPEECH BY PROFESSOR STEFAN TALMON SECOND PRELIMINARY OBJECTION

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

1. It is an honour to appear before you.
2. My task today is to present Myanmar's second preliminary objection.
3. Let me start by saying that this case is unlike any other case ever brought before you under the Genocide Convention: The Gambia alleges genocide committed outside its own territory against persons who are not its nationals. There is no link whatsoever between The Gambia and the facts of the alleged acts.
4. This raises questions of The Gambia's standing in this case.

The requirement of standing in international legal proceedings

5. Under customary international law, a fundamental condition for the admissibility of claims is that the State espousing a claim must have the standing to do so. Standing refers to the right to present a claim to the Court. It requires the showing of individual prejudice or individual legal interest in the subject matter of the claim. Such individual interest must be distinguished from a mere general interest that could be invoked by any State.
6. International law does not know of an "actio popularis" giving each and every State standing to challenge any alleged internationally wrongful act before a court¹. The Gambia accepts this.
7. There is no question that an injured State, as the State adversely affected by an internationally wrongful act, has the standing to present a claim to the Court. The Gambia, however, is not an injured State and nor does it claim to be.
8. As a non-injured State, The Gambia must therefore establish its standing before the Court by demonstrating an indi-



vidual legal interest in the subject matter of its claims. This, The Gambia has failed to do.

9. The subject matter of a claim is determined by the submissions. In essence, The Gambia requests the Court to declare that Myanmar is responsible for violations of the Genocide Convention because it allegedly committed acts of genocide against members of the affected community in Myanmar's northern Rakhine State.

10. A non-injured State can have standing only if, upon a proper construction of the Genocide Convention, it can be concluded: First, that it is intended to have individually a legal interest in the observance by every other Contracting Party of the obligations under the Convention, even where a breach of these obligations does not affect its material interests, either directly or through its nationals; and Second, that, in view of the said legal interest, it is entitled not only to call upon the competent

organs of the United Nations under Article VIII of the Convention but also to institute with regard thereto contentious judicial proceedings before this Court.

11. Humanitarian considerations cannot in themselves generate a legal interest. As the Court once noted: "It is a court of law, and can take account of moral principles only in so far as these are given a sufficient expression in legal form."²

12. The question which the Court must thus decide is whether the Genocide Convention vests a legal and not just political or humanitarian interest in the observance of the Convention in The Gambia individually and in its own right, entitling it to request the Court to declare that Myanmar is responsible for violations of the Convention by allegedly committing genocidal acts against members of the affected community in Myanmar's northern Rakhine State.

13. If The Gambia does not possess such a legal interest, it does not have the standing

to seek the requested declarations, even if the various allegations were assumed to be meritorious.

No individual legal interest on the part of The Gambia
Madam President, Members of the Court,

14. Myanmar submits that the Genocide Convention does not vest an individual legal right or legal interest in the Contracting Parties with regard to alleged acts of genocide committed against non-nationals outside their own territory. There is no indication in the Convention that the Court was ever intended to act as a general judicial supervisory authority at the instance of every Contracting Party.

Common and individual legal interests distinguished

15. Let me observe at the outset that the Court has never found that each Contracting State has an individual "legal interest" in the observance by every other Contracting State of the obligations under the Genocide Convention in all circumstances. In its Advisory Opinion on *Reservations to the Genocide Convention*, the Court stated:

"In such a convention the contracting States do not have any interests of their own; they merely have, one and all, a *common interest*, namely, the accomplishment of those high purposes which are the *raison d'être* of the convention."³

16. And in its Provisional Measures Order in the present case, the Court held that

"all States parties to the Genocide Convention have a *common interest* to ensure that acts of genocide are prevented and that, if they occur, their authors do not enjoy impunity"⁴.

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1. 1. South West Africa, Second Phase, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1966, p. 6 at p. 47, para. 88.
2. Ibid., p. 34, para. 49.
3. Reservations to the Convention on Genocide, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports

1951, p. 15 at p. 23 (italics added).
4. Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar), Provisional Measures, Order of 23 January 2020, I.C.J. Reports 2020, p. 3 at p. 17, para. 41 (italics added).

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17. A “common interest” in the accomplishment of the high purposes of the Convention is not the same as an individual legal interest intended to be enforceable before this Court. In fact, in its Advisory Opinion, the Court expressly distinguished between the “common interest” of all contracting States and the “legal interest of a signatory State in objecting to a reservation” to the Genocide Convention.⁵

18. The limited meaning of the term “common interest” in the prevention and punishment of genocide is also shown by Articles VI and VII of the Convention. These do not confer any entitlement on the Contracting Parties to try alleged perpetrators of genocide for acts committed outside their territory, or to request their extradition in respect of such acts.

19. In the *Bosnian Genocide* case, the Court expressly observed that claims in respect of alleged genocide committed outside the Applicant’s territory against non-nationals “could raise questions about the legal interest or standing of the Applicant”.⁶ This shows that the question of “legal interest” or standing has by no means been settled by the finding of a “common interest”.

20. Common interest may imply, as the Court found in its Provisional Measures Order, that “the obligations in question are owed by any State party to all the other States parties to the Convention”, but this says nothing about whether each and every State Party has an individual legal interest that can be pursued in judicial proceedings.

21. For example, under Article V of the Genocide Convention all parties are obligated to enact the necessary legislation to give effect to the provisions of the Convention and, in particular, provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide.

Madam President, Members of the Court,

22. Can it really be said, for example, that Liechtenstein has an individual legal interest entitling it to bring a case before this Court alleging that say Tonga violates the Genocide Convention because it considers the penalties for genocide prescribed by Tonga to be ineffective – the answer must surely be “No”!

23. Let us assume that each Contracting Party of the Genocide Convention had in fact such a judicially enforceable legal interest. This would mean that each of the

136 Contracting Parties that have not made a reservation to the Court’s jurisdiction could at any time bring a case before the Court against any one of the other 135 such Contracting Parties alleging that the latter violated their obligations under the Convention. As Myanmar has shown in its written pleadings, due to the inapplicability of *res judicata*, the other 134 Contracting Parties would not be bound by any ruling of the Court in such a case, so that these other Contracting Parties could successively litigate the same claims against the same respondent over and over again.⁷

24. In the 71 years since the Genocide Convention entered into force, no State has ever tried to bring a claim before the Court concerning a violation of the Convention that did not affect its own interests as a State or those of its nationals – and there were many such alleged genocides throughout the world. This fact may not be conclusive in itself but is indicative that Parties do not generally consider themselves to have the standing to request the Court to declare that another Contracting State is responsible for violations of the Convention in the absence of any individual prejudice to themselves.

No individual legal interest can be derived from the jurisdictional clause in Article IX

Madam President, Members of the Court,

25. The Gambia argues that Article IX of the Genocide Convention supports its view that it has the standing to seize the Court in the present case, despite the fact that it is not specifically or directly injured.⁸ Article IX, however, deals with jurisdiction, not with admissibility. In particular, it does not deal with the question of standing. It is Myanmar’s argument that standing requires an individual legal interest to present the claims to the Court.

26. No such individual legal interest can be derived from the jurisdictional clause in Article IX. As the Court has noted, “jurisdictional clauses are adjectival, not substantive in their nature and effect.”⁹ The capacity to invoke a jurisdictional clause does not settle the question of whether a State also has standing. As the Court itself has pointed out, even the wide language found in optional clause declarations under Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Court’s Statute – encompassing “all disputes” – does not absolve the State invoking these

clauses from establishing an individual legal interest in the subject-matter of the claim.¹⁰

27. In its Written Observations, The Gambia attempted at great length to demonstrate that under Article IX the Court has jurisdiction; what it has not done is to prove that it has an individual legal interest, that it has standing.

No individual legal interest follows from the erga omnes partes character of the obligations under the Genocide Convention

Madam President, Members of the Court,

28. The Gambia also argues that it has the standing to seize the Court because the obligations under the Genocide Convention are obligations *erga omnes partes* which entitle any Contracting Party to invoke the responsibility of another Party and seek reparation without having to prove a special interest.¹¹

29. However, the fact that a treaty establishes obligations *erga omnes partes* does not automatically grant every Contracting Party standing before the Court. An obligation’s substantive character is distinct from the procedural requirements of jurisdiction and admissibility.

