

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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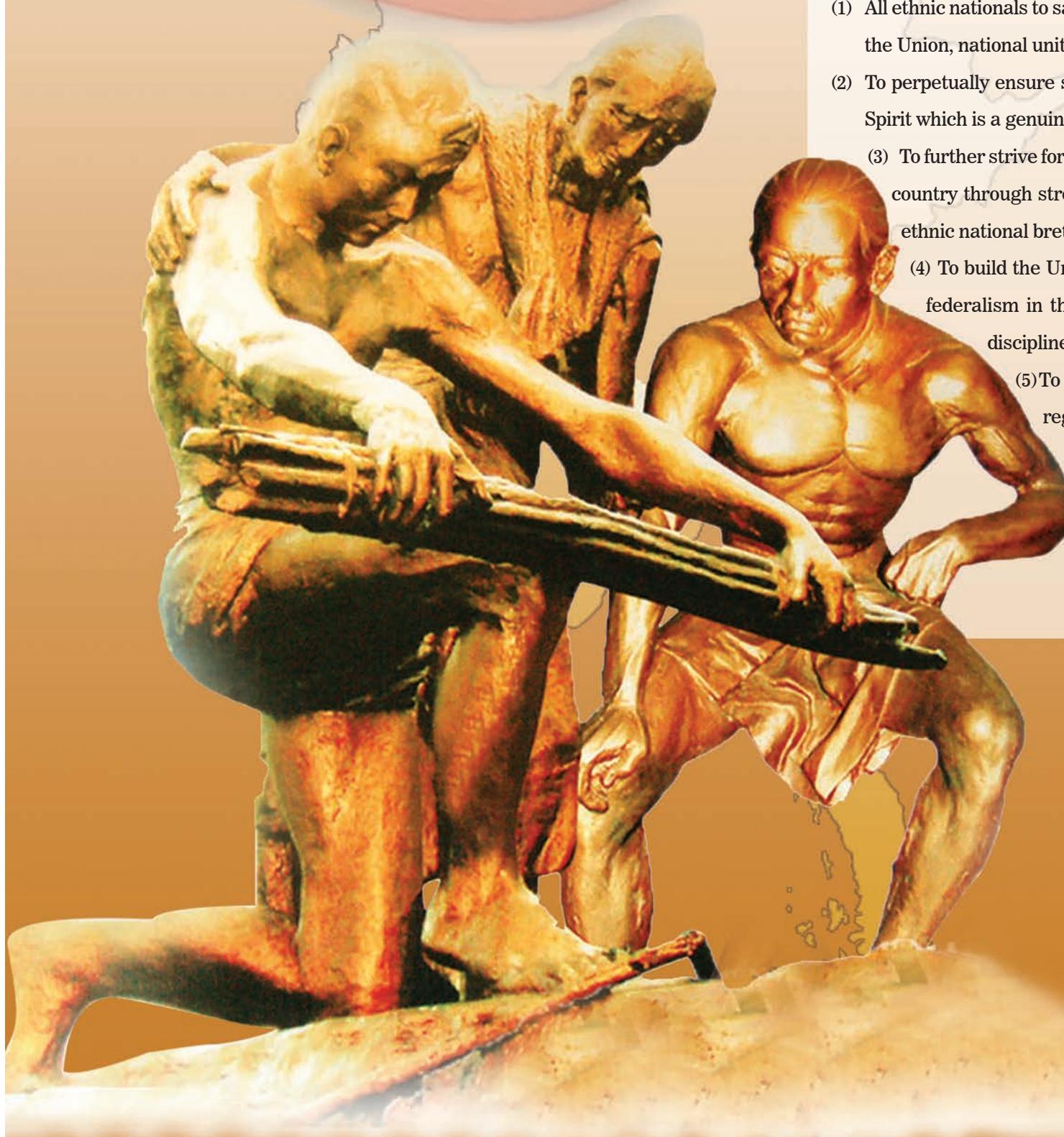
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Saturday, 12 February 2022

Honouring the Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022

National Objectives of Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022

- (1) All ethnic nationals to safeguard non-disintegration of the Union, national unity and sovereignty forever
- (2) To perpetually ensure strengthening dynamic Union Spirit which is a genuine patriotic spirit
- (3) To further strive for the perpetual existence of the country through strong and united strength of all ethnic national brethren
- (4) To build the Union based on democracy and federalism in the realization of the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy
- (5) To equalize development of all regions and states while making efforts for the enhancement of health, education and job opportunities of the ethnic nationals



**Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Announcement 1/2022**

6th Waxing of Tabodwe 1383 ME

6 February 2022

Invitation to Perpetual Peace and Diamond Jubilee Union Day Ceremony

1. The State Administration Council is implementing the five-point Road Map for ensuring stability and development and flourishing the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy. The government adopted the policy that “emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)” as the fourth point of the Road Map. To do so, the State Administration Council is continuously implementing the peace process as part of emphasizing peace in line with the NCA.
2. The Tatmadaw issued 20 statements related to a ceasefire from 21 December 2018 to 28 February 2022 to conduct ceasefire. After meeting with the Cambodian Prime Minister taking ASEAN alternate chair on his working visit to Myanmar on 7 and 8 January 2022, a joint declaration was issued to continue the ceasefire till the end of this year.
3. The message of greetings 2022 made by the Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister stated, “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. 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 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.” Although Myanmar has regained 75 years, the strengthening of sovereignty and development of the nation do not have the improvement as expected due to occurrences of internal armed conflicts and the country loses the strengths and capabilities. It is necessary to restore the perpetual peace to apply these strength and capabilities for the State development at full capacity.
4. Restoration of perpetual peace is very important for building the Union based on democracy and federalism. In this regard, the majority of political parties focused their discussions on the construction of the Union based on democracy and federalism within five years. The National Unity and Peace Restoration Central Committee, the work committee and the coordination committee were formed for working the national unity and perpetual peace. The peace coordination committee has so far held meetings with NCA signatories 16 times, non-NCA signatories nine times, political parties seven times and religious leaders and peace negotiators two times, totalling 34.
5. The State Administration Council is arranging the management for holding meetings with ethnic armed organizations for restoring the perpetual peace. Except for the groups declared as terrorist groups, the government invited not only NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations but also non-NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations to talks about the perpetual peace. The schedule was especially expressed that the meetings would not be pre-restricted for topics of the talks with the aim of freely exchanging views among them.
6. Among three future tasks of the State, **two national tasks** are “to ensure the prosperity of the State and the food sufficiency” and **the two political tasks** are “to strengthen the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy and build the Union based on democracy and federalism.” As such, the new steps will be made for the peace as of this year as part of implementing the process for ensuring **the integration of peace and sovereignty**.
7. It is necessary to focus on talking about the perpetual peace through seeking the way to solve the answer in negotiation in accord with the democratic practices in order to politically solve the political problems in successive eras as internal affairs of our country. On the occasion coincided with the Diamond Jubilee Union Day, all ethnic armed organizations are especially invited to the Diamond Jubilee Union Day grand ceremony as well as the pre-coordination meeting on perpetual peace talks to build the Union based on democracy and federalism during the ceremony of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day. The entire ethnic national people are requested to negotiate with all stakeholders to attend the free and unrestricted peace talks and the Diamond Jubilee Union Day for restoration of the perpetual peace of the government.

State Administration Council

Seventy per cent of nine rural water projects completed in Naga region

THE Department of Rural Development in Naga Self-Administered Zone, is implementing 9

rural water projects in villages in Lahe, Leshi, and Nanyun townships from the second week of

December 2021 and now it is 70 per cent completed.

