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# 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.

## State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla attend final match, prize presentation of ISR U-25 Women's Football Tourney 2022



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla watch the final match of the Inter-State/Region U-25 Women's Football Tournament at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 January 2022.

THE final match and prize presentation ceremony for the Inter-State/Region U-25 Women's Football Tournament organized by the Sports and Physical Education Department of the Ministry of Sports and Youth

Affairs took place at the Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon under the COVID-19 restrictions, attended by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min

Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla.

Rakhine State and Shan State played in the final match, watched by the Senior General and wife, council members and spectators.

Rakhine State won over Shan State with a 3-2 result in the final.

At the prize presentation ceremony, SAC member U Shwe Kyein presented medal and cash award of the best goalkeeper

award to Ma Toe Yadana Su of Rakhine State, SAC member U Saw Daniel the best defender award to Ma Phyu Phway of Shan State, SAC member Mahn Nyein Maung the best player

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## Press Statement

It has been observed that some countries and international organizations issued statements expressing concern with regard to recent clashes in Kayah State. In so doing, some statements are found to be constructive while others are found to have intentions to exert undue political pressure on Myanmar based on information emanating from unverifiable sources, anti-government organizations, media and terrorist groups in Myanmar.

The actual account regarding the clashes that took place in Loikaw, Kayah State on 11 January 2022 has been published in state-owned newspapers. The incident was a raid conducted by the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and the People Defence Force (PDF) terrorists taking positions in residential areas — houses, governmental and religious buildings, etc. The terrorists did not allow the innocent local civilians who wished to move to safe places during the incident. Instead, they used the civilians as human shields.

The security forces responded to the terrorists with utmost restraint not to harm innocent civilians. The terrorist groups also launched attacks on Loikaw prison to instigate unrest and disrupt stability in the city. The security forces were compelled to seek aerial and artillery support in countering the terrorists. However, they did not attack innocent civilians. It is learnt that no innocent civilian was injured and some of the buildings in the prison and civilian buildings suffered collateral damages during the attacks.

The acts of taking positions in civilian buildings, using local civilians as human shields and deliberately attacking civilian targets by the KNPP and PDF terrorists can be construed as committing terrorist activities. As such, countries and international organizations should reject and condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Nay Pyi Taw  
Dated. 21 January 2022

### Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education Department of Higher Education Announcement

#### Opening of final year (majoring in sciences) courses of University of Distance Education for 2022 academic year

THE Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education announced that the practical and lecturing courses of the final year (majoring in sciences) of the University of Distance Education for the 2022 Academic Year will be reopened at universities, degree colleges and colleges as of 22-1-2022.

*Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education*

## Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was re-constituted 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](mailto:antiillegaltradeinfo@gmail.com)

*Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee*

## Inland Water Transport increases Yangon Wadan-Dala car ferry service

IN a bid to facilitate transportation and reduce the delay, the Inland Water Transport (Delta Division) add one more car ferry on the Yangon Wadan-Dala car ferry route, said an official of the division.

“Ferry service grew in recent days. A ferry has to carry approximately 350 vehicles per day. A ferry can hold 30 small

cars or 20 large trucks. Ferry service schedules depend on the number of vehicles,” an official added.

The ferry on the Yangon Wadan-Dala route was plying to and from the ports between 6 am and 6:45 pm. The division adds more timetables to transport more motor vehicles. The Pansodan-Dala Port is the

only gateway to local people in southern Yangon-Dala, Twantay, Kawhmu and Kungyangon townships and some townships in Ayeyawady Region to link with the commercial city hub of Yangon. The service contributes to the health and socio-economic development of the local community. — Ko Nang (Bago)/GNLM



The ferry on the Yangon Wadan-Dala route was plying to and from the ports between 6 am and 6:45 pm.

## Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was re-constituted 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](mailto:antiillegaltradeoffice@gmail.com)

*Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee*

**83 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 21 January, total figure rises to 533,815**

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 533,815 after 83 new cases were reported on 21 January 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 511,936 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 19,308 after 1 died. — MNA

## All stakeholders and organizations are invited to join the peace talks

The year 2022 is of importance. Coming 12 February is the Diamond Jubilee Union Day and the 4 January 2023 will be the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day. As such, this year is the pre-Diamond Jubilee period. Hence, it is important to further strengthen the sovereignty of the State and progress of the nation with development fruits. So, we have to start the new paces for the restoration of the peace this year. As it is mentioned in the fourth point of the five-point road map, all stakeholders and organizations are invited to join the peace talks.

*(Excerpt from the New Year Message delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 1 January 2022)*

## State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla attend final match, prize presentation of ISR U-25 Women's Football Tourney 2022

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of the tournament to Ma Hla Mrat Thu of Rakhine State, SAC member U Mounng Har the best midfielder award to Ma Ingyin Hmwe of Mon State and SAC member Jeng Phang Naw Taung the best forward award to Ma Nang Phyu Phyu Thwe of Shan State, respectively.

SAC member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun presented the cash award to the fourth prize winner Yangon Region team, SAC member Admiral Tin Aung San, individual medals and cash award to the third prize winner Mon State, SAC member Daw Aye Nu Sein individual medals and cash award to the second prize winner Shan State and SAC member General Mya Tun Oo individual medals and cash award to the first prize winner Rakhine State, respectively.

The Senior General and wife presented the cash award and championship trophy to champions Rakhine State.

A total of 289 players from 13 football teams participated in the Inter-State/Region U-25



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla present the cash award and championship trophy to Champions Rakhine State.

Women's Football Tournament from 7 to 21 January 2022.

Among the spectators were

SAC Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo and wife, Chairman of

the Constitutional Tribunal of

the Union U Than Kyaw and Chairman of the Union Election

Commission U Thein Soe, Union

ministers and their wives, the chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council

and deputy ministers. —MNA



## MoI Union Minister discusses preparations for Diamond Jubilee Union Day

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, in his capacity as Chairman of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day Organizing Committee, presided over a coordination meeting yesterday.

During the meeting, the committee chairman discussed the Union Flag relaying process and decorated floats of the regions and states.

Then, committee secretary Deputy Minister U Ye Tint explained the entertaining programmes and other attendees presented the completion of decorated floats and rehearsing of performers. —MNA

The coordination meeting on preparations for Diamond Jubilee Union Day in progress.

## Ethnic Affairs, Public Management and Services Committee holds 1/2022 meeting

THE Ethnic Affairs, Public Management and Services Committee organized the coordination meeting (1/2022) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Member of the State Administration Council Union Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Committee, addressed the coordination meeting.

Then, Committee Secretary Deputy Minister U Zaw Aye Maung explained the decisions made at the previous 18/2021 meeting and implementations.

The attendees to the meeting discussed their respective sectors and the Union minister made approval for the motions proposed by the ministries to submit to the Union Govern-



The coordination meeting 1/2022 of the Ethnic Affairs, Public Management and Services Committee in progress.



ment meeting or to conduct with the decisions of the committee.

Afterwards, Deputy Minister for Education U Zaw Win

clarified the installation of lightning protection systems at the schools according to the discussion of 16/2021 meeting.

SAC member Saw Daniel, Union Ministers U Ko Ko, Dr Thet Thet Khine and U Saw Tun Aung Myint and Deputy Minis-

ter Dr Aung Gyi coordinated the discussion and the committee chairman concluded the meeting.—MNA

## MoHT Union Minister attends 40<sup>th</sup> ASEAN tourism forum, ASEAN tourism ministers' meeting and related meetings in Cambodia

THE 40<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Tourism Forum 2022 and the ASEAN Tourism Ministers' Meeting hosted by Cambodia under the theme "ASEAN- A Community of Peace and Shared Future", related meetings and events were held at the Sokha Resort Hotel in Prishanu, Cambodia from 17 to 20 January and attended by a delegation led by Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung.

At the meeting with Tourism Minister of Cambodia Dr Thong Khon and officials on 18 January, the Union Minister discussed the renewal of the Action Plan on Tourism Cooperation 2017-2020 between the two countries, including direct flights between Siem Reap and Bagan as per the action plan; human resource development for ecotourism and community-based tourism; matters to recognize internationally the combination of the Enchanting Myanmar Health & Safety Protocol implemented by Myanmar and the ASEAN Guidelines for Hygiene and Safety; joint tourism marketing in the post-COV-



The 40<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Tourism Forum 2022, ASEAN Tourism Ministers' Meeting and related meetings are held from 17 to 20 January in Cambodia.

ID-19 period.

The Union Minister attended the tree planting ceremony of ASEAN Ministers in commemoration of the ASEAN Tourism Forum-2022 in the afternoon, the opening ceremony of the forum and the welcoming dinner of the Prime Minister of Cambodia in the evening.

At the opening ceremony, Prime Minister of Cambodia Samdech Akka Moha Sena Pa-

dei Techo Hun Sen said it is necessary to be united and openly cooperate between the ASEAN countries, partner countries and international organizations in addressing regional and global challenges, and therefore, Cambodia led the drafting and implementation of the Phnom Penh Declaration on a More Sustainable, Inclusive ASEAN Tourism, and the ASEAN regional tourism revitalization plan in the post-COV-

ID-19 period.