30. The Court has observed that “the *erga omnes* character of a norm and the rule of consent to jurisdiction are two different things’ [...] and that the mere fact that rights and obligations *erga omnes* may be at issue in a dispute would not give the Court jurisdiction to entertain that dispute.”¹²

It is submitted that the same reasoning applies to the relationship between obligations *erga omnes partes* and standing. 31. The *erga omnes partes* character of an obligation as such cannot form the basis for the admissibility of a claim. As pointed out by Judge Xue in *Belgium v. Senegal*, “there is no general standing resident with each and every State to bring a case in the Court for the vindication of a communal interest.”¹³

32. Even more pertinent to the present proceedings is the *Barcelona Traction* case where the Court held that obligations *erga omnes* derive, inter alia, from the outlawing of acts of genocide and from the principles and rules concerning the basic rights of the human person.¹⁴ However, this characterisation of the obligations did not settle the question of the admissibility

of claims. The Court observed that even instruments which embody human rights do not confer on the Contracting States the capacity to protect the victims of infringements, “irrespective of their nationality.”¹⁵ In this connection, it may be recalled that Judge Shahabuddeen observed that it was not unreasonable to describe the Genocide Convention as “the first human rights instrument adopted by the United Nations”.¹⁶

33. And Judge Ammoun stated in the *Barcelona Traction* case that “a State which acts proprio motu for the defence of [...] a collective interest, must nevertheless prove the existence of a lawful interest which is legally protected.”¹⁷

34. In the *Bosnian Genocide* case, the applicant sought, inter alia, a declaration of violations of the Genocide Convention with regard to alleged genocide committed outside its territory against non-nationals. The Court stated:

“Insofar as that request might relate to non-Bosnian victims, it could raise questions about the legal interest or standing of the Applicant in respect of such matters and the significance of the *jus cogens* character of the relevant norms, and the *erga omnes* character of the relevant obligations.”¹⁸

35. The Court did not need to address these questions in that case, but the quoted passage shows that the *erga omnes partes* character of the obligations under the Genocide Convention does not automatically establish standing.

Invocation of responsibility and admissibility of claims distinguished

Madam President, Members of the Court,

36. The Gambia bases its standing also on the argument that as a Party to the Genocide Convention it is entitled to invoke the responsibility of another State Party for a breach of obligations *erga omnes partes* without having to prove a special interest.¹⁹

This argument calls for two observations: 37. First, the invocation of the responsibility belongs to the law on State responsibility. According to the International Law Commission – the ILC –, invocation should be understood as taking measures of a relatively formal character: for example, the commencement of proceedings before an international court or tribunal.²⁰

38. The ILC, however, noted in its commentary on the Articles on State Respon-

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5. Reservations to the Convention on Genocide, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1951, p. 15 at p. 29.

6. Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2007, p. 43 at p. 120, para. 185.

7. POM, p. 99-100, 105-106.

8. MG, vol. I, p. 40, para. 2.23; and p. 42, para. 2.26; WOG, p. 27, paras. 3.17-3.18.

9. South West Africa, Second Phase, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1966, p. 6 at p. 39, para. 64.

10. Ibid., p. 42, para. 73.

11. MG, vol. I, p. 40, para. 2.23; and p. 42, para. 2.26; WOG, pp. 23-27.

12. Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (New Application: 2002) (*Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Rwanda*), Jurisdiction and Admissibility, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2006, p. 6 at p. 32, para. 64.

13. Questions relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite (*Belgium v.*

Senegal), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2012, p. 422 at p. 575, para. 15 (diss. op. Xue).

14. *Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company, Limited*, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1970, p. 3 at p. 32, para. 34.

15. Ibid., p. 47, para. 91.

16. Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Preliminary Objections, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1996, p. 595 at p. 637 (sep. op. Shahabuddeen).

17. *Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company, Limited*, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1970, p. 3 at p. 326 (sep. op. Ammoun).

18. Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2007, p. 43 at p. 120, para. 185.

19. MG, vol. I, p. 40, para. 2.23; and p. 42, para. 2.26; WOG, p. 40, para. 3.45.

20. Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, Commentary on Article 42, ILC Yearbook 2001, vol. II/2, p. 117, para. 2; MG, vol. II, Annex 15.

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sibility that the “present Articles are not concerned [...] with the conditions for the *admissibility* of cases brought before [international] courts or tribunals. Rather, they define the conditions for [...] the invocation of that responsibility by another State or States.”²¹

39. Thus, no conclusions from the law of State responsibility can be drawn for the admissibility of claims and the question of standing. In particular, a right to invoke responsibility does not automatically mean that a State has an individual legal interest entitling it to bring a claim before an international court or tribunal.

40. Second, the invocation of responsibility may very well require proof of special legal interest, particularly where the alleged violation of international law is committed against individuals as in the present case.

41. The Genocide Convention belongs to the group of treaties concerning the protection of human rights²² wherein the words of the ILC – “the individuals concerned should be regarded as the ultimate beneficiaries and in that sense as the holders of the relevant rights.”²³

42. In this context, subparagraph (a) of Article 44 of the Articles on State Responsibility is of particular relevance. The provision, which reflects customary international law,²⁴ states:

“The responsibility of a State may not be invoked if: (a) the claim is not brought in accordance with any applicable rule relating to the nationality of claims”.

43. According to the nationality of claims rule, a State may protect individuals or groups of individuals, when injured by acts contrary to international law committed by another State, only if they are its nationals. States are not entitled to protect non-nationals. It is the bond of nationality that establishes the special legal interest on the part of the State of nationality which entitles it to invoke the international responsibility of the wrongdoing State.

44. The ILC stated with regard to the nationality of claims rule:

“[C]ertain questions which would be classified as questions of admissibility when raised before an international court is of a more fundamental character. They are conditions for invoking the responsibility of a State in the first place. [...]

Subparagraph (a) [...] makes it clear that the nationality of claims rule is not only relevant to questions of [...] the admissibility of claims before judicial bodies but is also a general condition for the invocation of responsibility in those cases where it is applicable.”²⁵

45. The nationality of claims rule applies to the invocation of responsibility by both injured and non-injured States irrespective of whether the obligation breached is an *erga omnes partes* or an *erga omnes* obligation. This is clearly shown by Article 42 subparagraph (b) and Article 48 paragraphs (1) and (3) of the Articles on State Responsibility.

46. The Gambia argues that if a State has the right “to invoke the responsibility of another State [...] then that State necessarily has standing”.²⁶ However – as just shown – under the law of State responsibility, The Gambia cannot invoke the responsibility of Myanmar for violations of the Genocide Convention with regard to individuals who are not its nationals.

47. If that is so, then – according to The Gambia’s own logic – it also does not have standing.

Distinction of the present case from the case concerning Questions relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite
Madam President, Members of the Court

48. The Gambia invokes the responsibility of Myanmar with regard to an alleged genocide committed outside its own territory against non-nationals. These facts distinguish the present case from all other cases referred to by The Gambia.

49. In particular, the *Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite* case between Belgium and Senegal, on which The Gambia heavily relies, did not address the question of nationality of claims. Belgium did not claim that Senegal had violated the Convention against Torture by subjecting individuals to acts of torture. Belgium rather claimed that Senegal had violated its obligations owed to Belgium to conduct a preliminary enquiry and to submit the case of an alleged offender present in its territory to its competent authorities for prosecution. In that context, the Court found that Bel-

gium could invoke Senegal’s responsibility for alleged breaches of these obligations because they constituted “obligations *erga omnes partes*” in the sense that each State party has an interest in compliance with them in any given case.”²⁷ Each State Party to the Convention, including Belgium, could thus invoke the responsibility as an injured State individually without having to prove that it had been specifically affected by the breach of the obligation.²⁸

50. Based on *Belgium v. Senegal*, the Court concluded in its Provisional Measures Order that

“any State party to the Genocide Convention, and not only a specially affected State, may invoke the responsibility of another State party with a view to ascertaining the alleged failure to comply with its obligations *erga omnes partes*, and to bring that failure to an end.”²⁹

51. This statement calls for several observations. First, it was included in the Provisional Measures Order without the Court having had the benefit of legal argument by the parties; or, in other words, it has not been subjected to the “*principe de contradictoire*”. It is submitted that in view of its far-reaching consequences for the invocation of the responsibility for breaches of obligations *erga omnes partes* in other treaties, the statement requires a careful rethink in light of Myanmar’s arguments.

52. Second, the statement only refers to the invocation of responsibility, it does not deal with the conditions of standing before international courts and tribunals. Any reading of this statement, equating invocation of responsibility with the standing, would be difficult to reconcile with the Court’s long-standing jurisprudence on *actio popularis*, or better its non-existence in international law.³⁰ In this context Judge De Castro’s statement on the Court’s characterisation of human rights as obligations *erga omnes* in the *Barcelona Traction* case may be recalled:

“It seems to me that the *obiter* reasoning expressed therein should not be regarded as amounting to recognition of the *actio popularis* in international law; it should be interpreted more in conformity with the general practice accepted as law. I am unable to believe that by virtue

of this dictum the Court would regard as admissible, for example, a claim by State A against State B that B was not applying ‘principles and rules concerning the basic rights of the human person’ with regard to the subjects of State B or even State C.”³¹ Indeed, the Court expressly found such a claim to be inadmissible when it stated in the often-overlooked paragraph 91 of its *Barcelona Traction* judgment that

“on the universal level, the instruments which embody human rights do not confer on States the capacity to protect the victims of infringements of such rights irrespective of their nationality.”³²

If universal human rights instruments do not allow the Contracting Parties to protect non-nationals, the same must be true for the Genocide Convention.