The rural water projects are being implemented with a budget of K100.457 million (K78.937 from the Union Fund and K21.52 million from the Sagin Region Government Fund) in the 2021-2022 mini-budget year in nine villages in the Naga Self-Administered Zone.

The Head of the District Department of Rural Development said the department is implementing annual priority projects to provide drinking water to the villages with water shortages, and the nine projects in Naga region will be beneficial for both animals and the people to have access to safe drinking water.—Soe Moe Kyaw/GNLM



The nine projects in Naga region will be beneficial for both animals and the people to have access to safe drinking water.

1,607 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 February, total figure rises to 543,511

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **543,511** after **1,607** new cases were reported on 11 February 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **515,816** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at **19,310** without casualties for 19 days consecutively.—MNA

Motto of 75th Anniversary Union Day 2022

*** Unity is strength: Ethnic nationals join hands as strengths of the Union**

Situation on Peacemaking Process

THE National Unity and Peace Restoration Coordination Committee, the Work Committee and the Coordination Committee were formed to carry out the tasks to ensure national unity and perpetual peace. Our coordination committee has met NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations 16 times, non-NCA signatory EAOs nine times, political parties seven times and the religious leaders and peace negotiators two times, totalling 34.

Tatmadaw issued 20 statements for a ceasefire from 21 December 2018 to 28 February 2022. A joint declaration after the meeting with the Cambodian Prime Minister in early 2022 mentioned that the ceasefire will last for the end of this year.

(Excerpt from the speech made by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on one-year State responsibilities discharged by the State Administration Council on 1-2-2022)

The message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

On the auspicious occasion of Diamond Jubilee Union Day, I extend greetings to all ethnic national brethren with a wish to be physically and mentally healthy and happy in prosperity.

In reviewing the history of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, whenever the ethnic nationalities could amicably build the united strength, the country showed off strong capabilities. Nonetheless, whenever the ethnic nationalities lessened unity due to various reasons, the strength of the country was weak. Finally, all ethnic nationals faced the bitter experiences that the country fell under servitude.

SEE PAGE-4

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 14/2022 12th Waxing of Tabodwe 1383 ME 12 February 2022 **Pardon Order**

THE Chairman of the State Administration Council reduces the jail sentence for Daw Nan Khin Htwe Myint, daughter of U Saw Hla Tun, who was jailed at Hpa-an prison, by half under Sub-section (1) of Section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Sd/Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 16/2022 12th Waxing of Tabodwe 1383 ME 12 February 2022 **Pardon Order**

THE State Administration Council Chairman grants pardon and deportation to the following seven Sri Lankan people, who were jailed at Insein prison, under Sub-section (1) of Section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedures on bilateral relations and humanitarian grounds as a gesture of marking the Diamond Jubilee Union Day, which falls on 12 February 2022, while the country is building a peaceful, developed and disciplined democratic nation.

- (1) A A Nepolian Ananda, Asa/ 22/ 01199/a
- (2) M A Sarath Kumarasiri, Asa/ 22/ 01200/ a
- (3) R P Lakmal Prasanna, Asa/ 22/ 01201/ a
- (4) BH Dinushan Chathuranga, Asa/ 22/ 01202/ a
- (5) W Alexce Fernando, Asa/ 22/ 01203/ a
- (6) W Krishan Chathuranga, Asa/ 22/ 01204/ a
- (7) W Sampath Kumar, Asa/ 22/ 01205/ a

Sd/ Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 15/2022 12th Waxing of Tabodwe 1383 ME 12 February 2022 **Pardon Order**

THE Chairman of the State Administration Council has released the pardon order in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day, which falls on 12 February 2022. Among prisoners who have been sentenced in various prisons for violating the existing laws, 814 prisoners, who have already served their sentences in good discipline, were sentenced under Sub-section (1) of Section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and they are pardoned on the condition that “if they commit another offence, they will continue to serve the remaining sentences”.

Sd/Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 17/2022 12th Waxing of Tabodwe 1383 ME 12 February 2022 **Withdrawal of ongoing criminal proceedings against ethnic armed organization members**

THE State Administration Council Chairman has released this order under Section 419 of the Constitution to withdraw the ongoing criminal proceedings against AA members and 46 subordinates and release them by honouring the Diamond Jubilee Union Day that falls on 12 February 2022 and ensuring durable peace.

By order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

The message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark Diamond Jubilee Union Day 2022

FROM PAGE-3

As colonialist rulers committed wedging among the ethnic nationals in various ways and means to ensure the long term existence of their ruling and exploitation to lessen the unity among the ethnic nationals during the colonial era, it is noticeable that a historical lesson showed the disintegration of the Union spirit.

In order to regain the independence of the State, ethnic national people firmly joined hands with the Tatmadaw in the independence struggles with relentless efforts and perseverance to overcome various difficulties with the sacrifice of life, blood and sweat for the nation. With their honest and righteous leadership, the State leaders rebuilt the unity among ethnic national brethren so as to firmly forge the Union spirit. As a token of the unity based on the Union spirit, all ethnic national people with a vow to regain independence for both hilly and plain areas signed the Panglong Agreement on 12 February 1947. As the 12 February 1947 when the ethnic nationalities showed off their patriotic spirit and the Union spirit was designated as Union Day in the history of the country, it now turns 75 years as Diamond Jubilee Union Day.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

As the fruits of the Panglong Agreement, both hilly and plain regions in integration regained Myanmar Independence on 4 January 1948. As such, the Union Spirit which initiated the relentless efforts of the ethnic nationalities across the nation to unitedly regain the independence should be forged among them forever for ensuring the non-disintegration of the Union and development.

All ethnic national brethren understand well that as the internal armed conflicts triggered by disunity for various reasons soon after regaining the independence cannot be totally solved up to now and the national unity and the Union peace cannot be firmly restored, the country sees delay of the development process. Whenever the Union peace cannot be totally restored, all Union people would have lesser opportunities to share the fruits of development with each other.

The actual need of the entire ethnic national people is to have their livelihoods in peace under the law and improvement of their lives. The government is making utmost efforts with a firm vow for ensuring unity and Union peace to fulfil the requirements of the people and carry out the sustainable and harmonious development tasks at which all ethnic national brethren enjoy the fruits of results. So far, ten ethnic armed organizations have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Moreover, they all have realized the common agreements and agreed to the future plans of peace restoration. As all ethnic nationalities must restore the peace for our country, I'd like to urge all relevant ethnic organizations and the entire people to emphasize the provisions of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

The Union spirit is a root cause of the independence struggles in history. Likewise, the foundation for building the future Union based on democracy and federalism is also the Union spirit. It is a universal truth. A firm vow that all ethnic national brethren would build the united Union through mutual respect and understanding is the Union spirit. As a peaceful and stable democratic and federal State can be firmly built through the Union spirit, it is necessary to persistently nurture the qualified new generations with a firm Union spirit.

The strong and dynamic patriotic spirit of the citizen is crucial for a country. The patriotic spirit is defined as adoring the own country, national races, language, literature and culture and having a feeling against the encroachment on the nation and the national races. The weak patriotic spirit can bring terrible danger to the national and the national races.

Hence, a strong and dynamic patriotic spirit, preservation of national prestige and integrity is an important duty of the entire ethnic national people. All the ethnic national people need to comply with traditions and customs for constantly preserving the national characters.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

In the democratization process, the most important task for the State is Our Three Main National Causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of National Solidarity and the Perpetuation of Sovereignty. I'd like to urge the entire ethnic national people to safeguard the Our Three Main National Causes forever in joining hands with the Tatmadaw.