The Union minister also attended the 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Tourism Ministers' Meeting, 21<sup>st</sup> ASEAN+3 (China, Japan, Korea) Tourism Ministers' Meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN + India Tourism Ministers Meeting, 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-Russia Tourism Ministers' Meeting, and meetings with ASEAN partner organizations. The meeting discussed the decline of international tourists in the ASEAN region in

2021, which was 90 per cent down compared to 2020, post-COVID-19 ASEAN tourism rehabilitation programme, completion of ASEAN Tourism Safety Regulations and further implementation of the ASEAN Safe Travel Stamp, implementation of the guidelines approved by the ASEAN Summits. The meeting also approved the implementation of the ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework with the inclusion of tourists in addition to the essential business and official travellers, and to review the challenges and opportunities facing the implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Professionals Mutual Recognition Programme.

The Union minister also attended the press conference of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers, the ASEAN Tourism Award Ceremony, and the launching ceremony of the ASEAN Tourism Logo and ASEAN Tourism Promotion TV in commemoration of the ASEAN Tourism Resumption.—MNA

## MoNREC Union Minister virtually attends 4<sup>th</sup> Asia Ministerial Conference on tiger conservation

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi and officials attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Asia Ministerial Conference on tiger conservation, hosted by Malaysia, through video conference yesterday afternoon.

Initially, the host country, Minister for Malaysia's Energy and Natural Resources and Minister for Bhutan's Agriculture and Forestry, chairman of Global Tiger Forum (GTF) gave opening speeches while the ministers from other tiger habited countries delivered the speeches.

Then, the Union minister said that Myanmar is one of the countries that are committed to keeping tiger grazing pastures. There are four tiger habitats measuring 49,000 square kilometres (seven per cent of the country) in the country. There are two national-level arrangements – the national-level tiger



conservation project and the wildlife habitation programme.

According to camera traps, the number of tigers has increased from 22 to 25. The World

Bank estimates that there may be between 35 and 70 tigers in Myanmar.

As part of the tiger rehabilitation project in Southeast Asia,

four activities are being carried out on a priority basis. This ministerial-level conference is aimed at promoting cooperation and strengthening the formulation

of the policy on the part of national-level authorities regarding tiger conservation. Additionally, it is said that there is the belief that the common goal of conservation of tigers, their habitat and all living species can be reached through cooperation.

After that, the prime minister of Malaysia delivered the concluding remark. A joint Kuala Lumpur communiqué on tiger conservation, tiger rehabilitation project in Southeast Asia and analysis of financial resources were released.

The conference was led by the prime minister of Malaysia and other 13 tiger range countries — Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Viet Nam. The relevant ministers and representatives attended the conference. — MNA

## Coord meeting focuses on mass cycling event promoting tourism in Sri Kestra ancient city

A coordination meeting was convened on 20 January at the Bago Region government office to hold a mass cycling event promoting tourism with sports activity in Sri Kestra, one of the Pyu ancient cities.

First most, Bago Region Chief Minister U Myo Swe Win gave a remark that the event is held by looking forward to the tourism development and physical fitness of the people. He instructed attendees to fulfil the needs of participants and ensure their health and accommodation. Moreover, he directed all to implement this event in line with set regulations as Sri Kestra is a world

cultural heritage site.

Afterwards, U Nanda Aung, head of the Region Directorate of Hotels and Tourism elaborated the event plan and chairpersons of nine subcommittees also addressed their sector-wise responsibilities. The chief minister and relevant ministers also advised the needs.

This event is aimed to promote tourism in the Pyu ancient city and cultural heritage in Sri Kestra and enjoy scenic views in Pyay city. It is slated to be held in the last week of January.—Tin Soe (Bago)/GNLM



## Myanmar-India JMC holds online meeting for bean trade



JOINT Monitoring Committee (JMC) on the Memorandum of Understanding for purchase of black gram and pigeon peas

under the Government-to-Government pact between Myanmar and India virtually held a meeting on 21 January 2022

concerning trade policy and development.

Director-General U Myint Thura of the Trade Department

of the Ministry of Commerce and Mr Kamkhenthang Guite, economic adviser to the Consumer Affairs Department of the Indian Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution led the meeting.

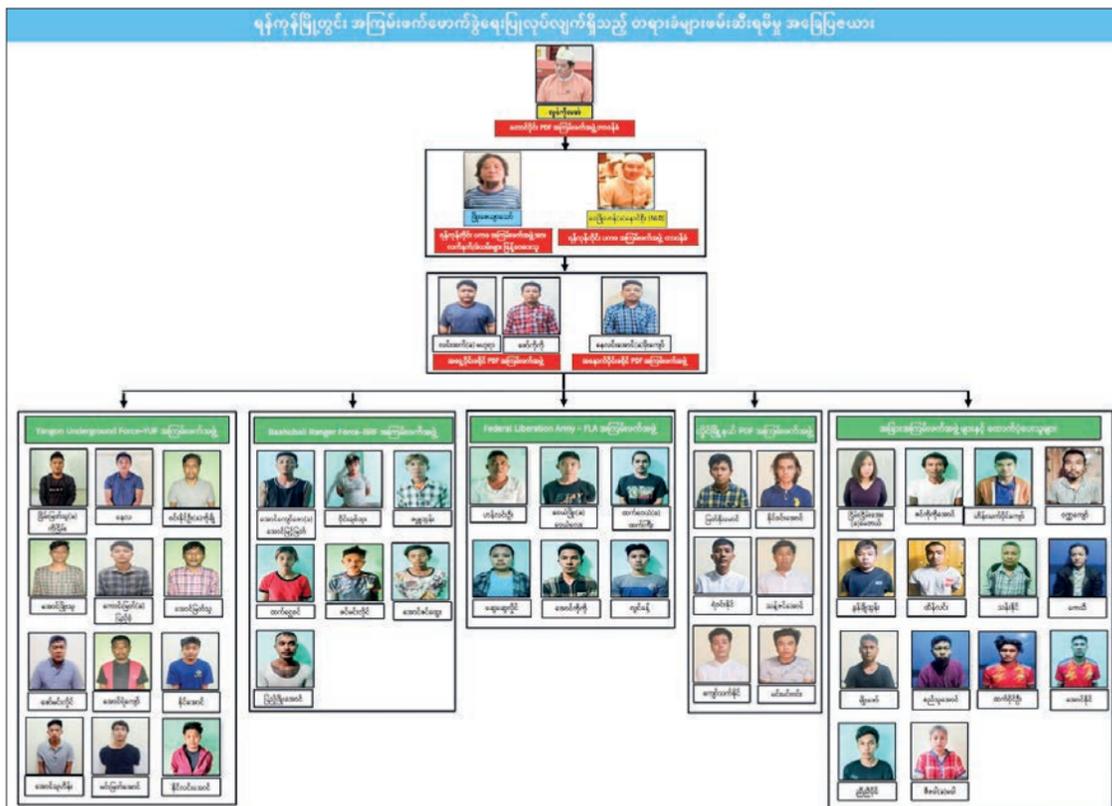
Myanmar can export 250,000 tonnes of black gram (urad) and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon pea under the G-to-G pact during the April-March period in the 2021-2022 financial year. So far, the export volume has surpassed the set quota. Additionally, India extended relaxations of conditions regarding clearance consignment until 31 March 2022. Therefore, Myanmar traders and Indian importers will use this opportunity effectively. The bilateral negotiation focused on

matters regarding the trade sector and its progress.

Later, they agreed on the criteria, standards and norms of the bean trade for the traders and governmental departments, according to an MoU between the 2022-2023 financial year and the 2025-2026FY.

The officials from the Myanmar Customs Department, Agriculture Department, Marine Administration Department, Myanma Port Authority, Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association, India's Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, India's Embassy to Myanmar and related entities attended the videoconference. — MNA

# Suspects involved in terrorist acts in Yangon arrested



IT has already been announced that a total of 50 suspects — 43 males and seven females, including NLD member Maung Kyaw (aka) Phyo Zeyar Thaw, who led terrorist attacks in Yangon under the instruction of CRPH and NUG terrorist groups, were arrested together with arms and ammunition on 20 November 2021 and NLD member Maung Kyaw (aka) Phyo Zeyar Thaw launched terrorist attacks in Yangon under directives of NUG terrorist group on 22 November 2021.

NUG terrorist group organized PDF terrorist groups and Lwin Ko Latt served in charge of the southern region PDF and perpetrated attacks to destroy the government's administrative mechanism and threaten the public. Instructed by Lwin Ko Latt, Maung Kyaw (aka) Phyo Zeyar Thaw acted as the leader of STF terrorist group and PDF terrorist group, while Wai Phyo Han (aka) Naung Yoe (still at large) as Yangon Region Pa Ka Pha (PDF), Lin Htet (aka) Mahuya as in-charge for eastern district, Nay Lin Aung (aka) Phoe Kyaw for western district and Htet Zaw (still at large) for the southern district and Min Yan Naing (still at large) for the northern district. The terrorists accelerated their missions in Yangon Region by organizing these four districts.

On 6 January 2022, security forces arrested Lin Htet (aka) Mahuya in charge of Yangon eastern district and Zaw Ko Ko in Punhlaing housing of Kyimyindine Township together with two Sig Sauer pistols, two magazines, 30 9mm bullets, two MK-12s, two magazines, 20 bullets and one

M-79. According to the confession of Lin Htet, Nay Lin Aung (aka) Phoe Kyaw in charge of the western district was arrested in Thakayta Township together with firearms and other related materials on 8 January.