53. Third, there is no indication that the invocation of responsibility for violations of obligations *erga omnes partes* is exempt from the general conditions set out in Articles 43 to 45 of the Articles on State Responsibility and, in particular, the nationality of claims requirement. On the contrary, Article 44 subparagraph (a) states in rather absolute terms that the “responsibility of a State may not be invoked if the claim is not brought in accordance with any applicable rule relating to the nationality of claims.” That there was no need for the Court to deal with the nationality of claims rule in *Belgium v. Senegal* does not mean that it is not applicable in the present case.

Concluding observations
Madam President, Members of the Court,

54. Let me conclude with some general observations.

55. The Gambia may well seek to argue that the requirement of standing in international legal proceedings is undesirable in light of the Genocide Convention’s high humanitarian objectives, and The Gambia might even try to frighten you again by stating that a denial of standing would cause a scandal and cast the Court into a wilderness for decades.³³ However, as the Court itself pointed out:

“If on a correct legal reading of a given situation, certain alleged rights are found

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21. Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, Commentary on Article 44, ILC Yearbook 2001, vol. II/2, p. 120-121, para. 1 (italics added).

22. United Nations Treaty Collection, Chapter IV: Human Rights, 1: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, https://treaties.un.org/pages/Treaties.aspx?id=4&subid=A&clang=_en; Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Preliminary Objections, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1996, p. 595 at p. 626, para. 4 (decl. Oda), pp. 645-646 and 650 (sep. op. Weeramantry).

23. Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, Commentary on Article 33, ILC Yearbook 2001, vol. II/2, p. 95, para. 3.

24. *Mavrommatis Palestine Concessions*, Judgment No. 2, 1924, P.C.I.J., Series A, No. 2, p. 12.

25. Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, Commentary on Article 44, ILC Yearbook 2001, vol. II/2, p. 121, paras. 1 and 2; POM, vol. III, Annex 69, p. 562.

26. WOG, p. 24, para. 3.10.

27. Questions relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite (*Belgium v. Senegal*), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2012, p. 422 at p. 459, para. 68.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 449-450.

29. Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*The Gambia v. Myanmar*), Provisional Measures, Order of 23 January 2020, I.C.J. Reports 2020, p. 3 at p. 17, para. 41.

30. South West Africa, Second Phase, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1966, p. 6 at p. 47, para. 88; Nuclear Tests (*Australia v. France*), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1974, p. 253 at p. 288 (sep. op. Gros); Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*Croatia v. Serbia*), Preliminary Objections, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2008, p. 412 at p. 636, para. 197 (diss. op. Kreca); Questions relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite (*Belgium v. Senegal*), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2012, p. 422 at p. 575, para. 15 (diss. op. Xue).

31. Nuclear Tests (*Australia v. France*), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1974, p. 253 at p. 387, para. 2 (diss. op. De Castro).

32. *Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company, Limited*, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1970, p. 3 at p. 47 para. 91.

33. Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*The Gambia v. Myanmar*), CR 2019/20, p. 30, para. 3.

FROM PAGE-5

to be non-existent, the consequences of this must be accepted. The Court cannot properly postulate the existence of such rights in order to avert those consequences. This would be to engage in an essentially legislative task, in the service of political ends the promotion of which, however desirable in itself, lies outside the function of a court-of-law.³⁴

56. In international law, the existence of obligations that cannot in the last resort be enforced by any legal process has always been the rule rather than the exception, and this was, even more, the case in 1948 than it is today.

57. The acceptance of The Gambia's claim to the standing would have repercussions far beyond the present case and the Genocide Convention. Besides the obligation to prevent and punish geno-

cide, the Court has identified, for example, the protection from racial discrimination, the right to self-determination and the prohibition of acts of aggression as *erga omnes* obligations. If this characterization automatically established standing, each State or each party to a relevant convention could, jurisdiction permitting, bring a case before the Court claiming a violation of these obligations irrespective of having suffered any material prejudice, either directly or through its nationals. This could lead to a potentially unmanageable proliferation of disputes.

58. Such a result would also raise questions of legitimacy with regard to the content of international responsibility. In its submissions, for example, The Gambia requests the Court to declare that Myanmar must perform the obligation of

reparation in the interest of the victims of the alleged genocidal acts.³⁵ It also states:

"That, failing agreement between the Parties on the amount of compensation and any additional forms of reparation [...] the question will be decided by the Court in a subsequent phase of the proceedings."³⁶

59. One may ask what mandate The Gambia has to negotiate the amount of compensation on behalf of the alleged victims, who are not its nationals. And, one may also ask what would prevent other States Parties to the Genocide Convention with equal standing from instituting their own proceedings before the Court if they were dissatisfied with the amount of compensation claimed by The Gambia.

60. Equating the concept of obligations *erga omnes partes* with standing would mean introducing the concept of *actio*

popularis to international law through the back door.

Such a far-reaching step cannot be based on The Gambia's flawed deduction from abstract legal principles but must be based on the consent of States and must find expression in the Genocide Convention itself.

61. For these reasons, Myanmar submits that The Gambia lacks standing in the present case, and that, accordingly, its application should be dismissed as inadmissible.

62. I thank the Court for its kind attention.

63. Madam President, it may now be a convenient time for a short break. Otherwise, may I ask you to call on Professor Kolb to present Myanmar's third preliminary objection.



34. South West Africa, Second Phase, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1966, p. 6 at p. 36, para. 57.
35. MG, vol. I, p. 507, 2.) B.).
36. Ibid., p. 510, 4.)

MoHT Union Minister attends opening ceremony of tourism research centre project and statistical research training

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung presided over an online opening ceremony of the tourism research centre project and statistical research training yesterday.

The event was also joined by the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai, the directors-general of the ministries concerned, officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mekong-Lancang cooperation unit, the president of the Myanmar Tourism Federation, instructors of the National Management Degree College and Mandalay University, trainees, staff and invitees among others.

At the ceremony, the Union minister said the establishment of the tourism research centre is one of the 21 projects, including poverty alleviation, woman empowerment, promotion of education and capability of young people from the Mekong-Lancang



member countries to be implemented in Myanmar under the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund (2021). Tourism is a major source of foreign income for developing countries and one

of the fastest-growing industries in the world.

By conducting tourism research, it can find the facts for marketing information, new tourism products and target

markets and the strategic tourism programmes.

For the first phase, the statistical research training courses, including lecture and practical sessions for 50 train-

ees from ministries concerned, universities and colleges and the Myanmar Tourism Federation. He then appreciated the support of China.

Afterwards, the Chinese ambassador said the establishment of the tourism research centre will be a supportive measure for the sustainable development of Myanmar's tourism industry and pledged to continue bilateral relations with Myanmar and China for tourism development.

Then, the relevant officials reported on the Mekong-Lancang cooperation works, intentions of the establishment of the centre.

The tourism research centre project is a one-year term from January 2022 to March 2023. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism will organize workgroups for the centre, research, tourism data survey and analysis. — MNA

Daily newspapers available online

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Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn replies to queries raised by reporters from South China Morning Post from China, Nikkei Asian News, Kyodo News, TBS and Asahi Shimbun from Japan

UNION Minister U Maung Maung Ohn replied to questions raised by reporters from South China Morning Post from China, and Nikkei Asian News, Kyodo News, TBS and Asahi Shimbun from Japan through videoconferencing on 23 February.

In his introductory speech in the interviews, the Union minister expressed his delightedness to meet them. On the opportune occasion, he said he would like to clarify matters related to Myanmar. He requested those reporters to send the information message to the international community and explanation on misinformation and one-sided accusations related to Myanmar.

Now, the State Administration Council has already turned one year term of discharging the State responsibilities. In reviewing the one-year endeavours, everybody may see the council carried out the appropriate tasks serving the interests of the State and citizens day and night. Especially, the council emphasized two national political processes such as prosperity of the country and food sufficiency while steadfastly implementing the two political processes such as strengthening a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and building a Union based on democracy and federalism.

Despite facing hindrances committed by unscrupulous terrorists to the tasks, it can be said that these tasks achieved success to some extent due to the trust and encouragement of the people. Recently, the government observed the Diamond Jubilee Union Day on a grand scale with the participation of cultural troupes from regions and states as well as all walks of life. It showed the understanding, trust and unity of all walks of life together with the State Administration Council in observing the grand ceremony.