Currently, as the government is making utmost efforts in taking preventive, control and treatment measures of COVID-19 in all aspects the global countries face, the infection rate of the disease remarkably declines, and further processes will be undertaken with momentum.

I'd like to urge the entire ethnic national people to strive for easing the loss of socio-economic life of the ethnic national people during the period of pandemic and ensuring equitable development of all regions and states in the post-pandemic period as well as the development of health, education and employment opportunities of the ethnic people.

In order to deeply implement the five national objectives of Diamond Jubilee Union Day -

1. All ethnic nationals to safeguard the non-disintegration of the Union, national unity and sovereignty forever
2. To perpetually ensure strengthening and dynamic Union Spirit which is a genuine patriotic spirit
3. To further strive for the perpetual existence of the country through strong and united strength of the ethnic national brethren
4. To build the Union based on democracy and federalism in the realization of the genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy
5. To equalize development of all regions and states while making efforts for enhancement of health, education and job opportunities of the ethnic nationalities,

I send a message on the significant Diamond Jubilee Union Day and amicably urge all ethnic national people in unison to implement these national objectives based on the Union spirit.

Motto of 75th Anniversary Union Day 2022

* Unity is strength: Ethnic nationals join hands as strengths of the Union

San Wati Organic Fertilizer Plant opened in Nay Pyi Taw

THE opening ceremony of the San Wati Livestock Organic Fertilizer Plant was officially commissioned into service at 10 am on 11 February in Letha village of Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, in coordination with the San Wati livestock and organic fertilizer manufacturing cooperative society and Shwe Kaba microfinance cooperative society to mark the 75th Anniversary Union Day.

Union Minister U Hla Moe for Cooperatives and Rural Development, Deputy Minister Dr Aung Gyi, Nay Pyi Taw council member U Zeyar Lin, officials concerned and the farmers attended the event.

The Union Minister delivered a remark that organic fertilizer is eco-friendly and less costly. The cooperative sector is fulfilling the requirement to manufacture organic fertilizer which has fewer health risks to the environment



and humans. The cooperative is also engaged in the manufacturing and distribution of dairy products besides dairy cattle breeding. The animal manure will be turned into organic fertilizer. Shwe Kaba microfinance put the capital

in that project. San Wati cooperative society is implementing fertilizer manufacturing. The organic fertilizer manufactured by San Wati Plant meets the criteria set by the fertilizer committee. It has already sought a fertilizer

certificate from the Agriculture Department.

Organic fertilizer adds nutrients into the soil solution, soil fertility and maintaining nutrient balance. It also contributes to sustainable agriculture, he added.

An acre of paddy needs four bags of this organic fertilizer. A 50-kilogramme bag is priced at K15,000.

Organic fertilizer includes composted manure of animals, such as cattle, chicken and bats, sewage sludge and biochar. The plant ensures an adequate inventory of raw materials by linking to the suppliers in other regions and states. It will carry out measures for sustainable production and quality control and build distribution networks through cooperatives, he elaborated.

Afterwards, the director-general of the Department of Cooperative and the chair of the San Wati cooperative explained each sector.

Eventually, a team led by the Union minister inspected the plant, experimental plantation of paddy and cattle farms. — MNA

Committee for Preventing Grave Violence against Children in Armed Conflicts 1/2022 meeting held



THE Committee for Preventing Grave Violence against Children in Armed Conflicts conducted a 1/2022 meeting yesterday.

During the meeting, Committee Chairperson Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Thet Thet Khine discussed the release of statement on

the implementation of national-level work plans regarding the prevention of child casualties and sexual violence in the conflicts and the transparent work procedures to the international countries after receiving the permission of SAC.

The meeting also focused on the implementation of a national action plan (2022-2023)

for the prevention of deadly injuries and sexual violence against children in armed conflict and a plan to release a statement from the committee.

The meeting was attended by the relevant officials of ministries concerned, including the Myanmar Red Cross Society. — 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

Diesel distributed at special prices in various regions, states

A joint venture between the Ministry of Commerce and the Myanmar Petroleum Importers and Distributors Association is selling 12.54 million gallons of diesel at a special price of US \$ 34 million directly from the central bank at a reference exchange rate.

Starting from 11 January, 18 companies have been distributing the diesel at a total of 363 petrol stations in various regions and states.

The public will be able to buy diesel at petrol stations at special prices at the reference prices issued by the Myanmar

Petroleum Products Inspection Department.

The daily price of diesel is available at Myanmar Petroleum Importers and Distributors Association website www.mpta.org.mm.

If the public is not able to buy diesel at the specified

prices at the designated petrol stations in each region and state, people can contact 09-664075683, 09-664596327, 09-687635943, 09-676320826 as Working Committee on Ensuring the Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods will be responsible for speeding up the flow of

trade and goods.

People can also contact at 01-250270 to reach the Customer Affairs Department and the public are urged to contact the Myanmar Petroleum Importers and Distributors Association at 09-421006794. —MNA

Entryway decorated with Kayin traditional ceremonial frog drum opened in Hpa-an



THE entrance decorated with a ceremonial bronze drum (Kayin frog drum) on the way to Hpa-an from Mawlamyine was inaugurated marking the Diamond Jubilee Union Day yesterday.

The opening ceremony was started by playing the ceremonial bronze drum and blowing buffalo horns. Then, Kayin State Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo highlighted the main symbol of the Kayin people, construction of entrance that began on 1 January 2022 and was completed on 7 February. He also extended wishes

to the people.

Afterwards, the state chief minister pressed the button to open the entrance signboard and he also cut the ribbon together with state cabinet members and relevant officials.

After opening the moat, the state chief minister inspected picturesque views of the entrance way and the director of the state development committee gave the scale model of the entrance to the officials, including the Chief Minister. — Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)/GNLM

Kayin State holds the ceremony to open the entryway decoration with the traditional frog drum. **PHOTO: SAW MYO MIN THEIN (IPRD)**

Preparations for Diamond Jubilee Union Day underway across the nation

DIAMOND Jubilee Union Day, which falls on 12 February (today), is grandly organized in Union Territory, Nay Pyi Taw and across the nation.

For the preparations, crowded roads in Nay Pyi Taw are decorated with honourable signboards honouring the Diamond Jubilee Union Day while Yaza Thingaha road, where the Union Flag will be carried, with national flags and other flags bearing state/region signs, electric lights and photos of ethnic nationals.

Similarly, signboards are erected at the Yangon City Hall

in Kyauktada Township of Yangon and the electric lights and signboards are also installed at the Maha Bandoola Park, the People's Park in Dagon Township, U Wisara roundabout, U Htaung Bo roundabout and Hanthawady roundabout.

Moreover, officials arrange fountain shows at the Mandalay moat and decorate the palace wall, along the Yadanabon garden road and at the MCDC office with colourful electric lights.

The regions and states also make preparations to welcome the Diamond Jubilee Union Day.

—MNA

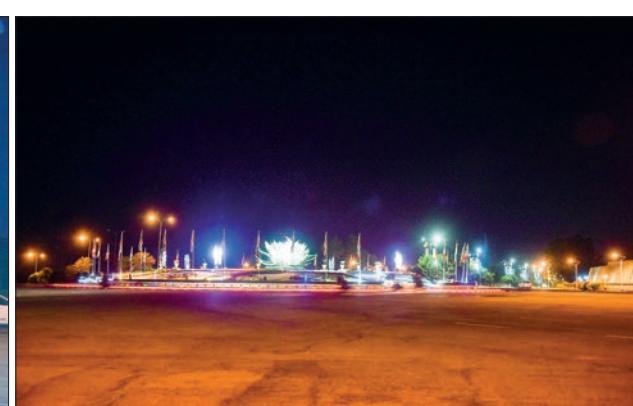
At the Maha Bandoola Park.