Based on the words of suspect Zaw Ko Ko, security forces arrested Aung Kyaw Zaw (aka) Aung Myint Myat near Zaygaba golf course in Mingaladon Township on 9 January and Wyne Chit Htoo in Shinphonetaung Village of Hlegu Township.

According to the confession of Aung Kyaw Zaw (aka) Aung Myint Myat, security forces arrested Zabu Tun, Htet Shwe Sin, Zin Min Hlaing and Aung Zin Htwe in North Okkalapa Township on 11 January, and detained Pyae Phyo Aung in Thudhamma 5<sup>th</sup> street in North Okkalapa

Township according to the admission of Zabu Tun.

Based on the words of Zaw Ko Ko, security forces arrested Nyein Myat Thu (aka) Ko Nyein, a member of the YUF terrorist group, Nay La, Win Naing Oo (aka) Ko Zho and Aung Phyo Thu at the house of Zaw Ko Ko together with weapons on 11 January.

According to the words of Nyein Myat Thu (aka) Ko Nyein, police arrested Kaung Myat (aka) Pyae Sone from 7 Ward of Thakayta Township near Thakayta roundabout together with Aung Myat Thu and Zaw Min Hlaing at his house in (7/east) Ward of Thakayta, including weapons and other materials on the same evening.

According to the confession of Nay La, police arrested Aung Ye Kyaw in Mingalar Taungyunt on 12 January and Naing

Aung at Yuzana Garden City of Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township, while Aung Thu Hein and Min Myat Aung in Sittaung Ward together with firearms and explosives.

According to suspect Win Naing Oo (aka) Ko Cho, security forces arrested FLA terrorist group member Han Lin Oo from Htaukkyant Town at No (3) Highway junction checkpoint of Mingaladon Township on 12 January noon and based on his words, Wai Yan Phyo (aka) Wai Yan Lay and Htet Wai Yan (aka) Htet Gyi in Waibargi Myothit of North Okkalapa Township together with firearms and also seized guns, pistol, various magazines, rounds of ammunition, grenades and other materials at their house near the bus terminal.

On 14 January, police raided the house located in Thalawady (3) street in (10) South Ward of Thakayta Township and seized weapons, magazines, bullets, detonators and other materials.

According to the confession

Bawlonkwin Ward.

According to the words of Naing Aung, security forces arrested Naing Lin Aung in North Okkalapa Township, and based on his confession, Nyein Nyein Aye (aka) Mable in Kyauktada Township, Zin Ko Ko Aung and Hein Thet Paing Kyaw at No (3) Highway junction checkpoint of Mingaladon Township on 15 January.

On 16 January, police raided the house rented by Ko Zay (still at large) in Konbaung street of No (6) Ward in South Okkalapa Township according to the confession of Zin Ko Ko Aung and seized weapons. They also arrested Wunna Kyaw in Bayda street in No (50) Ward of Dagon Myothit (North) Township together with firearms, handmade mines and explosives.

The police detained Khun Cho Tun and Htein Lin at the house of the suspect in Laydauntkan street of Thingangyun Township on the same afternoon together with a silencer, firearms,



Seized arms and ammunition.

of Htet Wai Yan (aka) Htet Gyi, police arrested Swe Swe Hlaing and Aung Ko Ko at his house in Yesutaung Ward of Htaukkyant Town and Lwin Khant at

rounds of ammunition and other materials. Moreover, they also confiscated homemade mines, bullets and explosives at the houses of suspects located at 7<sup>th</sup> Aung Zaya street of Yangon Thit Ward and on Aung Zaya road of Thingangyun Township.

According to the confession of Naing Lin Aung, security forces arrested Than Naing and Kay Thi together with guns at his house in Dagon Myothit (South) Township in the same evening, while Myo Zaw at Aungmingala Highway terminal in Mingaladon Township together with one grenade and nine homemade mines.

According to the words of Than Naing, the security forces arrested Sithu Aung and Htet Paing Oo in No (57) Ward of Dagon Myothit (South) Township together with firearms on the morning of 17 January and another suspect Aung Naing at No (93) Ward of Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township based on the word of



Confiscated weapons and magazines.

Naing Lin Aung.

According to Wunna Kyaw, police arrested Nyi Nyi Paing at his house located in No (50) Ward of Dagon Myothit (North) Township on the morning of 17 January, seized three homemade mines, nine keypads and explosives at the house in Nguwah street according to his confession and also confiscated energia grenades, homemade bombs and rounds of ammunition at Thathana Yaungchi religious hall in Nantaha Myaing street at noon and also arrested Myat Noe Maung in Thazin street of No (57) Ward of Dagon Myothit (South) Township.

The suspect Myat Noe Maung admitted that Hline PDF leader Naing Win Aung led the terrorist attacks. Therefore, security forces conducted security measures and arrested Naing Win Aung, Ye Win Naing, Thant Zin Aung, Kyaw Thet Naing and Min Min Win at the 115-Mile checkpoint on 18 January. They also detained Zizawah (aka) Ma Wah at No (2) Ward of Hline Township on the same evening based on the confession of Min Min Win.

According to the words of Naing Win Aung, police seized firearms, including pistols, various magazines and rounds of ammunition at December Housing in Dagon Myothit (South) Township on 19 January.

In these cases, security forces arrested 48 suspects — 43 males and five females — and seized two homemade guns, 37 various magazines, 3,771 various bullets, eight energia grenades, five grenades, two mines, 38 homemade mines, one silencer, 78 gunpowder bars, 4 3D-printable FGC-9 rifles, FGC-9 gun-related materials, gunpowder strings, detonators and explosives.

The suspect Nay Lin Aung sent 15 males from Kamayut and Kyimyindine townships to explosive training of KNLA Brigade 6 according to the instruction of Naung Yoe (aka) Wai Phyo Han (still at large).

Among arrestees, Khun Cho Tun completed the explosive training at KNLA Brigade (2) area, while Zaw Ko Ko at KNLA Brigade (5), Htet Wai Yan, Kaung Myat (aka) Pyae Sone and Aung Ye Kyaw at KNLA (6), Naing Lin Aung, Htet Wai Yan, Wai Yan Phyo, Lwin Khant, Aung Kyaw Zaw, Zabu Tun and Htet Shwe Sin at KNLA Brigade (7). After they completed the training, they entered Yangon and committed murders and bombing attacks under instructions by Lwin Ko Latt from the NUG terrorist group.

Moreover, Lin Htet (aka)



Seized explosives and related items.

Mahuya gave explosive training using the keypad phone and creation of homemade bombs at the houses located in Dhammayon street of Sangyoung Township and Kamayut Township arranged by Nay Lin Aung (aka) Phyo Kyaw to eight suspects, including Agga (aka) Ashay Gyi and Naing Gyi, who are still at large.

According to the statements of arrested suspects, Wai Phyo Han (a) Naung Yoe from NUG, in charge of the Yangon Region Pa Ka Pha terrorist group, issued arms and ammunition required for the acts of violence to the leaders of the District Pa Ka Pha, and Min Thuta, who is hiding in the

terrorist groups committed attacks to the following places with homemade bombs:

Near the Immigration Department in (6) ward in South Okkalapa on 11 August

In front of the Township Electrical Engineering Office on Thudamma road, (Hsa) ward in North Okkalapa on 14 August

Near the investment office in Yankin Township on 1 October

Near the Kyaukyetwin Bridge in North Okkalapa Township on 17 October

Near the Women's and Children's Hospital in (10) ward in South Okkalapa Township on 24 October



another innocent civilian near Ya Sa Pha (ward administration) office in the ward (22) in Dagon Myothit (South) with the pistol from Nay La on 9 January 2022.

According to the confession of the arrested suspects, BRF terrorist groups attacked the following places with homemade bombs:

Aung Kyaw Zaw, Zabu Tun, Pyae Phyo Aung, Zin Min Hlaing, Aung Zin Htwe, together with Man Ki (in hiding) and B-1 (in hiding), attacked the traffic control police station near Kanthaya traffic lights in North Okkalapa Township on 6 December

Near the Shwepaukkan Basic Education High School (6) on 16 December

Near Ya.Sa.Pha office in the ward (2) in North Okkalapa Township on 5 January 2022.

The arrest suspects also stated the following acts of violence committed by the FLA terrorist group:

Htet Wai Yan, Min Thu Ta (in hiding), and Than Zaw Win (in hiding) attacked the No (2) Primary School near the Mingaladon market on 13 May

Aung Ko Ko and Naing Shein Thu (in hiding) attacked the Khayepin Yeikmon power substation on 9 July

Near the Ka Nya Na (Directorate of Road Transport) Office in Dago Myothit (South) Township on 26 October

Near traffic control police station in Dagon Myothit (North) on 27 October

At the Electrical office in South Okkalapa Township on 2 November

Near the Ngwe Taung Restaurant in South Okkalapa Township on 16 November

At the Electrical office in Thakayta Township on 6 January 2022.