Currently, NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations and non-NCA signatory EAOs, except the organizations declared as terrorist groups, have been invited to join the perpetual peace talks. Significantly, the topics in the perpetual peace talks will not be restricted in advance, and the talks are arranged as freely as possible. On the other hand, it will be the new step for the peace process as of this year.

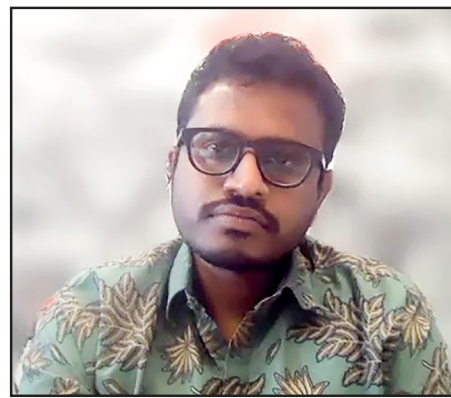


MoI Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn.

The Union minister continued to say that the State Administration Council has decided to strive for two national processes: the prosperity of the country and food sufficiency and for two political processes: building a Union based on genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and disintegration of peace and sovereignty as of this year in cooperation with the people.

In reply to the question raised by South China Morning Post of China: whether it is losing control/dominance of the country's peripheral region such as Rakhine, Chin and Kayah states where fighting has been intensifying, the Union minister said the reporter knows CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorists commit terror acts in some parts of Chin and Kayah states and Sagaing Region many times and do propaganda on lack of peace and stability in the country through social network pages. Their terror acts and unlawful activities cannot give the safety of life and property of the people. So, the security forces are on duty of taking necessary security measures for ensuring peace and stability of the regions and the rule of law round the clock.

As the State Administration Council places emphasis on security for regular running of social lives of the people, there is no loss in security dominance of the country. Security and stability of the State have been under control by cent per cent. The Tatmadaw addresses the threats of CRPH, NUG and PDF with arms in the border areas to fully protect the



The correspondent of South China Morning Post.

people. Some people sent complaints that they cannot accept the unlawful and brutally killings. Security and stability measures are being taken in all parts of the nation, and a total of 15,742 administrators have been appointed in 16,370 wards and villages of regions and states. And, a total of 2,619 new administrators have been appointed in the vacancies of 3,176 ward/village administrators who resigned from the positions due to threats of CRPH, NUG and PDF, and security measures have been taken fully in towns and villages.

The reporter asked about the response to the multiple reports of defections from the military. The Union Minister said that if that military personnel violate rules, action will be taken against them under the rules, regulations and laws of the Tatmadaw. Likewise, if members of the Myanmar Police Force violate the law, they will face action taken under the rules, regulations laws of the police force. The news on the Internet pages represent the events of some cowards who did

not dare to admit their guilty moves in breaking the law, and these events are exaggerated on the pages. A handful of those cowards were lured under the fear. The Tatmadaw members and MPF members are discharging their duties round the clock by cent per cent loyalty to the State and the people. The participation of State service personnel across the nation in the Diamond Jubilee Union Day ceremony proved their trust over the State Administration Council in fair and correct management.

The reporter asked one more question that isn't your insistence on characterizing the CDM/NUG/NUCC as linked to "terrorism"—in the same mould as Islamist terrorists—counter-reproductive in your efforts to win the hearts minds of the Myanmar people? Why don't you take a middle ground position? In his response, the Union Minister said CDM/ NUG/ NUCC groups were declared as terrorist organizations as they commit destruction to life and property of the people, blowing up of roads and bridges, setting fire to towns and villages and killing for no reason against the innocent people. As unlawful killings, setting fires, blowing up and exploding as well as accusing the people of informants are acts of terrorism, in reality, any country and government cannot accept these unlawful acts. So, CDM/ NUG/ NUCC are exactly identified as inhumane terrorist groups.

The Union minister continued his clarification, saying that during the period from 1 February 2021 to 20 January 2022, terrorists destroyed 525 bridges and roads, 27 hospitals and clinics and 504 schools and education buildings, killed 20 Buddhist monks, 95 government service personnel and left 153 personnel injured. In 9,437 terror acts within a year, 4,338 terrorists were arrested along with seizures of 5,606 assorted arms, 161,556 assorted ammunition, 1,890 grenades and 11,424 homemade mines/mines. CDM/ NUG/ NUCC terrorist groups violate the laws to undermine the peace and stability of the State by posing threats to the people with brutally killing Buddhist monks and people.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

Utilize roads and bridges in border areas for development

NOWADAYS, the government is emphasizing the plan to narrow the development gap between the border areas and mainlands as well as the border areas and that from other countries.

The living standards and daily lifestyle of the people residing in Myanmar side are very different from those from other neighbouring countries. Hence, local authorities and people are in harmony to strive for the development of their areas under the auspices of the Union government.

Road and bridges in all areas of the nation, including border regions and remote areas, are reliable infrastructures to help the local people enjoy the improvement of living standards and to contribute towards the development of local businesses. As such, the local people are responsible for the maintenance of these infrastructures as well as have a chance to taste the fruits of development.

financial year to 2030-31 financial year.

Up to 31 January 2022 of the 2021-22 financial year, a total of 4,896 small and large bridges have been built across the nation, including 358 bridges of more than 100 feet in length and 4,372 bridges under 100 feet in length and 166 suspension bridges.

During the period, the ministry built more than 10,303 miles long earthen roads, 7,207 miles long gravel roads, more than 177 miles long laterite roads, over 3,175 miles long asphalt roads, more than 46 miles long repaved roads, more than 91 miles long concrete roads, 543 miles long expanded roads, 5,101 miles long renovated roads, 2,422 conduits and 5,736 culverts.

Road and bridges in all areas of the nation, including border regions and remote areas, are reliable infrastructures to help the local people enjoy the improvement of living standards and to contribute towards the development of local businesses. As such, the local people are responsible for the maintenance of these infrastructures as well as have a chance to taste the fruits of development.

COVID-19 infection can be detected in breath tests: Study

ACCORDING to a new study, traces of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus that causes COVID-19 can be detected in microscopically small fluid droplets exhaled during a very short time span.

Researchers from the University of Gothenburg found that aerosol particles with the ribonucleic acid (RNA) virus can be found early in the course of COVID-19.

The study was published in the journal 'Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses'.

Few breaths are sufficient

New research demonstrated that a few breaths are sufficient for detecting traces of viruses in small fluid droplets. This immediately leads to conjecture about possibly replacing unpleasant nasal swab tests with convenient and easy breath tests.

Emilia Viklund, a doctoral student in occupational and environmental medicine and lead author of the study said, "We show that aerosol particles with the ribonucleic acid (RNA) virus can be found early in the course of COVID-19. The particles we

can detect are very small-less than five micrometres in diameter and we have here managed to capture particles with RNA virus in just a few breaths."

In an initial small study involving only 10 subjects conducted in the autumn of 2020, only one of the samples was positive. The researchers believed this resulted from conducting measurements too late in the course of the disease.

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests

In collaboration with Sahlgrenska University Hospital, which allowed parallel measurement in connection with employees taking polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests on the hospital grounds, the study eventually evolved to include more subjects in an earlier stage of the disease. These measurements were conducted in the spring of 2021 on medical professionals who had just submitted positive PCR samples for COVID-19.

Three different techniques were used to collect the samples. They were 20 normal breaths technique in which study sub-

jects briefly hold their breath after a very deep exhalation and a technique in which the study subject coughed three times into the instrument.

The research showed that coughing generated the most positive breath samples collected with PEXa (8 of 25) which was followed by deep breathing (3 of 25) and regular breathing (2 of 25). Two positive aerosol samples from normal respiration were also generated when collected with the instrument Breath Explore, although these came from individuals who were separate from the PEXa findings with normal respiration.

Aerosol particles

"The quantity of aerosol particles we needed for the test was about one 10-millionth of the amount from nasal swab samples needed to detect viral RNA in regular respiration with PCR analysis," said Anna-Carin Olin.

"The findings from the deep-breathing manoeuvre came as a surprise. The amount of sample is minute. Fluid droplets that one exhales after deep breathing form largely in the small airways,



Traces of the SARS-CoV-2 virus detected in microscopically small fluid droplets exhaled with an instrument, developed by a research team at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. PHOTO: AGNES VIKLUN/ UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

where it is known that the virus can cause great damage. As a result, it would be exciting to further study the findings in the exhaled air in relation to disease

progression," added Olin.

The Alpha viral variant dominated when surveys were conducted, which caused the infection that often extended farther

down into the lungs compared with the now dominant Omicron variant.

SOURCE: ANI

France's Sanofi to seek Covid vaccine approval after delays

FRENCH pharmaceuticals giant Sanofi said Wednesday that its Covid-19 vaccine, developed with Britain's GSK, had delivered positive results after nearly a year of delays left it lagging far behind its rivals.