Yangon City Hall.



Nay Pyi Taw.



Nay Pyi Taw.

Diamond Jubilee Union Day Exhibition of Magway Region draws interested visitors

THE exhibitions of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day is being held at Magway District Stadium from 9 February. It is reported that people are visiting with interest.

The students and the public were briefed on the contents

of the exhibitions displayed by the officials of the ministries in each gallery. Knowledgeable topics and games were also clarified.

The exhibitions show the culture and traditions of the ethnic people and the con-

duct of customs in Magway Region. More than 70 booths will be held in each ministry to educate the public about the activities of their respective departments from 9 to 20 February. — Ko Si Thu (Magway)/GNLM



Two companies propose to renovate ancient Tejoomal building

TWO companies have proposed to renovate an ancient Tejoomal building located at the corner of Maha Bandoola road and Pansodan road, Kyauktada township, Yangon region, it is learnt.

These two companies are MIEG company and Seven Aluminum company limited. The Urban and Housing Development Department, under the Ministry of Construction, has invited the companies to conduct the Swiss challenge under the MOT.

These two companies will continuously be invited to participate in the Swiss challenge tender to compete with the original bidder. Thus, the department is selling the rules and regulations and application form of the Swiss

challenge tender starting from 7 February and the companies need to apply not later than 25 March. The building, called the Tejoomal, was a popular supermarket opened by traders from southeastern part of Pakistan. This building is one of the well-known places in the Yangon region. It sold a wide range of unique souvenirs from all over Asia such as clothes, carpets and others. In 1990, the building was used as an insurance office. In 2006, the Kyaw family remodelled a half of the building. Now, Alibaba recreation centre, art gallery, restaurant and electricity shops are opened in that building, according to the record of the Yangon Heritage Trust (YHT). — Ko Naing/GNLM



The building, called the Tejoomal, was a popular supermarket opened by traders from southeastern part of Pakistan. This building is one of the well-known places in the Yangon region. **PHOTO: AIK THON**

CRIME NEWS

150 fire outbreaks reported in Myanmar in January

A total of 150 outbreaks of fire were reported across the country in January 2022, causing an estimated over K447,672,500 in property damage, according to a report of the Myanmar Fire Services Department.

In January, about 17 cases were caused by the kitchen fire, 42 by negligence fire, two by themselves, 39 by electric short-circuiting, 23 by arson, 8 by forest fire, 16 by arson committed by insurgents one lightning

strike and two fires under investigation.

According to the Fire Services Department's statistics, the most common cause of the fire was negligence followed by faulty electrical wiring.

The department also urged the people to inspect the electric wire at their houses and to ensure that quality materials are being used.

Most of the fires were caused by carelessness, such as forgetting to put

out cigarette butts, turn off ovens, or extinguish cooking fires.

The fires destroyed 354 buildings, two factories, and 10 warehouses, with a loss of K447,672,500 in property damage. In addition, about eight people were killed and six others were injured in the massive blaze.

There were 2,310 people affected by the fire and 3,580 animals were lost, it is learnt. — Myo Min Thura/GNLM

Defendant extradited from Thailand jailed for human trafficking

A woman extradited from Thailand was sentenced to 10 years in prison for human trafficking, according to the authorities.

Than Zaw Thein and Ma Thazin Hlaing from Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region, Than Zaw Oo from Hlinethaya Township and Daw Wa Toke (alias) Win San from Ye Township, Mon State persuaded Mg ..., 22-year-old and U ..., 42-year-old from Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region to work as shrimp sorters in Myeik, claiming that they would earn K300,000 per month but they were sent to a fishing factory in Thailand and their wages were rigged.

The case was filed in the southern district court under Section 28 (b)/32 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law at Thanlyin Myoma Police Station (Pa) 246/2017.

Daw Wa Toke (B) Win San, a fugitive fleeing to Thailand, was arrested and extradited from Thailand after being asked for help at a joint anti-trafficking meeting on the Myanmar-Thailand border.

On 9 February, defendant Daw Wa Toke (alias) Win San was sentenced to 10 years in prison under Section 28 (b)/32 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. —MNA

Illegal teak, raw jade, foodstuffs, utensils, unregistered vehicles seized

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

On 9 February, Mon State Forest Department led an inspection team and seized 1.8234 tonnes of illegal teak worth

K547,020 in Kyakto Township of Thaton District.

On 10 February, the Customs Department and relevant officials of the Yaypu checkpoint confiscated K6,665,000 worth of products – undocumented commodities (K2,665,000) from unregistered Toyota Isis worth

K4,000,000 in their patrol.

Similarly, the Bago Region Customs Department and a combined team conducted a surprise check between Waw Township and Shwe Thanlwin Tollgate and seized K2,899,600 worth of foodstuffs and juice on the same day.

On 11 February, Bago Re-

gion Forest Department also seized 7.6096 tonnes of various illegal timber in the forest reserves of Bago, Toungoo and Thayawady districts.

Then, the combined inspection team consisting of the officials of Mayanchaung inspection camp, Customs Department and

department concerned seized K19,300,000 worth of illegal materials—one unregistered Honda Airwave Station Wagon worth K18,000,000 and 100 cartons of juice worth K1,300,000 from that car on the same day. Moreover, the combined inspection team of the Sagaing Region conducted a patrol and seized K2,400,000 worth of 200 bags of Indian flour.

Similarly, the combined team with Sagaing Region Police Force seized 597.50 grammes (still estimating the prices) of raw jade.

Thus, a total of 12 arrests (estimated value of K33,007,960) were made on 9, 10 and 11 February and the officials took action under the Forest Law, Customs Law and Myanmar Gems Law, stated the committee. — MNA



Seized timbers and goods.



Join restoration process of perpetual peace as a vision of the nation

THE year 2022 is the Diamond Jubilee for Union Day as well as the pre-Diamond Jubilee for the Independence Day which falls in the year 2023. It is a year bringing the victorious omen and auspiciousness to the nation.

Myanmar had been under the yoke of British colonialists for more than 120 years. Those colonialists manipulated the exploration of underground and above ground natural resources. Various kinds of taxes were burdens for the Myanmar people, indicating that it was a bad living style under servitude. Although the colonialists attempted to tarnish the images of nationality, language and religion in various ways, Myanmar national people with nationalistic spirit and patriotic spirit fought against them in the independence struggle and then regained their independence on 4 January 1948.

Although the country regained the independence to become a sovereign nation that escaped from the ruling of the British colonialists, it unavoidably carried a burden of internal armed insurgency as an evil legacy. The people were in unity as brothers in the independence struggles but they were disunited in the instigation of the colonialists. Up to the pre-Diamond Jubilee Independence Day, the country is yet to enjoy the fruits of peace.

As such, the State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister in his message of greetings to the 2022 New Year pointed out, "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 75-year sovereignty of the State and progress of the nation with development fruits. So, we have to start the new paces for 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."

Currently, unscrupulous persons are committing instigation to the efforts of the government to restore peace. Hence, it is sure that only when everybody performs doing something with correct opinion, talks, thoughts and behaviours will one embrace the achievement.

As the State Administration Council is implementing the five-point road map and nine political, economic and social objectives, the entire people need to beware of instigations committed by external saboteurs among national brethren and lead forwards the process of perpetual peace process.