According to the statement of suspect Naing Aung, he killed an innocent civilian who lived at Ngamoeyeik (2) street in Thingangyun Township with the pistol received from AK, a member of the MJF terrorist group on 8 November. He also revealed that he and Nyein Myat Thu killed

Gyi (in hiding) shot two innocent civilians at the Kyankhinsu ward administrator's office in Mingaladon Township on 14 August

According to the statement of Hein Thet Paing Kyaw,

Hein Thet Paing Kyaw and Khant Htet Paing (in hiding) attacked the house of an innocent civilian in Hninsigon ward in Thingangyun Township with homemade mines on 9 September

Zin Ko Ko Aung and Bo Bo (in hiding) attacked YBS 56 in Dagon Myothit (South) Township on 9 October

Hein Thet Paing Kyaw, Khun Cho Tun and Khant Htet Paing detonated a homemade mine near Ya Sa Pha office in Waibula ward in Thingangyun Township on 9 December

Khun Cho Tun, Hein Thet Paing Kyaw and Bo Bo detonated a homemade mine near the Ya Sa Pha office in the ward (24) in Thingangyun Township on 6 January 2022

Hein Thet Paing Kyaw detonated a homemade mine near the Yangon Thit Market in Thingangyun Township on 8 January

According to the statement of the arrested suspects, Hline PDF terrorists committed the following acts of violence:



Killing the innocent.

KNLA Brigade, sent arms and ammunition for FLA terrorist group from Myawady to Yangon.

According to the statements of Zaw Ko Ko and Aung Phyo Thu, ten suspects in hiding, including Ko Phyo, Ye Naing and Lukar, committed the following terrorist acts:

Bombing in front of the City Hall on 18 June 2021

Bombing in front of Myoma police station on 30 August

Bombing near Shwelinpan garment factory and Yoegy/Yoelay village on 21 September

Bombing near Wah Wah Win garment factory on 3 October

Bombing near Sanay Ma garment factory on 15 October

M-79 grenade was fired at Thauggyi area police station on 20 November

Arrested suspect Lin Htet revealed that the Pa Ka Pha ter-



Bomb attack on YBS bus.

Htet Wai Yan and Wai Yan Phyo committed bomb attacks near the Mingaladon Township General Administrator's office and the USDP office on 4 August

Htet Wai Yan, Wai Yan Phyo, Nay Lin Oo (in hiding) and Shein

Four terrorists, including San Win Htut (a) Gyogya (in hiding) shot an innocent civilian who lived in the ward (13), Hline Township, on 23 July

Kyaw Thet Naing, San Win

SEE PAGE-10

# Help monastic education schools last for a long time

**B**UDDHIST monks have been playing a key role in the education sector of Myanmar in successive eras. It is because those who learned education in the monastic education led the various sectors of the country including politics, economic, military and social affairs.

Since yore, Buddhist monks have been teaching Buddhist literature and other knowledge to Myanmar children. Those students learn further higher education studies based on knowledge from monastic education. They could accumulate greater knowledge thanks to the monastic education.

Up to now, the monastic education schools arrange the learning society for the students not only in urban but in rural areas and remote areas because those students miss the chance to touch the basic education schools.

Thanks to the encouragement of the government and too much reliance of the students and parents mostly from rural and remote areas, monastic education schools are sure to stand tall in the education sector of the nation with the best academic services for the students to be able to turn out good and able sons in the future.

In the 2020-21 academic year, 1,489 monastic education schools including 797 primary schools, 589 post-primary schools, 101 middle schools and 26 high schools were allowed to be opened in regions and states in addition to the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area under the supervision of the monastic education supervisory central committee.

A total of 207,137 students are learning education at the primary level of monastic education schools, 67,156 students at the post-primary level, 27,381 students at the middle school education level and 4,771 students at the high school level, totalling 306,445 students.

To be able to teach the students, a total of 5,237 teachers are assigned at the monastic education primary schools, 1,691 teachers at the post-primary schools, 679 teachers at the middle schools and 120 teachers at the high schools, totalling 7,763.

In fact, these teachers are not in-service of the Ministry of Education. Hence, they miss the chance to enjoy salaries set by the Ministry of Education.

That is why the government provided cash assistance to those voluntary teachers as of the 2013-14 academic year. In the 2020-21 academic year, the government allotted K369.252 million for the cash assistance of those teachers. Now, cash assistance for those teachers was increased by 50 per cent in accord with the decision of the management committee in May 2021.

Thanks to the encouragement of the government and too much reliance of the students and parents mostly from rural and remote areas, monastic education schools are sure to stand tall in the education sector of the nation with the best academic services for the students to be able to turn out good and able sons in the future.

# Online influencers conference held to boost China-ASEAN ties

**T**HE first ASEAN-China Online Influencers Conference and Fujian Brands Promotion Tour along Maritime Silk Road concluded in Fuzhou, southeast China's Fujian Province on 13 January 2022, a year after China and ASEAN celebrated the 30th anniversary of their dialogue relations and elevated their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

Themed "Set Sail from Blessed Land when the Wind is Positive", the event also followed the implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest free trade deal that will bring new development opportunities to China-ASEAN ties.

During the three-day event, ASEAN diplomats to China and representatives from media organizations, as well as Chinese and ASEAN online influencers learned about Fuzhou's experience in developing the digital industry and experienced the culture of Fujian province through field visits and online activities. They also shared what they saw and felt in the city on social media platforms.

The event focused on economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges between China and ASEAN, and held three dialogues on the digital economy, influencer economy and cross-border e-commerce.

It also acted as a matchmaker between Chinese and ASEAN enterprises. Fujian Asia-Pacific



The event focused on economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges between China and ASEAN, and held three dialogues on digital economy, influencer economy and cross-border e-commerce. PHOTO: HANDOUT

Economic and Trade Cooperation Promotion Association, China's first provincial-level business association responding to the RCEP agreement, set the stage for a series of agreements between Chinese and ASEAN industries, including a \$5.6 billion intended deal inked by Fujian's Eversun Holdings Group to invest in an ASEAN refinery.

The conference, joined by online influencers, expanded a new space for telling stories about China-ASEAN cooperation under the RCEP framework. It mirrored the broad cooperation between China and ASEAN

countries on people-to-people exchanges and witnessed the deepening regional economic integration between the two sides.

China's Assistant Foreign Minister Hua Chunying delivered a speech at the conference via video link. She noted that the fruits of China-ASEAN cooperation in the past 30 years are made possible by the right historical choice taken by the farsighted leaders of the two sides who have embraced the trend of the times, and they are also a result of the unique ties between the two sides marked by geographical proximity and

cultural affinity. She said online influencers are telling the best stories and writing history every day. "Creative and empathetic, you are sharing the emotional highs and lows of ordinary people on social media and the Internet. Their experience of small serendipities and pursuit of big dreams and strike a chord with every one of us and draw people closer across national borders," she remarked.

Both online and offline discussions were carried out at the event focusing on the correlation between influencer economy and cross-border e-commerce. The

Cambodia enjoy a long history of friendship, and she hopes to further the exchanges between the cultures of the two countries despite their differences. Indonesian influencer Harini Riswanda introduced her efforts to maintain strict inspection and integrity when promoting cross-border e-commerce. Alexandra Bounxouei from Laos believes that music and media are bringing closer the people from her country and China, though they speak different languages and have different cultures and traditions.

As China's first large forum joined by senior government officials, scholars and online influencers, the event was co-sponsored by the ASEAN-China Centre, Global Times Online, Department of Commerce of Fujian Province, Foreign Affairs Office of the People's Government of Fujian Province, and Fuzhou Municipal People's Government. It was supported by the China Public Diplomacy Association and Mission of the People's Republic of China to ASEAN, and co-organized by Fujian Asia-Pacific Economic and Trade Cooperation Promotion Association.

(The ASEAN-China Online Influencers Conference was held in Fuzhou, Fujian Province from 11 to 13 January 2022. The Global Times Online www.huanqiu.com provides the above press release. -GNLM)

Their ASEAN counterparts expressed similar aspirations. Cambodian gaming streamer Seaneang said that China and

# 105 nations to get cheaper Merck Covid pill

**G**ENERIC drug manufacturers will make a more affordable version of Merck's anti-Covid pill for 105 of the world's poorer nations, a UN-backed organization said on Thursday.

The global Medicines Patent Pool signed agreements with 27 manufacturers to produce the oral antiviral medicine molnupiravir, for supply in low- and-middle-income countries.

"This is a critical step toward ensuring global access to an urgently needed Covid-19 treatment

and we are confident that... the anticipated treatments will be rapidly available in LMICs," said MPP executive director Charles Gore.

Merck granted a licence to the MPP in an agreement announced in October. The MPP in turn, issued sub-licences to the generic drugs makers. The sub-licences allow manufacturers to produce the raw ingredients for molnupiravir, and/or the finished drug itself.

The companies are spread across Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Jordan, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Pakistan, South Africa, South Ko-

rea and Vietnam.

Five manufacturers will focus on producing the raw ingredients; 13 will produce both raw ingredients and molnupiravir itself; while nine will simply produce the finished drug. Antivirals like molnupiravir work by decreasing the ability of a virus to replicate, thereby slowing down the disease.

Given to patients within days of a positive test, the treatment cuts the risk of hospitalization, according to Merck, also called MSD outside the United States.

"Accelerating broad, afforda-

ble access to molnupiravir has been a priority for MSD from the start," said the company's Paul Schaper. "We are pleased to see this vision come to life."

## Sales royalties waived

Merck jointly developed molnupiravir with the Miami-based company Ridgeback Biotherapeutics. They will not receive sales royalties while Covid-19 remains classified as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) by the WHO.