The two drugmakers said they will "seek regulatory authorization" for their vaccine in the United States and the European Union following phase 3 trials involving thousands of people.

The trials indicated that the vaccine was 100 per cent effective against severe Covid disease and hospitalization, Sanofi said in a statement.

Effective against all symptomatic Covid

It was also more than 50 per cent effective against all symptomatic Covid, the statement added.

Sanofi's vice-president for vaccines Thomas Triomphe said the data was "similar to the recent clinical data from authorized vaccines".



Sanofi's distribution centre in Val-de-Reuil, France. PHOTO: JOEL SAGET/AFP

He also emphasized that no other phase 3 study "has been undertaken during this period with so many variants of concern, including Omicron."

The announcement of the positive trials -- which have not

yet been released as is normal practice -- puts the vaccine on the last hurdle before a possible market launch.

Sanofi's share price rose nearly 1.5 per cent on the Paris stock exchange at midday.

Wounded French pride

If the vaccine receives authorization, it will mark the end of Sanofi's long struggle to develop a Covid vaccine following numerous setbacks.

The French firm originally

hoped to announce such results by mid-2021.

But the date was pushed back by six months due to a dosing error; then late last year was delayed again after difficulties finding people who had never been infected with Covid to take part in the trials.

The delays -- and the renowned Pasteur Institute abandoning plans to develop its own vaccine in early 2021 -- dented the pride of a country that considers itself a leader on pharmaceutical technology.

Sanofi also abandoned a previous vaccine project based on the mRNA technology used by its quicker rivals Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna, whose jabs have formed the backbone of vaccination efforts in many countries.

Focused on a vaccine

Sanofi is now focused on a vaccine using a slightly less innovative technique based on recombinant protein technology, also

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 24 February 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 25 February, 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in upper Sagaing, Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Chin states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in (north and east) Shan, Kayin and Mon states and generally fair 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 isolated rain or thundershowers in upper Sagaing, Taninthayi regions and Kachin state.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 February, 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 February, 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 February, 2022: Generally fair weather.

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Fourth day of Golden Jubilee Myanmar Health Research Congress held

THE fourth-day session of the 50th Myanmar Health Research Congress was held in Yangon yesterday.

In the morning session, the officials held a seminar under the topic of “Interprofessional Education (IPE) and Interprofessional Collaborative Practice (IPCP): Promise for Quality Health Workforce and Quality Healthcare”. The event was chaired by Director-General Prof Dr Tin Tun of the Department of Health Human Resources and Rector (retired) of the University of Nursing (Yangon) Prof Dr Myat Thanda.

Afterwards, Rector of the University of Medicine (2) Prof Dr Aye Aye Khin presented how health professionals integrate current co-curricular activities into current medical and clinical training under the topic “Navigating the Integration of



The fourth day of the Golden Jubilee Myanmar Health Research Congress in progress.

IPE into Medical and Allied Health Training Programmes: How far have we reached”.

Pro-Rector of the University of Nursing (Mandalay), Prof

Dr Nyi Nyi Htay (teaching), spoke on “Implementation off IPCP: Possibilities and Challenges”. Director of the Department of Health Human Re-

sources (Head Office) Dr Kyaw Soe Nyunt presented the cooperation activities between the Ministry and the departments, cooperation with INGOs in im-

plementing the IPE and IPCP sector, and plans for the future to achieve their goals under the topic “Way forward: Team Collaboration and Organizational Support”. Professors and medical experts who attended the event asked questions and participated in the discussion.

In the evening session, a total of 20 papers regarding basic research, applied research, social and health system research were presented through videoconferencing and the resource persons replied to the questions of online participants in the chatbox of the videoconference system.

The research posters are displayed with E-poster form at <https://conference.myanmar-dmr.org>, and those who want to join the congress can make registration free. The congress will be held until 25 February. — MNA

COVID-19 vaccines distributed nationwide

THE Tatmadaw medics, health workers and social welfare organizations make efforts in providing medical services for COVID-19 patients and isolated persons and in conducting vaccination processes at mil-

itary hospitals, public hospitals, health departments and COVID-19 centres.

Meanwhile, the vaccines are distributed to the regions and states by Tatmadaw aircraft and cold chain delivery

logistics vehicles.

The officials allocated Covaxin (per vial for 10 people) and Covidshield (per vial for 11 people) kept in the central vaccine store depot of the Public Health Department in Mayangon Township of Yangon Region yesterday.

The cold chain delivery logistics vehicles and MNA transported 800 doses of Covaxin and 138 doses of Covidshield to Matupi Township, 300 Covaxin and 108 Covidshield to Mindat Township, 44 Covidshield to Kanpetlet Township and 200 Covaxin and 313 Covidshield to Paletwa Township of Chin State, 700 Covaxin to Lashio of Shan State (north) and 2,500 Covaxin to Magway of Magway Region.

The allocated medical supplies will be distributed to other places. — MNA



Vaccines are loaded onto the cold chain vehicle for distribution across the nation.

MoC facilitates daily imports of essential anti-COVID-19 equipment

THE Ministry of Commerce is overseeing the importation of essential medical supplies plus anti-COVID 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.

Five vehicles carrying 28.63 tonnes of masks were imported by two companies via the Chinshwehaw trading post and two oxygen plants were imported via international seaports

yesterday.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures for the import process.

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

Public Notification

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

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

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

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

Public Notification

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

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

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

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions

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

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

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

Yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 1,510 people from three Townships in Shan State (North), 3,194 people from 12 townships in Mon and Kayin States, 593 people from Tam-



Inoculation is underway at one of the vaccination sites.

way Townships in Yangon Region, 23,112 people from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region, 8,430 people from seven townships in Rakhine State, 6,630 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region, respectively.

Similarly, healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 434 students from 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

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

CRIME NEWS

Illegal teak, unregistered vehicles confiscated across states/regions



Confiscated teak timbers.

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

On 20 February, a combined inspection team led by the Rakhine State Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force conducted an inspection and seized 71.7406 tonnes of illegal timbers (estimated at K5,638,486) in Taungup and Antownships, and action is taken under the Forest Law.

On 23 February, a combined inspection team led by the Yangon Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force led by the Region Forest Department conducted a surprise inspection, and a to-

tal of 0.895 tonne of illegal teak and door pieces (estimated at K268,500) were seized in Mingaladon Township, and action is taken under the Forest Law.

Similarly, combined inspections led by the State Forest Department under the auspices of the Mon State Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force conducted inspections in Mudon Township.

A total of 0.837 tonne (approximately K167,400) worth of illegal timber and door pieces were seized on the Mudon-Chaung Nakwa Road, and action is taken under the Forest Law.

Next, the Police Force under the management of the Sagaing

Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force seized a Toyota Wish vehicle without a licence (estimated at K3,000,000) in Sagaing Township on 24 February, and action is taken under the Import and Export Law.

According to the report, 17.4000 tonnes of illegal timbers (estimated at K1,137,500) were seized in the Thayawady District Forest Reserve under the management of the Bago Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force.

Therefore, a total of seven arrests (approximately K10,211,886) was made on 23 and 24 February, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA

Stimulant tablets seized in Tamway, Kengtung, Tachilek

A combined team consisting of members of the Myanmar Police Force confiscated 21,000 stimulant tablets during a search in the house of Khin Maung Soe (a) Arju Mullah in Tamway Township on the evening of 23 February.

On the same day, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-illegal Drugs Police Force seized 2,000 stimulant tablets from the vehicle driven by Arr Phu near Wankaung village, Mingzin village-tract, Kengtung Township in Shan State.

At around 6 pm, on the same day, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-illegal Drugs Police Force searched the house of Aik Lone in Pakhalone village, Naryaung village-tract, Tahley, Tachilek Township, Shan State.



Two arrestees are seen along with drugs and labelling device.

The team arrested two guards of the house together with 14 kilogrammes of stimulant tablet powder, 2.5 kilogrammes of caffeine and one tablet labelling device.

It is reported that action is being taken against the arrested suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to the Myanmar Police Force. — MNA

Woman imprisoned for trafficking girl to China

MYANMAR Police Force said a woman named Daw Ma Chay (alias) Ma Than has been jailed for trafficking a girl to China.

Daw Ma Chay (alias) Ma Than together with Ma Htay Htay Soe from Taungchay Village, Sittway Township, Rakhine State, Daw Kyaung Ma and Ma Aye Aye Soe from Ngahlawei Village, Kyaukpyu Township, and Ma Ni Ni Kyaw from Kyalgaung, China told Ma ... , 16-year-old from Sittway, Rakhine State that she would earn K3 million if she married

a Chinese man in China.

Then, she was trafficked to a Chinese man for financial gain.