Old drug may protect against COVID-19 lung injury, finds study

Lung infection and lung injury was the cause for many deaths in the second wave of COVID-19. Doctors everywhere tried their best to find a drug that cured the lung infection.

NOW, a new preclinical study from researchers at Weill Cornell Medicine and Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory has shown a ray of hope.

According to them, an FDA-approved drug that has been in clinical use for more than 70 years may protect against lung injury and the risk of blood clots in severe COVID-19 and other disorders that cause immune-mediated damage to the lungs. The results of their study were published in *JCI Insight*.

Drug disulfiram

The study found that the drug disulfiram protected rodents from immune-mediated lung injury in two separate models of this type of injury: infection with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus that causes COVID-19, and a lung failure syndrome called TRALI that in rare cases occurs after blood transfusion.

"As we learn more about the underlying biology of these lung injuries, we may be able to specifically target the processes that are damaging the lung tissue," said senior co-author Dr Robert Schwartz, an associate professor of medicine in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Weill Cornell Medicine and a hepatologist at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

Both types of lung injury are



Doctors look at a lung CT image at a hospital in Yunmeng County, Xiaogan city, in China's central Hubei province, 20 Feb 2020. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

now known to be driven in part by immune cells' formation of web-like structures called neutrophil extracellular traps, or NETs.

These can trap and kill infectious organisms, but can also be harmful to lung tissue and blood vessels, causing the accumulation of fluid in the lungs (edema) and promoting the development of blood clots. Disulfiram blocks one of the steps in NETs formation.

A collaboration

The study was a collaboration

between Dr Schwartz's research group and a group led by Dr Mikala Egeblad, professor and cancer center co-leader at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

Serendipity has attached to disulfiram almost from the start of its history as a medicine. The compound was originally used in the production of rubber, and was later investigated as an anti-parasite treatment.

Incidental observations that people taking it became mildly sick whenever they drank alcohol led to its FDA

approval in 1951 as a deterrent to alcohol consumption for people with alcohol use disorder.

Scientists found in 2020 that disulfiram also inhibits part of the inflammatory process that can lead to NET formation by white blood cells called neutrophils.

The finding prompted the testing of disulfiram as a NET blocker. "NETs will damage the tissue, but since disulfiram interferes with gasdermin D, a molecule needed to produce NETs, no NETs are formed after disulfiram

treatment," Dr Egeblad said.

After confirming in lab-dish experiments that disulfiram does greatly reduce the formation of NETs by human and mouse neutrophils, the researchers tested it in models of TRALI and COVID-19, two diseases that are known to feature extensive neutrophil invasion of the lungs, NET formation and often fatal lung damage.

A mouse model

In a mouse model of TRALI, disulfiram treatment a day before and then again three hours before induction of the syndrome allowed 95 per cent of the animals to survive, compared to just 40 per cent of those not treated with the drug.

The findings showed that disulfiram, apparently by reducing NET formation, blocked the progressive damage to lung tissue and vessels that occurred in untreated mice, and in so doing allowed lung function to stabilize and recover relatively quickly after the initial damage.

By contrast, an inhaled drug called DNase 1, which has been investigated as a potential TRALI treatment, had no significant effect in improving the mouse survival rate even when administered minutes before TRALI induction.

In earlier collaborative work

published in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*, autopsy results suggested that NETs were present in severe COVID-19 patients and raised a novel possibility.

"Currently there aren't any good treatment options for COVID-related lung injury, so disulfiram appears to be worth investigating further in this regard, particularly in severe COVID-19 patients," Dr Schwartz said.

A golden hamster model

Next, the researchers tested disulfiram in a golden hamster model of COVID-19. This form of COVID-19 was less severe than what was seen in the worst human cases, but disulfiram treatment a day before or a day after infection with SARS-CoV-2 led to clearly favourable outcomes: less NET formation, less scar-like tissue formation (fibrosis) in the lungs, and gene activity changes suggesting a significant reduction in the harmful inflammatory response without impairment of antiviral immunity.

By comparison, the standard severe-COVID-19 treatment dexamethasone, an immune-suppressing steroid drug, did less to protect lung tissue from disease-related changes and led to higher levels of SARS-CoV-2 in the lungs.

SOURCE: ANI

EU looks to start 'health union' with joint declaration



Tourists wearing protective face masks walk past the Louvre in Paris. PHOTO: BERTRAND GUAY/AFP

THE EU, under France's current turn holding the bloc's presidency, is to kick off plans for a common "health union" with a joint declaration, French Health Minister Olivier Veran said on Thursday.

The text will be called "the Grenoble Declaration" after the French city where EU health ministers held a meeting on Thursday to discuss their ambitions of closer coordination.

France, which holds the six-month EU presidency until the end of June, is looking to capitalize on the health cooperation engen-

dered in the joint approach to tackling the Covid pandemic over the past two years, notably through vaccines procurement.

"I believe that the European Union can also become a world champion in public health" if it overcomes "contradictions" between market considerations and public health systems, Veran told journalists.

Joint purchase of certain medical products and tackling rare diseases at a European level should yield benefits because of economies of scale, he said.

To that end, the Grenoble Dec-

laration he said he hoped would be signed "in coming days... would be a founding declaration for the health union in Europe".

A strong push towards genuine European approaches

EU health commissioner Stella Kyriakides, who attended Friday's meeting, called the move by France "a strong push towards genuine European approaches when it comes to our actions on health". Both she and Veran also emphasised that, while the EU had made strides in rendering the coronavirus pandemic a more

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 11 February 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 12 February, 2022: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be scattered in Taninthayi region and Kachin state, isolated in upper Sagaing region and Kayin, Mon states with isolated heavy falls in Taninthayi region. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady regions and northern Shan, Chin states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershower in Taninthayi region.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 February, 2022: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 February, 2022: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 February, 2022: Generally fair weather.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay region and partly cloudy in Yangon region.

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Rubber price in bull market on strong foreign demand

THE price of rubber remained upward trend as there is a steady demand by China and Kyat devaluation against the US dollar continues, according to rubber traders.

The prices of Local 3 and Ribbed Smoked Sheet 3 varieties which is highly demanded by China hit above K1,100 per pound on 11 February.

After the suspension of trade between Myanmar and China amidst the COVID-19 consequences last year, the trade channel has been reopened again in the present. Myanmar daily delivers rubber, various beans and pulses, dried plum, watermelon, muskmelon and other food commodities to China through the Kyinsakyawt border. Mon State is the top producer of rubber in the country, accounting for over 240 million pounds of rubber per year, as per data of Mon State Agriculture Department.

The National Enlightenment Institute (NEI), a non-profit or-



Rubber is commonly produced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As per 2018-2019 rubber season's data, there are over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar

ganization based in Mon State, has been receiving technical assistance from PUM Netherlands Senior Experts to enhance the

rubber industry since May 2021, according to Mawlamyine Commodity Centre.

Rubber is commonly pro-

duced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As per 2018-2019 rubber season's data, there are over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon State accounting for 497,153 acres, followed by Taninthayi Region with 348,344 acres and Kayin State with 270,760 acres. About 300,000 tonnes of rubber is produced annually across the country. Seventy per cent of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, and other countries, according to the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association.

Myanmar shipped 303,293 metric tons of rubber to the foreign trade partners and generated more than US\$449 million in revenue in the previous financial year 2020-2021, which is an increase of \$184.6 million worth of 89,880 MT compared to the FY2019-2020, according to Myanmar Customs Department's statistics. — NN/GNLM

Both private, public sectors see imports plunge in capital goods

THE weakening Kyat against the US dollar and a slowdown in the construction market, drive the import slump in capital goods, according to the construction market.