SOURCE: AFP



Antivirals like Molnupiravir work by decreasing the ability of a virus to replicate, thereby slowing down the disease. Molnupiravir is an antiviral medication that inhibits the replication of certain RNA viruses. It is used to treat COVID-19 in those infected by SARS-CoV-2. PHOTO: MERCK/AFP

## Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 21 January 2022)

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 22nd January, 2022:** Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region and Kachin, (Northern and Eastern) Shan, Kayin, Mon States and isolated in Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon, Ayeeyawady Regions and Southern Shan, Chin, Kayah States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy the remaining Regions and States.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperature in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan, Chin States.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 January, 2022:** Partly cloudy.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 January, 2022:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thunder showers Degree of certainty is (60%).

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 January, 2022:** Partly cloudy.

**WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND:** Weather will be partly cloudy in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Yangon Regions.

## EARTHQUAKE NEWS

A moderate earthquake of magnitude (5.4) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (11) miles northeast of Falam), latitude 23.05°N, longitude 93.76°E, depth (72) kilometers, about (30) miles north-northeast of Haka seismological observatory was recorded at (16) hr (42) min (32) sec M.S.T on 21 January, 2022.

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# Suspects involved in terrorist acts in ...

### FROM PAGE-7

Htut (a) Gyogya and Tin Htoo Maung shot an innocent civilian, who lived in the ward (1) in Hline Township, near the Butayon Junction traffic lights on 29 August

Yan Kyi Aung shot an innocent civilian who lived in the ward (14) in Hline Township on 19 September

Totegy (in hiding) and Nay Toe (in hiding) shot an innocent civilian who lived in the ward (2) in Hline Township on 10 October

Myat Noe Maung and Pu Tin opened fires at security forces near volleyball gymnasium in Hline Township on 10 November

San Win Htut, Gyogya, Chel Chel, Hein Thu Aung, Yan Gyi Aung, who are now in hiding, shot a security member near Thaw Thazin market in the ward (5), Hline Township, on 3 December  
Tin Htoo Maung and Hein



Thu Aung, who are now in hiding, shot an innocent civilian who lived in the ward (6) in Hline Township on 31 December

It is learnt that Kyaw The Naing was monitoring the situation during these shootings.

According to the statements of arrested suspects, Wai Phyo Han (a) Naung Yoe, with the fund

from the local/foreign extremist NLD supports, has been funding the in-charges of the four districts in Yangon Region for safe houses to hide after committing acts of violence and issued more money depending on the ability to commit terrorist acts.

According to the statement of suspect Nyein Myat Thu, Moe

Thu Thu Aung (a) May Thet Khine, leader of the MURM terrorist group, who has been hiding in the KNLA Brigade (6), sent four 3D printers, and Kaung Myat tested FGC-9 guns in the safe house in the ward (77) in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township.

According to the confession of arrested suspects, Naing Lin Aung connected with Wai Lin Kyaw (a) Ye Yint, who is hiding in the KNLA Brigade (7); Htet Wai Yan connected with Min Thuta, who is hiding in the KNLA Brigade (7); Zin Ko Ko Aung connected with Chit Tee and Ko Zay; they carried and transported arms and ammunition from Myawady. Wunna Kyaw kept arms and ammunition at his house, under the guidance of Ko Zay.

According to the statement of Nyein Nyein Aye (a) Mable, she received the killing news of an innocent civilian, who lived in

Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township from YRG terrorist group under the link of Naing Lin Aung, and sent the news to Mizzima News Agency in November. She had to report news related to terrorist groups to Editor-in-Chief Soe Myint daily, and she linked Naing Lin Aung with Paing Ye Thu and Okka.

The terrorist groups stated above committed 29 terrorist bombings and 10 killings of innocent civilians, to undermine the state administration and terrorize innocent people. Therefore, effective action will be taken against arrested suspects, and the people are called for cooperation to eradicate those committing terrorist acts by secretly reporting any movement about them to the relevant authorities and that they will be awarded worthy rewards. — MNA

## Phyo Zeyar Thaw (aka) Maung Kyaw (aka) Yaykhe, Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy get death sentences



Phyo Zeyar Thaw.



Kyaw Min Yu.

THE military tribunal sentenced NLD member Phyo Zeyar Thaw (aka) Maung Kyaw (aka) Yaykhe and Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy to death under the Counter-terrorism Law Section 49(a), 50 (i) and 50 (j) yesterday.

Phyo Zeyar Thaw (aka) Maung Kyaw (aka) Yaykhe who lives in Yadana Hninsi Housing in Yadana street of No (61) Ward of Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township of Yangon Region, faced death penalty for keeping various arms and ammunition to provide terrorist groups at his two houses in Thingangyun Township. Moreover, he organized Zoom meeting with CRPH, NUG and PDF, which were declared terrorist groups with Order No 2/2021 of the Central Committee on Counter-Terrorism of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and their subordinate Moon Light Operation groups to stimulate to commit bomb attacks in Yangon, to provide weapons and order

to kill the ones who do not support them, security members and administrative officials and also to launch bomb attacks on governmental buildings, public areas, religious buildings and schools.

He collected cash contribution from those who living abroad and bought arms and ammunition using these cash contributions to perpetrate terrorist attacks. He intentionally used all the funds or a few of funds which was received officially or illegally and provided to certain terrorists or terrorist groups by collecting directly breaking the law or accidentally.

Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy who lives in Thayatchan (1) street of Peinegon Ward of Insein Township of Yangon Region also kept arms and ammunition at the house in Myahninsi street of Pinlon Housing in No (27) Ward of Dagon Myothit (North) Township to provide CRPH, NUG and PDF, which were

declared terrorist groups with Order No 2/2021 of the Central Committee on Counter-Terrorism of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. He held Zoom meeting with CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorists and their subordinates Moon Light Operation groups to launch bomb attacks and served as advisor to do so. He transferred money to Nway Oo Kant Kaw, subordinate of CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorist groups to purchase/create arms and ammunition. He cooperated with UMCD to ask for money at NUG to buy about \$100million worth of 3D printer that can print firearms. He bought dollars and exchanged into Myanmar Kyats for many times to provide financial assistance to terrorist groups.

The military tribunal sentenced NLD member Phyo Zeyar Thaw (aka) Maung Kyaw (aka) Yaykhe and Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy to death under the Counter-Terrorism Law Section 49 (a), 50 (i) and 50 (j) yesterday. Therefore, two suspects were sentenced to death by the military tribunal under the Martial Law.

It issued 23 crimes to be heard by the military tribunal in the townships placed under the Martial Law and effective actions will be taken by the military tribunal if those who commit one of these crimes. — MNA

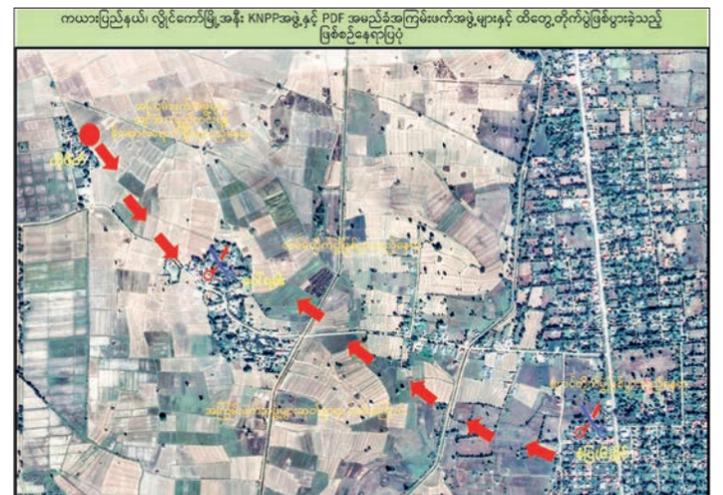
## KNPP and PDF terrorists commit more war crimes

FOLLOWING the report on KNPP and PDF terrorists who were hiding in the San Pya (6) mile village in the south of Loikaw, Kayah State, security forces conducted a search operation. However, as the terrorists opened fire at the security forces by covering behind houses, government and religious buildings and by using the residents as human shields instead of letting them out of the danger, the clashes erupted when security forces returned fire.

The terrorists finally fled towards the locally-known Gurkha village located in the northwest of the village. When the security forces followed them, more terrorist

groups hiding in Hopheik village had used vehicles to reinforce their attacks. Therefore, security forces used heavy weapons and aerial supporting fire to prevent such reinforcements from harming local communities.

As the acts of KNPP and PDF terrorists are not targeting military targets, but religious buildings, schools and homes, and the use of human shields are deliberate acts of war crimes according to the Geneva Conventions and international laws, security forces continue to fight against them to prevent civilian casualties and peace in the area. — MNA



Armed clashes with KNPP, PDFs near Loikaw, Kayah State.

## Domestic gold price remains in bull market on global cues

THE price of precious yellow metal stays in the upward trend tracking the hikes in the international gold market and Kyat weakening against the US dollar, U Myo Myint, Chair of the Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

“The domestic gold price is highly correlated with the international market. Additionally, Kyat is depreciating against the US dollar. We have a large supply of gold yet the market is quite sluggish. The gold price gained on account of global gold and Kyat devaluation on the US dollar,” he elaborated.

The global gold price stands at US\$1,839 per ounce. The US dollar exchange rate is approximately K1,990 in the local forex market at present. Meanwhile, the pure gold fetches up to K1,884,000 per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme).

The gold price rally is expected to continue in the coming months. Only if the global gold price slides and Kyat appreciates on the US dollar can the domestic gold price fall, U Myo Myint shared his opinion.