The case was filed under Section 28 (a)/32 of Sittway Myoma Police Station (Pa) 386/2020 under the Prevention of Trafficking in Person Law at the Sittway District Court on 23 February.

Defendant Daw Ma Chay (alias) Ma Than was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment under the human trafficking law. — MNA

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Russia attack on Ukraine reverberates in energy-rich Gulf

RUSSIA'S assault on Ukraine is reverberating in the energy-rich Gulf, where top oil and gas producers face economic and political dilemmas in easing sky-high prices and alleviating shortages in Europe.

As oil prices broke past \$100 per barrel and risks of supply disruptions grew, eyes in Europe were increasingly focusing on oil kingpin Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, one of the biggest natural gas exporters.

And the calculations in Riyadh and Doha are much more nuanced than maximising financial gain from soaring prices, as market constraints and alliances with both the West and Russia are also paramount.

Qatar and Saudi Arabia "are facing a reality in which their main exports are in high demand," Karen Young, director



The Ras Laffan Industrial City, Qatar's principal site for production of LNG and gas-to-liquid, some 80 km north of the capital Doha. **PHOTO: AFP**

of the Program on Economics and Energy at the Middle East Institute in Washington, told AFP.

But she said the capacity to ramp up oil production and transport new supplies of liquefied nat-

ural gas was "not so simple".

"Investment conditions for either are not quick enough or at

the ready to be a superhero in the advent of a collapse of Russian oil and gas to Europe or globally," Young added.

Russian gas accounts for about 40 per cent of the European market, leaving the latter highly exposed to supply disruptions resulting from the conflict.

A similar logic applies to the 2.3 million barrels of Russian crude that heads west each day through a network of pipelines.

There were hopes in Europe and the United States that Qatar, one of the world's biggest LNG exporters, could temporarily redirect exports destined for Asian markets. Meanwhile, some major oil importers have called on the OPEC+ alliance of producing nations to pump faster and put pressure on the likes of Saudi Arabia to use some of their spare capacity.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

WTO to hold 1st ministerial meeting in over 4 years in June

THE World Trade Organization on Wednesday decided to hold a ministerial meeting for the first time in more than four years in mid-June after it was forced to put off the gathering twice due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The WTO said the meeting, serving as its highest decision-making body, will take place in Geneva during the week starting 13 June as COVID-19 travel restrictions and quarantine requirements in Switzerland have been eased. The exact dates of the meeting will be decided later, according to the WTO, headquartered in the Swiss city.—Kyodo ■

Hong Kong unveils \$22 bn budget for virus plagued economy

HONG Kong's finance chief on Wednesday unveiled a costly HK\$170 billion (\$21.79 billion) budget, including tax breaks and consumer spending vouchers, as the city reels under its worst coronavirus outbreak to date.

While rival finance centres emerging from pandemic isolation and reopening to the world, Hong Kong has found itself overwhelmed by the highly infectious Omicron variant after the city's previously successful zero-Covid strategy crumbled.—AFP ■

China's urbanization rate hits 64.72 pct in 2021



A farmer working in front of high-rise buildings in a new rural community in Huaxian County, Henan Province. **PHOTO: CHINATODAY/XINHUA**

CHINA'S urbanization rate of permanent residence hit 64.72 per cent in 2021, according to the country's top economic planner.

Over the past year, the country has seen an accelerated trend of rural residents moving to cit-

ies, said the National Development and Reform Commission.

The capacity of city clusters and circles has been enhanced, the quality of urban construction has been improved, and the integrated development of rural and

urban areas has also made new strides, the commission added.

It stressed a people-centered approach in advancing new urbanization strategy, promoting the high-quality development of urbanization in 2022. According to the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), China aims to raise its urbanization rate to 65 per cent in the period. The 14th Five-Year Plan highlights high-quality green development and emphasizes innovation as the core of modern development, relying on the dual circulation strategy as the growth paradigm coupled with reforms to increase living standards. Building on the achievements of the 13th Plan, it aims to reduce the carbon intensity of the economy and peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030.—Xinhua ■

Sri Lanka to spend 56 million USD on global tourism promotion

SRI Lanka plans to allocate 56 million US dollars for tourism promotion activities in its main tourist source countries during the second quarter of 2022, an official said here on Wednesday.

The main targets for tourism promotion include Britain, India, Russia and China, said Minister of Tourism Prasanna Ranatunga

during a press conference.

He said that they have an ambitious plan to attract tourists this year and Minister of Finance Basil Rajapaksa agreed to provide 56 million dollars for the promotion. "We will also carry out promotional activities in other countries that are potential sources of tourism. We are

trying to get tourists as groups," Ranatunga said. The Sri Lankan government approved in 2021 a five-year global action plan to promote tourism. The Ministry of Tourism is currently in the process of selecting an event management firm, an advertising firm and a digital partner to implement the project.—Xinhua ■



A Chinese tourist poses at a stilt fishing pole in Sri Lanka. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

UK bank Barclays says profit quadruples on recovery

BRITISH bank Barclays announced Wednesday that its 2021 net profit more than quadrupled as the economy recovered from coronavirus fallout. Profit after tax surged to almost £6.4 billion (\$8.7 billion), helped by the release of £700 million that had been set aside for bad loans during the pandemic, Barclays said in a statement. That compared with a £1.53-billion profit the prior year, when Barclays had taken a vast £4.8-billion charge to cover po-

tential Covid-19 fallout. The 2021 performance was “driven by an improved macroeconomic outlook” and buoyed also by reduced unsecured lending balances and a benign credit environment. Pre-tax profit more than doubled to £8.4 billion, aided by record earnings at its investment banking arm. “Barclays demonstrated a clear and sustainable path to growth over the course of 2021,” said chief executive C.S. Venkatakrisnan.—AFP ■

Air New Zealand unveils huge loss, warns worse to come

AIR New Zealand posted a record interim loss Thursday and warned the airline is set to plunge further into the red as it faces the most difficult year in its history.

The flag carrier, which is majority owned by the New Zealand government, said half-year losses blew out almost four-fold to NZ\$272 million (\$185 million), from NZ\$72 million a year earlier.

It said the airline was on track for a full-year loss exceeding NZ\$800 million amid rising fuel prices and ongoing Covid restrictions at the New Zealand border. Chairwoman Therese



A photo taken on 9 August 2021 shows an Air New Zealand plane taking off from Auckland Airport PHOTO: AFP/WILLIAM WEST

Walsh said the 2022 financial year, which runs to 30 June, would be “the most difficult one yet for the airline” as the pandemic only affected the last quarter of financial 2020 and govern-

ment subsidies softened the blow in 2021. “The 2022 financial year has and will continue to be much more heavily impacted, both by continued suppressed demand

and rising costs,” she said. The airline said it planned to tap the market for a capital raising around the end of March and the government had agreed to participate. Air New Zealand has not specified how much equity it is seeking under the plan, which was postponed twice in 2021 due to adverse market conditions. Chief executive Greg Foran said Air New Zealand’s international passenger network—which normally provides about two-thirds of total revenue—was effectively grounded during the June-December 2021 reporting period.—AFP ■

Petrobras sees record net profit in 2021 at nearly \$20 bn



View of a Petrobras station in downtown Rio de Janeiro on 4 February 2020. PHOTO: VANDERLEI ALMEIDA / AFP

BRAZILIAN state-run oil company Petrobras announced Wednesday it posted a record net profit of nearly \$20 billion in 2021. Net profit for the final quarter last year came in

at \$5.64 billion, bringing 2021’s total to \$19.88 billion, the company said, a stark contrast to 2020’s total of just over \$1 billion due to effects of the pandemic. “This increase is

mainly due to the 70 percent increase of the price of a barrel of Brent crude oil in this period, higher sales volumes in the domestic market and higher margins in the derivatives market,” Petrobras, a Brazilian publicly owned company, said in a statement. The post-pandemic economic recovery also contributed to the increase of sales in Brazil, the group said. The 2021 final quarter’s net profit was down from the third quarter’s net of \$5.94 billion and down 51 percent from the final quarter of 2020.—AFP ■

PESTICIDE TRADE NAME CHANGE ADVERTISING

The following three pesticides distributed by MARGA MIN 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.