Between 1 October 2021 and 28 January 2022 of the current six-month mini-budget period, capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines and steel, with an estimated import value of \$853.87 million, were imported into the country. This figure was

tremendously down by \$1.347 billion, compared to the corresponding period of the last financial year 2020-2021.

Additionally, the COVID-19 negative consequences shut down some foreign investment enterprises and the condominium property market relying on foreign expatriates plunged 70 per cent. As a result of this, the realtors are forced to reduce the rents. The rental market continued a downward spiral amidst

the COVID-19 consequences and political changes. The occupancy is drastically declining, a realtor from Yangon elaborated.

As Kyat is depreciating on the US dollar, the construction costs have risen. Consequently, the developers are facing supply chain issues and a halt in the planning.

The construction sector imports steel, cement, electronic appliances, machinery and others. — KK/GNLM

Singapore ranks top investor in past four months

ONE-LISTED Singapore enterprise brings in the capital of \$275.7 mln into Myanmar during the past four months of the current mini-budget period (Oct 2021-Mar 2022), the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration's data indicated.

Singapore is the top source of FDI so far. China is placed as the second-largest investor of Myanmar with US\$109.6 million from 16 enterprises.

Those enterprises listed from India, the Republic of Korea, France, Hong Kong (SAR), Nepal, China (Taipei) and Seychelles also made investments this year. Myanmar has drawn foreign direct investment of more than US\$506.82 million from 32 enterprises during the October-January period, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises and investments in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, DICA's statistics indicated. Of them, 23 enterprises pumped FDI into the manufacturing sector. Agriculture, power, construction, hotels and tourism received each project, livestock and fisheries sector attracted two projects, and three enterprises made the investment in other service sectors.

During the previous financial year 2020-2021, the 14 Singapore-listed enterprises brought in US\$429.336

million into Myanmar last financial year 2020-2021, including the expansion of capital by the existing enterprises, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration's statistics showed.

Singapore companies mainly put investments into urban development, real estate, power and manufacturing sectors.

Singapore stood as the largest foreign investor in Myanmar in the previous years, pulling in the FDI of \$1.85 billion in the FY2019-2020, \$2.4 billion in the FY2018-2019, \$724.4 million in the mini-budget period (April-September, 2018), \$2.16 billion in the 2017-2018FY, \$3.8 billion in the 2016-2017FY, \$4.25 billion in the 2015-2016FY, \$4.29 billion in the 2014-2015FY, \$2.3 billion in the 2013-2014FY and \$418 million in the 2012-2013FY respectively. Additionally, Singapore emerged as the second-largest foreign investor in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, after the top investor Japan. The investors can inquire about the investment through the contact number of Myanmar Investment Commission (+95 92023821, and +95 1658132) located on Thitsar Road, Yankin Township or via the following email address (dica@mptmail.net.mm or dica.ip.mm@gmail.com). — KK/GNLM

Salt price rises up

THE price of salt from Mon state has risen again, according to the Mawlamyine Commodity depot.

On 11 February, the raw salt price (normal) ranges from K115-K120 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilograms) while the raw salt (pure) is K140 per viss.

Last January, the raw salt price (normal) hit K75-K80 per viss while the raw salt (pure) fetched only K100 per viss.

Nevertheless, this year's salt season is better than last year. Last year, the raw salt price (normal) was K65 per viss while the raw salt (pure) was K85 per viss.

At the last 2021 opening season of the salt, the salt prices were not good, and the yield loss of the salt was due to the early rain.

Although the price of salt is mounting in the late season, there is less salt stockpile in the hand of local farmers and traders. On the other hand, rising fuel oil prices have also pushed up transport costs.

Therefore, the last 2021 salt season can be said to be a year of low yields and losses for farmers. Yearly, Mon State produces nearly 40,000 tonnes of sun-dried salt beyond magnesium chloride ($MgCl_2$), iodized salt (I_2) and table salt ($NaCl$).

The 2019-2020 statistics showed 14 iodine salt processing plants and one factory each for magnesium chloride ($MgCl_2$) and table salt ($NaCl$) production, with the production capacity of 60 tonnes of magnesium chloride, 204 tonnes of table salt and 12,132 tonnes of iodized salt. — NN/GNLM



On 11 February, the raw salt price (normal) ranges from K115-K120 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilograms) while the raw salt (pure) is K140 per viss.

Indonesia starts testing homegrown Covid-19 vaccine on humans

INDONESIA began testing a homegrown Covid-19 vaccine on humans Wednesday after getting the green light from the drug regulator as the country faces a rising wave of virus cases.

Research on the "Merah Putih" ("Red White") vaccine — named after the colours of the Indonesian national flag — is led by Airlangga University and Biotosis Pharmaceutical Indonesia.

The project has suffered delays since starting in 2020, but authorities are now hoping to authorise its use by the middle of 2022 if the trials are successful.

Health minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said the drug, set to be rolled out in the latter stages of Indonesia's vaccination campaign, could be donated to other nations, as a booster jab or as a

vaccine for children aged three to six.

"I have discussed this matter with the president and he has agreed to use this vaccine as a donation to countries in need," Sadikin said Wednesday at a launch event for the human trials in Surabaya.

The first and second phases of the clinical trials will involve 90 and 405 adult volunteers respectively.

The Merah Putih vaccine has been granted a "halal" certification from the Indonesian Ulama Council, the Muslim majority nation's top religious clerics body, according to the dean of Airlangga University Mohammad Nasih.

"We hope with this halal certification, the public confidence to use this vaccine will be higher,"



Lab workers in the Bandung BioFarma facility in Indonesia examine vials that have vaccine vial monitor technology incorporated into their labels. **PHOTO: PATH/UMIT KARTOGLU/AFP**

Nasih told reporters.

Indonesia has approved 13 vaccines and boosters but has

of more than 270 million people.

The Indonesian government has stressed the importance of developing and manufacturing national vaccines since the beginning of the pandemic.

The country was ravaged by Covid-19 in July last year as the Delta variant swept the country.

Daily cases declined significantly at the end of the year but the spread of Omicron recently brought the country back to 30,000 confirmed cases a day.

In total, Southeast Asia's largest economy has reported over 4.5 million confirmed cases with nearly 145,000 deaths.

Vaccination rollout is also relatively slow with around 48 percent of the population vaccinated with two jabs and only five million with a booster shot.—AFP ■

Berlin filmfest goes live as virus wave peaks



Workers roll out the red carpet at the Berlinale Palace on the eve of the 72nd Berlin film festival. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Berlinale, Europe's first major international film festival of the year, returns as a live event on Thursday just as Germany faces record daily coronavirus infections. Organizers of the event, which started in 1951 as a Cold War culture showcase for

the divided German capital, say a raft of precautions will keep audiences safe as they take in the latest movies from around the globe.

Artistic director Carlo Chatrian defended the decision against accusations it was ir-

responsible at this stage of the pandemic, saying the communal movie experience was crucial for the battered industry, as well as for society at large. "Seeing a film in a theatre, being able to hear breathing, laughter or whispers next to you -- even with correct social distancing -- contributes in a vital way not only to the viewing pleasure, but also to strengthening the social function that cinema has," he said.

Huppert honours

The Berlinale will open with "Peter von Kant", a gender-flipped adaptation of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's classic "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant".