Last 28 September 2021, a dollar value hit an all-time high of over K3,000 in the black market and consequently, the pure gold reached a record high of K2.22 million per tical in history.

In January 2021, the gold price was ranged between the minimum of K1,316,000 per tical (28 January) and the maximum of K1,336,000 per tical (6 January). It reached an all-time high of K1,410,000 per tical on 3 February and hit the minimum of K1,340,000 per tical on 2 February. In March, the rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,391,000 (25 March) and the lowest of K1,302,000 (4 March). The price was registered the highest of K1,455,000 (30 April) and the lowest of K1,389,000 (1 April). The price reached an all-time highest of K1,709,000 (12 May) and the lowest of K1,447,000 in May. The price moved in the maximum of K1,575,500 (11 June) and the minimum of K1,543,000 (19 June). It fluctuated between K1,562,300 (26 July) and K1,587,000 (K1,587,000). The price of gold reached the lowest of K1,572,800 (3 August) and the highest of K1,698,000 (31 August). It was recorded the lowest of K1,703,500 (1 September) and edged up to K2,220,000 (28 September). The price was ranged between K1,768,500 (27 October) and K2,030,000 (1 October). It elevated to K1,810,000 (6 November) and plunged to K1,768,500 (24 November). It was traded between K1,768,500 (6 December) and K1,823,000 (29 December), the gold traders said. — NN/GNLM



Gold jewellery is seen at one of the Yangon gold jewellery outlets.

## Corn seeds price still inching upward



At present, corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons. The country yearly produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn.

THE price of corn seeds has sustained its upward momentum and is now around K800 per viss, according to the domestic market.

The corn price has sharply risen due to rising of foreign exchange currency and the devaluation of the Myanmar kyat, according to the corn traders.

At present, the exchange rate of a US dollar hit around K2,000 in the local foreign market. The FOB price of corn stood at approximately US\$260 per tonne.

Currently, Myanmar corns are exported to Thailand and China through land borders. It has also conveyed Myanmar corns to the Philippines, India, Viet Nam, Laos

and Singapore through the sea route. The corn price is climbing this year compared to last year, according to Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

In the financial year 2020-21, Myanmar exported about 2.3 million tonnes of corn to the international market, according to the association. Of 2.3 million tonnes, the majority of corn was delivered to Thailand, whereas the remaining corn was conveyed to China, India and Viet Nam.

Thailand has granted tax exemption on corn imports between February and August. However, Thailand imposed a maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on corn import to protect the rights of their

growers if the corn is imported during the corn season of Thailand.

Therefore, Myanmar will resume its corn export process to Thailand next February, according to corn traders.

During the FY2019-2020, the country exported 2.2 million tonnes of corns to the external market, with an estimated value of over \$360 million, the Ministry of Commerce's data showed.

At present, corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons.

The country yearly produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn. — NN/GNLM

## Mandalay Region Consumer Affairs Department resolves 13 out of 14 complaints in mini-budget period

MANDALAY Region Consumer Affairs Department has resolved 13 out of 14 complaints in the current mini-budget period and it is handling the last remaining one, said U Zaw Min, head of Mandalay Region Consumer Affairs Department. “The department received 14 complaints between October 2021 and 18 January 2022 and it has handled 13 complaints involving service, telecommunication, delivery and domestic tour service. Only one is left to be solved,” said U Myo Tun, head of the department.

It plays a pivotal role in ensuring quality goods and services for the consumers. To meet consumer needs, an awareness campaign is a must.

“The department in coordination with the Information and Public Relations Department is raising awareness of consumer rights through talk shows. A survey and surprise check is also being undertaken at petrol stations. The consumer has a right to acquire knowledge. They can file a complaint regarding loss suffered on purchase of defective goods,” he continued.

The department received 237 complaints in the 2019-2020 FY, while only 76 complaints are reported in the 2020-2021 FY, the department's data showed. The department is protecting consumer rights and benefits by looking forward to food safety and consumer product safety and

trying to improve the quality of goods and services. Consumers can file a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service or products or false or misleading advertising that harms the rights of consumers under the Consumer Protection Law. The department firstly tries to resolve the cases by mediating the situations. However, legal action is taken in certain cases under the Consumer Protection Law. The consumers can file the complaints to the Department of Consumer Affairs through Facebook Page or DOCA Myanmar mobile app or www.doca.gov.mm, or dial 067- 3430468, 067-3430459 and 067- 3430207. — Aye Chan, KK/GNLM

## Illegal teak, foodstuffs and vehicles seized



Seized goods.



UNDER the supervision of the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, effective action is being taken to prevent illegal trade under the law.

On January 20, a combined inspection team led by the Customs Department conducted an inspection at the Mayanchaung Permanent Checkpoint and one unlicensed food item (estimated at K3,676,000) was seized from a passenger bus on the Road of Hpa-an-Yangon and action is being taken in line with the Customs Department's procedures.

Similarly, the Customs Department conducted an inspection at the Myanmar Industrial Port Container Inspection Station and seized Laminated Building Glass without its import declaration ID with an estimated value of K2,645,000, and officials are taking action as per the procedures of the Customs Department.

Similarly, under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force and led by the Department of Forest, a search of the Dauntchaung village tract



Confiscated illegal teak.

resulted in the seizure of 3.8768 tonnes of illegal mango (esti-

Forestry Law. In addition, an investigation was carried out by the Myanmar Police Force and the Forest Department with the supervision of the Anti-Illegal Task Force yesterday in Sagaing Region.

A total of four unregistered vehicles and 5.232 tonnes of teak (estimated value of K12,284,800), including one Honda CR-V and one Honda Fit in Sagaing Township, one AD van in Kanbalu Township, one Yamaha motorcycle in Monywa Township, four unlicensed vehicles (estimated value of K11,500,000) and 5.232 tonnes of teak in Mawlaik Township (estimated value of K784,800) were seized.

Unregistered vehicles are being prosecuted under the Import and Export Law and teak under the Forest Law. Thus, on 20 and 21 January, a total of eight arrests were made with a total estimated value of K18,605,800, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA

mated value of K465,000) and action is being taken under the

## Over 3,000 killed, 8,000 injured in traffic accidents in 2021

IN the year 2021, more than 3,000 people were killed and over 8,000 injured in traffic accidents in Nay Pyi Taw and other regions and states, according to a statement from the Road Transport Administration Directorate.

In the same year, a total of 6,420 crashes and road accidents including 181 traffic accidents in Nay Pyi Taw, 257 times in Kachin State, 14 times in Kayah State, 170 times in Kayin State, 23 times in Chin State, 341 times in Sagaing Region, 215 times in Tanintharyi Region, 813 times in Bago Region, 520 traffic accidents in Magway Region, 690 times in Mandalay Region, 560 times in Mon State, 182 in Rakhine State, 915 in Yangon Region, 595 times in Shan State, and 691 road accidents in Ayeyawady Region, and 253 times on expressway and elsewhere.

The crashes resulted in many deaths and injuries.

In Nay Pyi Taw, 131 people were killed and 147 wounded, while 151 killed and 311 injured in Kachin State. Similarly, nine were killed and 15 injured in Kayah State, 89 people were killed and 226 wounded in Kayin State, 17 people died with 31 being injured

in Chin State, 198 people were killed and 468 were wounded in Sagaing Region, 114 people were dead and 318 injured in Tanintharyi Region, 363 died with 1,070 being wounded in Bago Region, 199 people were dead and 745 injured in Magway Region, 394 were killed and 783 were wounded in Mandalay Region, and 224 were killed and 826 injured in Mon State, respectively.

In Rakhine State, 121 people died with 289 being injured, while 450 were dead with 915 being injured in Yangon Region.

In Shan State, 314 people

were killed and 759 injured and 286 people were dead with 1,011 being wounded in Ayeyawady Region, 98 dead and 397 injured on expressway and others.

A total of 3,158 people were killed and 8,311 wounded in the same year. Yangon Region had the highest number of traffic accidents in the year 2021, followed by Bago Region. According to a statement from the Road Transport Administration Directorate, Yangon Region has the highest number of fatalities due to traffic accidents, followed by Mandalay Region. —Pwint Thisar



Yangon Region had the highest number of traffic accidents in the year 2021, followed by Bago Region. PHOTO: SOE MYINT AUNG

## Drugs seized in Yaybyu, Tachilek townships



Thein Maung Soe

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force stopped and searched Scania passenger bus near Milepost 81/6 of Mahletaung checkpoint, Kalein Aung Town, Yaybyu Township, on 20 January.

A total of five kilogrammes of ice in the luggage of Thein Maung Soe, a passenger in the vehicle, worth a total of K135million was seized at 1 pm that day.

Similarly, Police searched bikers Aung Thiha and Ye Lin Tun (a) Ko Ye on Waibargi Road and seized 2,000 stimulant tablets.

Next, 1,782 stimulant tablets were found in search of a motorcycle driven by Kyaphae on the Tachilek-Mongsat Road, near Lwetawkham village, Lwetawkham Village-tract, Tachilek Township at 4 pm on 19 January.

According to the link, a further search of Manana's home in Natali village, Lwetawkham Village-tract, Tachilek Township, at 6 pm on the same day led to the confiscation of another 630 stimulant tablets and they are being prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to the Police Force. — MNA

# JR East to launch 2-yr leave plan for infertility care, study abroad

EAST Japan Railway Co. is planning to introduce in April an unpaid leave system of up to two years for infertility treatment, study abroad or pursuing qualifications, sources familiar with the matter said Thursday. The new leave plan aims to reduce turnover by providing flexible work options, as it is much more substantial than the few months of long-term leave offered at many Japanese companies, according to the sources.