MARGA MIN CO., LTD . Phone – 09-455557861..

| Sr. | Old Trade Name | New Trade Name | Active Ingredients | Registration No. |
|-----|----------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. | MGM IMAZE | PILARIMA | Imazethapyr 10 % SL | P 2020-4819 |

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of Pilarquim(Shanghai) Co.,ltd have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name “Myanmar Max Agro Service Co.,Ltd”, to new distributor name “Seinn Lae Thwin Co.,Ltd”. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Seinn Lae Thwin Co.,Ltd. Ph-09894089998, 09894089996.

| Sr. | Trade Name | Active Ingredient | Registration No. |
|-----|-------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Pilarspirit | Cyhalofop-butyl 15% + Penoxsulam 2% OD | P2021-5433 |
| 2. | Pilaroptim | Gibberellic acid 0.135% + Indol-3-ylacetic acid 0.00052%+ 14-hydroxylated brassinosteroid 0.00031% WP | P2021-5434 |

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

AS the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 2nd MARCH 2022 (Peasant’s Day) and 16th MARCH 2022 (Full Moon Day of Taboung), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

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Letter of Apology

I, Zaw Lin Oo @ Ronin Zaw, apologize for the misinformation and defamation towards Eleven Media Group and its chairman’s family on my Facebook post (dated September 27, 2021). On this post from Ronin Zaw Facebook account.

I used the family’s personal photos and some of the contents from Irrawaddy News article titled “Emerging Class of Cronies Part (5)” to make false statements and implications, which were intended to defame the dignity and reputation of Eleven Media Group and its Chairman’s family.

I am deeply sorry for the misinformation to the public that this post created and the personal damage that it inflicted on the persons involved.

NEWS
IN BRIEFFrance's Macron to
kick off re-election
bid in March

President Emmanuel Macron will launch his re-election bid on 5 March at an inaugural campaign rally in Marseille, sources in his party said Wednesday.

Macron has so far kept away from formal campaigning ahead of the 10 April first round, working round-the-clock in diplomatic efforts to avert a war caused by a Russian invasion of Ukraine. The declaration of his candidacy is now expected next week, just ahead of a 4 March deadline. Three sources in his centrist Republic on the Move (LREM) party told AFP on Wednesday told AFP his first rally would then be on 5 March in Marseille.

Polls have steadily indicated that Macron is likely to come out on top in the first round of voting on 10 April.—AFP ■

US weapons cause
more killings in
Mexico: report

MORE than 17,000 homicides in Mexico were linked to trafficked weapons in 2019, most of which were from the United States, reported the website of Al Jazeera. According to an opinion piece by Belen Fernandez, there are no fewer than 7,000 licensed firearms dealers in the southern US state of Texas bordering Mexico, and some half a million firearms are reportedly trafficked each year from the United States into Mexico.—Xinhua ■

Battle over future of
spytech firm NSO:
Israel court papers

A court fight within Israeli spytech firm NSO Group has shed new light on the crisis engulfing the company, including tensions over whether to keep selling malware to autocrats to stay afloat. NSO was already mired in debt before an investigation revealed last year that its Pegasus phone-hacking software had been used to spy on hundreds of journalists, dissidents and activists worldwide. Now the surveillance tech giant is teetering, especially after being banned by the United States.—AFP ■

Prince Harry sues major British
newspaper group

BRITAIN'S Prince Harry has launched new legal action against one of the country's biggest newspaper groups, a spokesperson said Wednesday.

The complaint against Associated Newspapers — which publishes the Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday and MailOnline — follows his wife Meghan Markle's recent victory in a separate, long-running case against the same group.

A spokesperson for the pair told AFP that a complaint had been filed by Harry, without specifying its nature or the publication being sued.

Multiple UK media reports said Harry — Queen Elizabeth II's grandson — was suing for



Harry and Meghan moved to the United States in 2020, after stepping down from royal duties Roy. PHOTO: ROCHLIN /AFP/FILE

libel over a Mail on Sunday article alleging he had sought to keep a request for British police protection under wraps.

Markle, 40, and Harry, 37,

live in California after stepping down from royal duties in 2019, which caused them to lose their UK taxpayer-paid protection.

Last month, Harry appealed

to the UK courts after the government refused to allow him to pay for police protection out of his own pocket, arguing the decision means he cannot return home.

A lawyer for Harry told a London court last week that the UK “will always be his home,” but that his own private security team in the US does not have adequate jurisdiction or access to UK intelligence necessary to keep his family safe.

The government lawyer dismissed Harry's offer to pay for police protection as “irrelevant”, writing to the court that personal “security by the police is not available on a privately financed basis.”—AFP ■

Kyiv mobilizes reserves
as Moscow doubles down
on demands

Ukrainian servicemen patrol in the settlement of Troitske in the Lugansk region near the front line with Russia-backed separatists on 22 February 2022. PHOTO: AFP

UKRAINE mobilized its military reserve on Wednesday and urged its citizens to leave Russian territory ‘immediately’, as Moscow sharpened its demands, increasing fears of all-out war.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has defied an avalanche of international sanctions to put his forces on stand-by to occupy two rebel-held areas of eastern Ukraine.

In response, Kyiv's President Volodymyr Zelensky has put Ukraine's more than 200,000 reservists on notice that they will receive summons to return to their units.

Ukraine's security council also on Wednesday called for a state of emergency in the coun-

try — a measure that still needs to be formally approved by parliament.

Meanwhile, Ukraine urged its approximately three million citizens living in Russia to leave, as the crisis deepened despite intense international pressure on Moscow, backed by new economic sanctions. Western capitals say Russia has amassed 150,000 troops in combat formations on Ukraine's borders with Russia, Belarus and Russian-occupied Crimean and on warships in the Black Sea. Ukraine has around 200,000 military personnel and Wednesday's call up could see up to 250,000 reservists aged between 18 and 60 receive their mobilization papers.—AFP ■

Lebanese turn to public
libraries to check out of
financial crunch

IN many countries, public libraries are considered a dying relic amid the shift to digital, but in Lebanon they are getting a new lease of life as its economy flatlines.

Every Friday afternoon, Munira Khalifa takes her son Elia to a public library in Beirut for a weekly storytelling event — one of the last affordable pleasures as a crashing local currency has rendered books something of a luxury.

“We had reached a point where we couldn't find anywhere to take Elia because of the coronavirus pandemic and our difficult financial situation,” Khalifa said.

She is just one of hundreds of parents who are hitting the shelves at three public libraries in Beirut in the heat of the unprecedented financial crisis.

The libraries are managed by the Assabil non-governmental group, which was founded in 1997 to promote free access to books and culture.

At one of them in the neighbourhood of Bachoura, the mother and son were the first to arrive ahead of a reading.

The library offered them some relief, Khalifa said, adding: “It is safe, comfortable and close to home.” “Financially, it helps us cut on costs for transportation and new books, which have become more expensive,” she told AFP. Throughout the reading, laughter abounded as a storyteller acted out a book using puppets. Librarian Samar Choucair said the number of visitors at the facility had increased in the past year, largely since people cannot afford to buy new books.—AFP ■



The libraries are a lifeline for hundreds in Beirut, but despite their growing popularity, they too face the risk of drying funds. PHOTO: JOSEPH EID /AFP

Israel's president heads to Greece to calm ally ahead of Turkey visit

ISRAEL'S President Isaac Herzog headed to Greece Thursday for a trip experts said marked a chance to reassure an ally as Israel moves closer to Turkey, with tensions fraught between Athens and Ankara.

Herzog holds a largely ceremonial post but has assumed a high-profile diplomatic role under the Israeli government that took office last year.

He is expected to make a rare visit to Turkey next month for talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a prominent critic of Israel's policies towards the Palestinians.

But experts said that any Israeli rapprochement with Turkey cannot undermine the Jewish state's ironclad ties with its Mediterranean neighbours, Greece and Cyprus, two states with long-standing acrimony to-



Israel's President Isaac Herzog speaks at al-Wasl Dome at Expo 2020 Dubai during Israel's expo National Day. **PHOT: AFP**

wards Erdogan's Turkey.

On his one-day trip, the Israeli president is due to meet his counterpart Katerina Sakellaropoulou, Prime Minister Kyr-iakos Mitsotakis, as well as opposition leader and ex-premier

Alexis Tsipras.

Oded Eran, a senior researcher at the Tel Aviv university's Institute for National Security Studies, told AFP that while in Athens Herzog must stress that "the attempt to improve relations

with Turkey will absolutely not come at the expense of ties with Greece." Herzog should underscore that Israel wants to "enhance the eastern Mediterranean cooperation," with Cyprus and Greece, added Eran, Israel's former ambassador to the European Union. The president is also due to visit Cyprus next week.

Relations between majority-Muslim Turkey and the Jewish state froze over after the death of 10 civilians in an Israeli raid on a Turkish flotilla carrying aid for the Gaza strip in 2010.

Relations between Israel and Greece have meanwhile deepened over the past decade.

In 2019, Cyprus, Greece, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Italy and the Palestinian territories agreed to create the "East Mediterranean Gas Forum" -- without Turkey.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Putin authorizes "special military operation" in Donbass region

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin on Thursday authorized "a special military operation" in response to the appeal of the leaders of the "republics" in the Donbass region.