The film by acclaimed French director Francois Ozon stars Denis Menochet, Isabelle Adjani and Hanna Schygulla, now 78, who played the cruel young seductress in the original.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

France: Drop in hospitalizations, including intensive care

THE number of people hospitalized with a diagnosis of Covid-19 continued to fall on Wednesday, as did the number of patients hospitalized in critical care, according to figures released Wednesday evening by health authorities.

French hospitals currently have 32,878 patients with Covid-19 (including 2,614 who arrived in the past 24 hours), down from 33,352 on Tuesday, according to Public Health France. It is however more than last Wednesday (32,720).—AFP ■

EU warily sees 'stabilization' of Covid wave

THE European Union is cautiously welcoming a "stabilization" of the latest wave of the coronavirus pandemic but knows it must do more to help poorer nations, especially in Africa with jabs, officials said Wednesday.

"Saying that we have turned the corner... is not a phrase that at least I would use," EU health commissioner Stella Kyriakides told reporters while attending a joint meeting of EU health and foreign ministers in Lyon, France. "We are seeing in the last seven to eight weeks a stabilization in the number of hospitalisations and mortality... and we are seeing in some member states that they have reached the peak with the Omicron" strain of the virus, she said.—AFP ■

Global COVID-19 cases surpass 400 mln — Johns Hopkins University

GLOBAL COVID-19 cases surpassed 400 million on Tuesday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

The global case count amounted to 400,244,031, with 5,761,208 deaths worldwide, as of 5:21 pm local time (2221 GMT), showed the data.

The United States reported 77,025,027 cases and 908,262

deaths, both the highest counts around the world, accounting for more than 19 per cent of the global cases and more than 15 per cent of the global deaths.

India recorded the world's second largest caseload of 42,339,611, followed by Brazil with 26,776,692 cases as well as the world's second largest death toll of 634,057. Countries with more

than 12 million cases also include France, Britain, Russia and Turkey, while other countries with over 200,000 deaths include India, Russia, Mexico and Peru, according to the university's tally.

The global caseload reached the grim milestone of 100 million on 26 Jan 2021, rose to 200 million on 4 Aug and exceeded 300 million on 6 Jan 2022. —AFP ■



Rows of beds are prepared for incoming COVID-19 patients at a new field hospital in a sports stadium on the outskirts of Bangkok, Thailand on 18 April 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

China's new yuan loans beat expectations to hit record high

CHINA'S new yuan-denominated loans beat market expectations in January, hitting a monthly high of 3.98 trillion yuan (about \$625.8 billion) as banks front-loaded loans at the beginning of the year, central bank data showed on Thursday.

The data, higher than the market forecast of approximately 3.7 trillion yuan, marked an increase of 394.4 billion yuan over the same period last year, according to the People's Bank of China.

The M2, a broad measure of



The People's Bank of China in Beijing. PHOTO: CFP/XINHUA

money supply that covers cash in circulation and all deposits, increased 9.8 per cent year on year to 243.1 trillion yuan at the

end of last month.

The rate was 0.8 per centage points higher than the figure seen at the end of December and 0.4 percentage points higher than that of January 2021.

Newly added social financing, a measurement of funds the real economy receives from the financial system, reached 6.17 trillion yuan in January.

Yuan-denominated loans to the real economy increased by 4.2 trillion yuan, also a record monthly high.

The accelerated pace of

lending came as authorities warned of the triple pressure of demand contraction, supply shocks and weakening expectations amid an increasingly complicated external environment and despite a strong economic rebound in 2021.

Last month, the central bank cut the interest rates of its medium-term lending facility loans and reverse repos by 10 basis points, amid the country's efforts to lower lending costs for businesses and shore up economic growth further.—Xinhua ■

World's biggest mobile show eyes up to 60,000 visitors

UP to 60,000 people are expected to attend the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona this month, organizers said Thursday, hoping it would resemble its pre-pandemic days despite the absence of several heavyweights.

"We're expecting somewhere between 40,000 and 60,000 people," said John Hoffman, executive director of the GSMA industry association which stages the annual telecoms show, which is the biggest in the world.

Speaking to reporters, he

said there would be "more than 1,500 exhibitors" from 150 countries at the four-day event in the Catalan capital which this year runs from 28 February to 3 March. "The whole (mobile telecoms) ecosystem is again coming to MWC here in Barcelona, we're on track to meet and hopefully exceed all of our expectations," he said ahead of the show's 16th edition which will take up seven of the eight pavilions at the city's main exhibition hall.

The show, a key event for

showcasing new technologies, had been cancelled at the last minute in 2020 after multiple companies withdrew as the global pandemic took hold.

Last year, the congress did take place although it was in June instead of February and included a mixture of in-person and online events, drawing just 20,000 visitors compared with 100,000 in normal times.

Tight health restrictions also meant delegates needed to be tested at the venue's gates in order to gain entry, but this year they only need to show proof of vaccination.

And this year, 95 per cent of the 1,000 speakers will be there in person, said Mats Granryd, GSMA's director-general. "It's important for our industry, it's important for society and for business to come together physically," he said. In recent weeks, several industry heavyweights have said they would not be attending, among them Sony, which did not participate last year, and China's Lenovo which said it would only be present online.

—AFP ■



General view taken of the Mobile World Congress, the world's biggest mobile fair, held in Barcelona from 26 February to 1 March. 2018.

PHOTO: PAU BARRENA/AFP/FILE

FTA negotiations with China to bring growth opportunities, says Ecuadorian president

ECUADORIAN President Guillermo Lasso has spoken highly of the start of free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations between Ecuador and China, saying that increasing exports to China will generate growth opportunities for his country.

Lasso, who concluded his

official visit to China last week, made the remarks at a press conference here on Wednesday, where he elaborated the benefits of the negotiations for Ecuador.

Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and Ecuadorian Minister for Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and

Fisheries Julio Prado recently signed a memorandum of understanding, marking the start of bilateral FTA negotiations.

"The global economy is a reality," said Lasso. "I believe that sooner or later we had to reach this point with China."—Xinhua ■

EU cuts eurozone growth forecast as inflation 'chills' economy



Energy prices and food chain problems jack up inflation and delay a more sustained recovery from the pandemic, says the European Commission. A vendor wearing protective masks and gloves serves a customer at a market in Rome on 16 April. PHOTO: ANDREAS SOLARO/AFP

THE eurozone economy will grow less than expected this year, the European Commission said on Thursday, as energy prices and supply chain problems jack up inflation and delay a more sustained recovery from the pandemic.

The EU executive said GDP in the single currency bloc would grow by 4.0 per cent this year, instead of the 4.3 per cent forecast only three months ago.

Inflation would increase to a much stronger than expected 3.5 per cent in 2022.

"Multiple headwinds have chilled Europe's economy this winter: the swift spread of Omicron, a further rise in inflation driven by soaring energy prices and persistent supply-chain disruptions," said EU economy commissioner Paolo Gentiloni.

The high prices "are likely to remain strong until the summer; after which inflation is projected to decline as growth in energy prices moderates and supply bottlenecks ease," he added.

However the former Italian prime minister underlined that "uncertainty and risks remain high" with the EU warning that "geopolitical tensions" in eastern Europe had "markedly aggravated" potential threats to the economy.

This was in reference to the more than 100,000 Russian troops that are deployed on the border with Ukraine, raising Western fears of a possible attack.

The crisis has brought major uncertainty over the supply of energy from Russia, which accounts for roughly 40 per cent of the gas that heats homes and powers factories in the 27-member EU.