The railway company joins an increasing number of Japanese companies offering flexible work environments to meet the growing need for diversified working styles and retaining a talented workforce in the face of labour shortages.

The new programme also comes as JR East expects a second straight annual net loss in the year to March, as teleworking, in-



A shinkansen bullet train operated by East Japan Railway Co. is pictured at Tokyo Station on 20 January 2022. PHOTO: KYODO

troduced at many companies as a measure against the coronavirus pandemic, is expected to keep train commuter numbers low. All Nippon Airways Co. is among Japanese companies introducing flexible work policies. The airline in April last year began a plan allowing workers to take leave for up to two

years regardless of the purpose.

In 2020, Kirin Holdings Co. started a special re-employment screening for retirees who had worked at the beverage company for three consecutive years and within five years of quitting.

Yahoo Japan Corp. said last week it would

allow workers to live and commute from anywhere in Japan beginning in April, while Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp. said last year that it is considering allowing all 320,000 employees of the telecom giant group to work remotely as the norm and abolishing job relocations.—Kyodo ■

# US extends protection of Venezuelan oil unit Citgo

THE US Treasury on Thursday extended by one year a rule that shields Citgo, a US-based unit of Venezuela's state-owned oil company PDVSA, from being seized by creditors, the department said.

The Houston-based company has been controlled by parties opposed to the government of President Nicolas Maduro since early 2019, when US sanctions against PDVSA took effect.



Citgo is the US subsidiary of the troubled Venezuelan state owned oil company PDVSA. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Citgo had been used by the government as collateral in various loans. It was also designated as an

asset to offset defaults in cases decided in international and US courts.

Now, as part of the

sanctions against PDVSA, the Treasury has extended by a year a decree which bars Citgo from being sold off to creditors.

The administration of then-president Donald Trump handed control of Citgo to opposition leader Juan Guaido in 2019 after recognizing him as his country's interim president following elections in which Maduro won another term amid allegations of fraud. President Joe Biden still backs Guaido.—AFP ■

# Da Vinci should grace new euro notes, says Lagarde

EUROPEAN Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde suggested Thursday that Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci and pioneering French politician Simone Veil appear on the new

euro banknotes, as she waded into a politically sensitive topic.

The ECB announced plans to introduce new euro bills by 2024, but designing the European Union's single currency

is fraught with political tension.

Euros were introduced in 2002 with symbolic illustrations of Roman and Gothic architecture to avoid debates on choosing historical

figures. But they will get a facelift as the ECB has launched a design and consultation process involving the public and a panel of 19 experts, one from each eurozone country.—AFP ■

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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.  
Dated 22 January 2022 hh@kcyangon.com

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (003N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (003N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-1-2022 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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# US charges Belarus officials with air piracy over Ryanair flight diversion

THE US Justice department charged four Belarus officials with air piracy Thursday for last year's forced diversion of a Ryanair flight in order to arrest a dissident on board.

Two top officials of the state air navigation authority and two security officials were accused of conspiracy to commit aircraft piracy for allegedly taking part in a fake bomb scare scheme to force the aircraft to land in Minsk on 23 May 2021, so that the Belarusian government could seize opposition campaigner Roman Protasevich.

The charges, filed in federal court in New York, said Ryanair Flight 4978 from Athens to Vilni-



A Ryanair Boeing 737-8AS (flight number FR4978) is parked on the Minsk International Airport's apron in Minsk, Belarus, 23 May 2021. PHOTO: AFP

us had been carrying more than 100 passengers, including four US citizens, when Belarus authorities concocted the scheme

to force it to land.

Two of the four charged, Leonid Mikalaeovich Churo and Oleg Kazyuchits, are director-general and deputy director-general, respectively, of the state aviation authority Belaeronavigatsia.

Two others from the state security services, their names not fully known to the FBI, were also charged.

"The FBI identified a detailed operation that subjected passengers from many countries, including the US, to the realities of terroristic threats," said FBI Assistant Director Michael Driscoll.

"Not only is what took place a reckless violation of US law,

it's extremely dangerous to the safety of everyone who flies in an airplane," he said.

"The next pilot who gets a distress call from a tower may doubt the authenticity of the emergency — which puts lives at risk."

The diversion operation was led by state security services and succeeded in having Protasevich, 26, a journalist with the Nexta opposition media, and his girlfriend Sofia Sapega, a law student at the European Humanities University in Lithuania, arrested at a Minsk airport.

Both were placed under house arrest to face various charges.— AFP ■

## Quiet car: England to ban loudspeaker 'spam' on trains

UK transport chiefs on Friday said that bothersome on-board train announcements would be cut in a bid to offer more peaceful journeys, a move it dubbed a "bonfire of the banalities".

The measure is likely to be welcomed by commuters all-too familiar with the annoyance of loudspeaker interruptions reminding them to have tickets in hand or — ironically — to keep their voices down.

Operating companies will still broadcast important safety messages, but "repetitive and unnecessary on-board announcements" will be removed, the Department for Transport said.

The so-called "tannoy spam" — a reference to the public address system — is expected to be removed in the coming months in England.

"Banal announcements set

to be culled include self-evident instructions, such as having your ticket ready when leaving the station, and contradictory calls for passengers to keep volume levels low while on-board announcements blare out," said the department.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the measures were aimed at improving the railways for those who use them frequently. "I'm calling for a



The so-called 'tannoy spam' is expected to be removed in the coming months. PHOTO: DANIEL LEAL /AFP

'bonfire of the banalities' to bring down the number of announcements passengers are forced to

sit through and make their journey that little bit more peaceful," he said.—AFP ■

## Mexico sees drop in murders in 2021



Members of Mexico's National Guard deploy near a crime scene in Irapuato in the central state of Guanajuato. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

MEXICO recorded 33,308 murders last year, marking a 3.6 per cent decrease compared with 2020, in a country long plagued by drug cartel violence, official figures showed Thursday.

Homicides were on a "downward trend," Security Minister

Rosa Icela Rodriguez said after the second consecutive annual improvement.

Murders hit 34,690 in 2019, the highest on record, before dropping slightly to 34,554 in 2020.

Since 2006 when the government of then-president Felipe

Calderon launched a controversial anti-drug military operation, Mexico has recorded more than 340,000 murders, according to official figures. Gangs fighting for control of lucrative routes for smuggling drugs, migrants and stolen fuel often seek to intimidate their rivals by leaving dead bodies hanging from bridges or dumped in public places. Some types of crimes — including extortion, rape and certain kinds of robberies — have been on the rise, Rodriguez said. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took office in 2018 championing a "hugs not bullets" strategy to tackle violent crime at its roots by fighting poverty and inequality with social programmes, rather than with the army. He also created a new security force, the National Guard, made up of elements of the armed forces.— AFP ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### At least two dead, 22 wounded by bomb in Pakistan's Lahore

At least two people were killed and 22 wounded Thursday by a bomb blast in a busy shopping district of the Pakistani megacity of Lahore, police and officials said.

The attack was claimed on Twitter by a spokesman for the Baloch Nationalist Army, one of several ethnic separatist groups that have been waging an insurgency for years in southwest Pakistan.

"Initial investigations show that it was a time-controlled device on a motorbike which was the cause of the blast," Rana Arif, spokesman for Lahore police, told AFP.

Thursday's blast happened in old Lahore's busy Anarkali shopping district, damaging several motorbikes and upturning market stalls.

Officials said a nine-year-old child was one of those killed.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed regret over the "loss of precious human lives", a spokesman for his office said.

On Twitter, a spokesman for the Baloch Nationalist Army said it was responsible. "This attack targeted bank employees. A detailed statement will be issued soon," the tweet said.

Mineral-rich Balochistan, bordering Afghanistan and Iran, is the largest of Pakistan's four provinces, but its roughly seven million inhabitants have long complained they do not receive a fair share of its gas and mineral wealth.—AFP ■

# US, Russia hold last-ditch talks on Ukraine war fears



Russian troops arrived in Belarus, near Ukraine, as seen in this handout photograph from Belarus' defence ministry.

PHOTO: BELARUS' DEFENCE MINISTRY/HANDOUT/AFP

WASHINGTON and Moscow's top diplomats meet Friday in Geneva in a last-ditch bid for a solution over Ukraine, with the United States increasingly fearing that Russia will invade

despite warnings of severe reprisals.

The talks between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov come just 11 days after their deputies met in Geneva and agreed to preserve dialogue amid Russia's build-up of tens of thousands of troops on Ukraine's border.

Unlike the 10 January session, which lasted for nearly eight hours, Blinken and Lavrov are expected to have a concise exchange as they determine whether diplomacy remains possible.

Veteran diplomats who have encountered each other for years, Blinken is known for his unflappable calm and Lavrov for his mordant intensity.

They will meet at the lakeside luxury Hotel President Wilson, named for the US leader whose decisions included intervening against the Bolshevik revolution.

"These are difficult issues we are facing, and resolving them won't be done quickly. I don't expect we'll solve them in Geneva," Blinken said in Geneva. "But we can advance our mutual understanding", Blinken

said, and if Russia de-escalates on the ground, "that can turn us away from this crisis in the weeks ahead".