Putin on Monday signed two decrees recognizing "the Lugansk People's Republic" and "the Donetsk People's Republic" as independent and sovereign states.

"Our plans do not include the occupation of Ukrainian territories. We are not going to impose anything on anyone by force," he said.

Putin called on "all people living on the territory of today's Ukraine" to "independently determine the future of their own and children." NATO has created fundamental threats year after year, expanding to the east and bringing its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders, Putin noted. —Xinhua ■

Russia's Putin launches 'military operation' in Ukraine

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation in Ukraine on Thursday with explosions heard soon after across the country and its foreign minister warning a "full-scale invasion" was underway.

Weeks of intense diplomacy and the imposition of Western sanctions on Russia failed to deter Putin, who had massed between 150,000 and 200,000 troops along the borders of Ukraine.

"I have made the decision of a military operation," Putin said in a surprise television announcement that triggered immediate condemnation from US President Joe Biden and sent global financial markets into turmoil.

Shortly after the announcement, explosions were heard in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, and several other cities, according to AFP correspondents. Putin called on Ukrainian soldiers to lay down their arms, and justified the operation by claiming the government was overseeing a "genocide" in the east of the country.

The Kremlin had earlier said rebel leaders in eastern Ukraine had asked Moscow for military help against Kyiv.

The extent of Thursday's attacks was not immediately clear, but Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said the worst-case scenario was playing out.

"Putin has just launched a



Russian paratroopers during a joint exercise of the armed forces of Russia and Belarus at the Obuz-Lesnovsky firing range near the city of Baranovichi in Belarus. **PHOTO: RUSSIAN DEFENCE MINISTRY/AFP**

full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Peaceful Ukrainian cities are

under strikes," Kuleba tweeted.—AFP ■

Dutch evacuates 294 Afghans through Pakistan: ministry

THE HAGUE: The Netherlands has evacuated 294 Afghan citizens who arrived in neighbouring Pakistan over the last few days and will be flown soon to a Dutch destination, the foreign ministry said Wednesday.

The group, consisting of translators, non-governmental workers and other people assisting Dutch missions to the war-torn country as well as their families, have been allowed across the Afghan-Pakistani border following "intense diplomatic negotiations," the Hague-based ministry said in a statement. The group consists of "persons and families of whom not everyone has valid travel documents," it added.

"The Pakistani authorities have made an exception for this specific group and have given permission to travel to the Netherlands via that country," the foreign ministry said. The group is currently being housed by the Dutch government in hotels in Islamabad, the NOS public broadcaster reported. —AFP ■

'Straight to hell': Ukraine, Russia, spar during heated UN meet



A photograph shows tanks of the 92nd separate mechanized brigade of Ukrainian Armed Forces parked in their base near Klugino-Bashkirivka village, in the Kharkiv region on 31 January 2022. **PHOTO: SERGEY BOBOK/AFP**

A visibly emotional Ukrainian ambassador traded barbs with his Russian counterpart during a heated late-night emergency Security Council meeting on the Russia-Ukraine crisis Wednesday.

Sergiy Kyslytsya implored the council, chaired by Russia, to "do everything possible to stop the war" against his country.

"It is the responsibility of these bodies to stop the war," Kyslytsya told the meeting of the 15-member council, which began

shortly after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation in Ukraine.

Kyslytsya urged UN ambassador Vassily Nebenzia of Russia, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the council, to "call Putin, call (Foreign Minister Sergey) Lavrov to stop (the) aggression".

Kyslytsya told Nebenzia to "relinquish your duties as chair".

"There is no purgatory for war criminals. They go straight to hell, ambassador."—AFP ■

Aung La N Sang to fight against Vitaly Bigdash tonight



Aung La N Sang (left) take training with trainer Henri Hooft ahead of his trilogy fight against Vitaly Bigdash tonight. **PHOTO: AUNG LA N SANG'S FACEBOOK PAGE**

MYANMAR'S MMA star Aung La N Sang will take on Russian fighter Vitaly Bigdash in their ONE: Full Circle Middleweight clash on 25 February.

Upon the fight, Aung La has said that he was different than before.

"I don't think we're the same fighters anymore," Aung La N Sang said. "Since our first meeting five years ago, I don't think we're the same fighters

anymore. You're going to fight to work on all your skill sets, and you gameplan the best for the guy you're going to fight."

"I approached this as a brand new fight. It's not like we fought a few months ago. It's been five years ago. But we did go 10 rounds, so I know what his strong suit is. I know what his skill set is. But he's still going to develop as a fighter and I'm still going to develop as a fight-

er. You're going to see a better version, a better trilogy match than what you saw in the first two showings."

"He's always well rounded. I'm sure everything is a little bit sharper and a little bit cleaner and a little stronger. I think his submission game is good. His striking is good. He's a great opponent. I know in the past few years he's been training to get better at all aspects. So I think the fans are in for a treat."

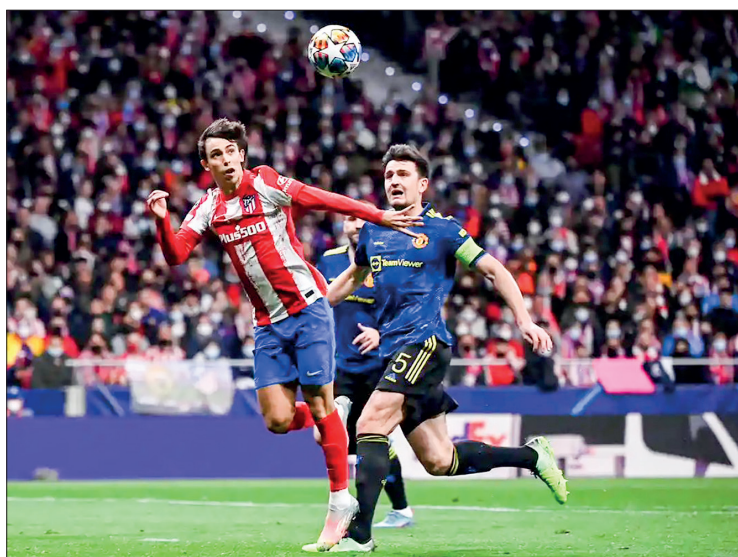
"I've gotten better, I would say. And for sure, he's improved as well. If you liked the last two fights, this one's gonna be better. We're both more mature and better mixed martial artists."

In the main event, two-division ONE World Champion Reinier de Ridder defends his middleweight belt against ONE Welterweight World Champion Kiamrian Abbasov. Also, in the co-main event, Roman Kryklia defends his ONE Light Heavyweight Kickboxing World Title against Murat Aygün.

Fans from Myanmar can enjoy the main card live on Skynet at 7 pm Myanmar Standard Time and the lead card will broadcast live on ONE's Facebook account, ONE's YouTube channel, and the ONE Super App at 4:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time. — GNLM

Man Utd escape with a draw after Elanga pegs back Atletico

MANCHESTER United were spared a damaging and deserved defeat by Atletico Madrid on Wednesday as Anthony Elanga's late goal rescued them a 1-1 draw in the first leg of the Champions League last 16. Atletico outplayed a sluggish United for the majority of the match at the Wanda Metropolitano and might have considered Joao Felix's early goal scant reward heading into the second leg at Old Trafford in three weeks' time. But rather than extend their advantage, Atletico squandered it, Elanga racing onto a Bruno Fernandes through ball and applying a cool finish with 10 minutes left to earn United a draw that felt like a victory. United boss Ralf Rangnick was asked in his press conference



Joao Felix headed Atletico Madrid into the lead against Manchester United on Wednesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

what he told the United players at half-time. "I told them this is not enough," he said. "We have to have more energy. It's not about

game-plans or tactics. It's about conviction. It's about belief. This is not enough. This is the Champions League." — 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.

Liverpool hit Leeds for six to close gap on Man City, Spurs stunned



Reds boss Jurgen Klopp believes his side must win every game for the rest of the season to pip City to the title. **PHOTO: AFP**

LIVERPOOL crushed Leeds 6-0 to close the gap on Premier League leaders Manchester City to three points, while Tottenham's top four bid was rocked by a 1-0 defeat at Burnley on Wednesday. Reds boss Jurgen Klopp believes his side must win every game for the rest of the season to pip City to the title. That ambitious goal can't be ruled out on Liverpool's current form and Leeds were no match for the title chasers at Anfield. Mohamed Salah netted twice from the penalty spot

either side of a Joel Matip goal.

Sadio Mane bagged a brace in the second half and Virgil Van Dijk completed the rout. Liverpool have won their last nine games in all competitions, with none more important than this success in their game in hand on City.

City were 12 points ahead of Liverpool just a few weeks ago, but that lead has quickly been whittled away by a combination of the Reds' blistering streak and a couple of blips from the champions. — AFP ■