President Joe Biden bluntly assessed on Wednesday that his counterpart Vladimir Putin is likely to "move in" on Ukraine and warned of a "disaster for Russia". The United States and its allies have warned of severe economic sanctions for an invasion. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov responded that Biden's remarks were destabilising and could "inspire some hotheads in Ukraine with false hopes".—AFP ■

## Draghi, Berlusconi in mix as Italy elects new president

ITALY'S parliament begins voting for a new president Monday, with Prime Minister Mario Draghi tipped for election in a high-stakes version of musical chairs which threatens the survival of the government.

As backroom negotiations hit fever pitch this week, the brashest campaigner has been billionaire Silvio Berlusconi, whose charm offensive has included bragging about his raunchy "bunga bunga" parties.

The 85-year-former premier has long coveted Italy's top job, even reportedly promising his late mother he would get it, although few believe he has the necessary votes.

It is notoriously hard to predict who will win the secret ballot for the seven-year post.

While a largely ceremonial role, the president wields considerable power in times of political crises, from dissolving



Former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi has taken out advertising space in newspapers to promote his campaign for the presidency. PHOTO: AFP

parliament to picking new prime ministers and denying mandates to fragile coalitions.

Italy needs a stabilising figurehead now more than ever: the disparate parties who share power in Draghi's government are already in battle mode ahead of next year's elections, and cha-

os could put precious European recovery funds at risk.

"This is a key and very complicated election, because the political parties are weak, they are in a utterly fragmented state," Giovanni Orsina, head of the Luiss School of Government in Rome, told AFP. — AFP ■

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Russia risks 'quagmire' in Ukraine: UK

RUSSIA risks becoming embroiled in a "terrible quagmire" if it invades Ukraine, British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is to warn Friday in a speech in Sydney.

The UK's top diplomat will tell Russian President Vladimir Putin that he is on the brink of making a strategic blunder by launching military action and "has not learned the lessons of history."

According to prepared remarks to the Lowy Institute, Truss will urge Putin to "desist and step back from Ukraine before he makes a massive strategic mistake."

"Invasion will only lead to a terrible quagmire and loss of life, as we know from the Soviet-Afghan war and conflict in Chechnya." Tens of thousands of Russian troops have massed on Ukraine's border, and the drumbeat of invasion has been growing for months.—AFP ■

#### Crashed World War II aircraft found in India after 77 years

A missing World War II plane has been identified in India's remote Himalayas nearly 80 years after it crashed with no survivors, following a treacherous search that led to the deaths of three guides.

The C-46 transport aircraft was carrying 13 people from Kunming in southern China when it disappeared in stormy weather over a mountainous stretch of Arunachal Pradesh state in the first week of 1945.

"This aircraft was never heard from again. It simply disappeared," said Clayton Kuhles, a US adventurer who led the mission after a request from the son of one of those on board the doomed flight.—AFP ■

## CIA sees no foreign effort behind 'Havana syndrome' cases

THE CIA has concluded that no foreign government is likely behind hundreds of mysterious "Havana syndrome" afflictions reported by US diplomats and that nearly all have more conventional medical or environmental explanations, a senior official said Thursday.

Out of as many as 1,000 anomalous health incidents (AHIs) reported by American

diplomats, intelligence and other officials, commonly dubbed "Havana syndrome", about two dozen remain unexplained and are still the focus of intense examination, the official told AFP on the condition of anonymity.

The first cases in Cuba in 2016, involving complaints of nosebleeds, migraines and nausea after experiencing piercing sounds at night, sparked sus-

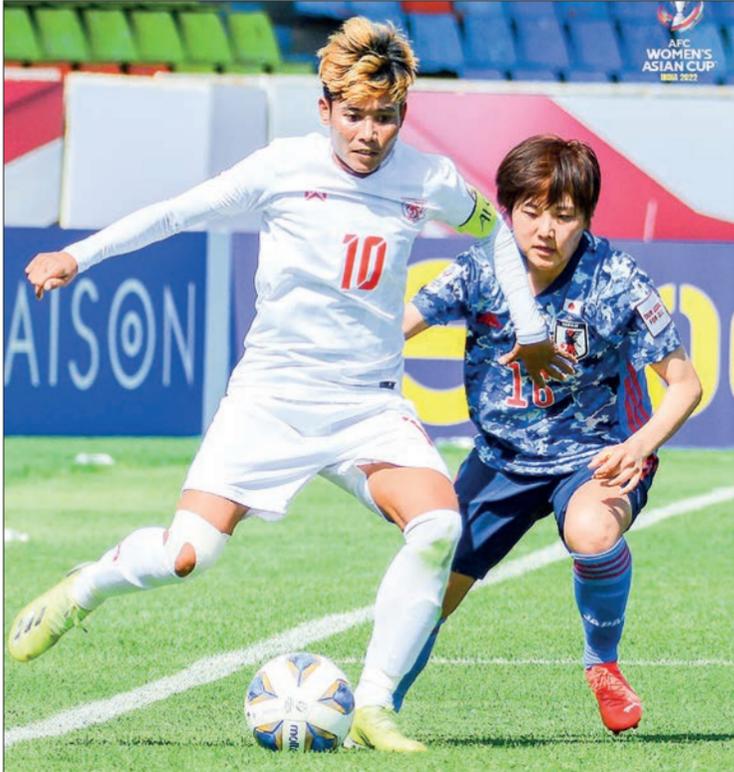
picious that Russia or another rival was conducting campaigns to hurt US officials.

The reports of unexplained physical ailments spread to US officials in China, Russia, Europe and even Washington, sparking a broader investigation by the government and direct accusations that Russia had an unknown electronic or sound-based weapon.—AFP ■



The US embassy in Cuba, where staff in 2016 complained of mysterious, debilitating symptoms that were dubbed "Havana Syndrome". PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## Myanmar loses to defending champions Japan in AFC Women's Cup



Myanmar's star player Khin Marlar Tun dribbles the ball during the AFC Women's Cup Group C match against Japan at Shri Shivchhatrapati Sports Complex, in Maharashtra, India on 21 January 2022. **PHOTO: AFC**

MYANMAR team suffered 0-5 loss to defending champions Japan team in the first-day match of the 2022 AFC Women's Cup Group C at Shri Shivchhatrapati Sports Complex, in Maharashtra, India yesterday.

The Myanmar team is dif-

ferent from the Japanese team in every way, but the Myanmar players competed well with their best effort.

This is the third time Myanmar has met Japan in the final round of the Asian Cup. Team Myanmar lost by five goals to

nil but was able to keep a clean sheet.

Myanmar head coach U Tin Myint Aung used his favourite players: goalkeeper May Zin Nwe, Aye Aye Moe, Chit Chit, Phyu Phyu Win, Thin Thin Yu, San Thaw Thaw, Khin Mo Mo Tun, Khin Marlar Tun, July Kyaw, Nu Nu and Khin Than Wai.

Win Theingi Tun, a main striker of the Indian club, could not play in this match due to the COVID-19 infection.

The Japanese team, which has won the Women's World Cup, was able to put pressure on the Myanmar team from the very beginning.

The Myanmar team conceded only one goal in the first half but gave in to four more goals in the second half.

Goals for the Japan team were scored by Riko Ueki in 22 minutes, Yui Hasegawa in 47 and 90+2 minutes, Hikaru Naomoto in 52 minutes, and Yui Narumiya in 70 minutes, respectively.

Team Myanmar will play against the second AFC Women's Cup match against South Korea on 24 January. —Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM ■

### 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.

## Barca and Atletico Madrid turn attention to La Liga race for top four

BARCELONA and Atletico Madrid will have to put recent struggles behind them this weekend as they continue their scrap to finish in La Liga's top four. Barca's hopes of winning a trophy this season were dealt two blows in a week after they followed up defeat by Real Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup with a surprise loss to Athletic Bilbao on Thursday in the Copa

del Rey. Xavi Hernandez's side still have the Europa League, with a tie against Napoli to come next month, but La Liga is surely out of reach given they sit 17 points behind Real Madrid at the top. "We have lost two titles in a week but we still have the league and Europa League," said Xavi on Thursday. "We have no other option but to keep going." —AFP ■



Barcelona's Ferran Torres scored his first goal for the club against Athletic Bilbao on Thursday. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## Beijing Olympic torch relay closed to public over Covid



The flame of the Beijing Winter Olympics on tour at a university. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE already scaled back Beijing Winter Olympics torch relay will be cordoned off from the general public because of Covid measures, organizers said on Friday.

The relay involving 1,200 torchbearers will take place across the Games' three sites and also travel to tourist attrac-

tions such as the Great Wall from 2 to 4 February, when the Olympics open.

"Safety will always be prioritized for this torch relay," said Yang Haibin, a Games organizing committee official responsible for the torch relay.

"Given epidemic control

considerations... the torch relay and ceremonial activities will be arranged in safe and controllable closed venues."

In a break with tradition, there was no torch relay on Greek soil because of Covid before the flame arrived in China.

Last October's flame-lighting ceremony in Greece was disrupted by human rights activists.

Beijing will next month host the world's most restricted mass sporting event since the pandemic, with all participants required to operate in a strict "bubble" cut off from the outside world. Organizers this week cancelled public ticket sales after the Chinese capital logged its first domestic Omicron outbreak. Travel restrictions into Beijing have been tightened, with all visitors needing to provide recent negative test results, as China battles multiple nationwide outbreaks. — AFP ■