'So vulnerable'

"Apparently Russia has no interest in increasing supplies right now, despite peak prices," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a video address to a business conference in Brussels. —AFP ■

UK economy rebounds by record 7.5% from pandemic in 2021

BRITAIN'S economy grew by a record 7.5 per cent last year on easing Covid curbs after a pandemic-driven collapse, official data showed Friday, but analysts warned that sky-high inflation clouds the 2022 outlook.

The expansion, which was the fastest since records began in 1948, followed a record 9.4-per-cent slump in 2020, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) added in a statement.

Economies across the world were slammed in 2020 by the deadly pan-

demic, which sparked lockdowns and other public health restrictions that have since been largely removed.

The ONS added Friday that the UK economy increased by 1.0 per cent in the fourth quarter despite the emergence of the Omicron Covid variant, matching its expansion in the third quarter.

December hit by Omicron

However, gross domestic product dipped 0.2 percent in December

on fallout from the rapid spread of Omicron -- which is widely regarded as less dangerous than previous variants but hit the travel sector.

"GDP fell back slightly in December as the Omicron wave hit, with retail and hospitality seeing the biggest impacts," said ONS director of economic statistics Darren Morgan.

"However, these were partially offset by increases in the Test and Trace service and vaccination programmes."



Britain's economy grew at its fastest pace last year since records began in 1948. Shoppers walk outside the Intu Watford Shopping Center in Watford, Hertfordshire on 26 June 2020. PHOTO: AFP/DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS

"Despite December's setback, GDP grew robustly across the fourth quarter

as a whole with the NHS (National Health Service), couriers and employment agencies all helping to support the economy," added Morgan.—AFP ■

Trucker protests disrupt car plants in US, Canada

LARGE automakers have cut back production at several US and Canadian plants due to trucker-led protests over Covid rules that have blocked a key bridge between the two countries, the carmakers said Thursday.

Ford is running its Canadian plants in Oakville and Windsor at "reduced capacity" due to the blockade of the Ambassador Bridge that links Windsor and the US city of Detroit, according to a Ford spokesman.

Stellantis said all its North American plants



The Ambassador Bridge, which connects Detroit, Michigan, and Windsor, Canada is closed on 10 February 2022, in Detroit, due to trucker-led protests in Canada over Covid-19 mandates. PHOTO: AFP

were running Thursday morning, "but a number of US and Canadian plants

cut short second shifts Wednesday night due to parts shortages caused by

the closure of the Detroit/Windsor bridge," according to an email from the company. Toyota said the upheaval added to existing challenges that have stressed operations.

"Due to a number of supply chain, severe weather and Covid related challenges, Toyota continues to face shortages affecting production at our North American plants," a Toyota spokesperson said, adding that plants in Canada and the state of Kentucky were affected by "this most recent challenge."—AFP ■

Turkey tax takes spirit out of bar scene

IN a waterfront Istanbul neighbourhood that once buzzed with cafe and pub life, there are now only empty tables after nearly 50 per cent tax hikes on alcohol. The tax is one of the biggest blows to alcohol consumption by a government often accused by its

opponents of eroding the pillars of modern Turkey, an overwhelmingly Muslim nation but an officially secular state. The blow was felt particularly hard in the Besiktas neighbourhood on the European side of the Bosphorus.

Suleyman Gunes expressed frustration as he

searched for customers during an evening rush hour this week outside the pub where he works.

"It's not like it used to be. At this time of day, we were full, like 80 to 90 per cent and now it's around 30 to 40 per cent," the 32-year-old told AFP.

"Customers stand up and leave soon after they see the prices on the menu," Gunes said. Besiktas is one of the most popular and vibrant Istanbul quarters, with its universities, well-known football club, and young population, as well as many cafes and bars.—AFP ■

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (185W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PANJA BHUM VOY.NO. (185W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12-2-2022 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCL 17

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCL 17 VOY. NO. (0222) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-2-2022 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT-2 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301928

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

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

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Indonesia to buy French warplanes as Paris boosts Asia alliances

INDONESIA on Thursday ordered 42 Rafale fighter jets from France, as Paris and Jakarta seek to strengthen military ties in the face of growing tensions in the Asia-Pacific.

The agreement was announced as Indonesian Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto met his French counterpart Florence Parly in Jakarta.

"It's official, Indonesia orders 42 Rafale," said Parly on Twitter.

Subianto confirmed a deal had been struck for the purchase of the jets, with a contract signed Thursday relating to the first six.

It is the latest sign of warming ties between Jakarta and Paris, as France rethinks its alliances in the region following the collapse in September of a multibillion-dollar Australian submarine deal.—AFP ■

Nigeria Islamic police destroy nearly 4 mn beers

RELIGIOUS police in northern Nigeria's city of Kano have destroyed nearly four million bottles of beer, on grounds that sale and consumption of alcohol is prohibited in the predominantly Muslim region.

Sharia police called Hisbah often destroy alcohol and confiscated drugs, but the huge beer haul was one of the largest in a recently intensified crackdown.

Hundreds of Hisbah offloaded 3,873,163 bottles of mostly beer and some assorted alcoholic drinks on Wednesday in an open space in Tudun Kalebawa village.—AFP ■

Honduras president stops eviction of indigenous community

THE eviction of a hundred Lenca indigenous families in Honduras was stopped Wednesday at the request of President Xiomara Castro after dozens of police officers tried to remove them.

Police arrived at Tierras del Padre, a piece of land 10 kilometres (six miles) south of the capital Tegucigalpa, with a judge and an eviction order stating the site belongs to a private individual.

The 200-hectare property is claimed by a businessman who intends to build 10,000 homes on the land, according to local media reports.

But representatives of the indigenous community say they have a deed registering ownership of the land that dates back to 1739. "Please Xiomara. With my eyes closed, I gave her my vote. You are a mother, please don't take (the land) from us," shouted local resident Ingris Vivas through tears as she carried her two children.—AFP ■



Dozens of police officers tried to evict 100 Lenca indigenous families as part of a land dispute. PHOTO: AFP

Russia launches Belarus military drills as West fears Ukraine invasion



Columns of Russian missile systems rolled across snow-carpeted fields on the eve of the start of the drills in footage released by the defence ministry. PHOTO: RUSSIAN DEFENCE MINISTRY/AFP

RUSSIA and Belarus launched joint military drills on Thursday that heightened tensions and added urgency to diplomatic efforts by NATO leaders to avert a feared invasion of Ukraine.

The war games, set to run until 20 February, are the latest point of contention between Russia and the West over Ukraine. Kyiv quickly denounced the manoeuvres as "psychological pressure".

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian called the exercises "a very violent gesture" while British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss used a visit to

Moscow to accuse Russia of attempting "to undermine Ukrainian sovereignty".

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the build-up was "a dangerous moment for European security".

Western leaders have been warning for weeks that Russia could be preparing to escalate an eight-year separatist conflict in east Ukraine after building up of some 100,000 troops around the former Soviet state.

The United States has said Russia is also dispatching some 30,000 troops to Ukraine's neighbour Belarus for the exercises

that started Thursday.

Columns of Russian missile systems rolled across snow-carpeted fields on the eve of the start of the drills in footage released by the defence ministry.

Russia has also sent six warship through the Bosphorus for naval drills on the Black Sea and the neighbouring Sea of Azov.

Kyiv denounced their presence as "unprecedented" attempt to cut off Ukraine for both seas.

Moscow and Minsk have not disclosed how many troops are taking part in the military exercises in Belarus.—AFP ■

Colombia eyes 200 tonnes of galleon gold

COLOMBIA took a step Thursday toward recovering a long-lost Spanish wreck and its fabled riches, but it may be a rough ride as Spain and native Bolivians have also staked claims on the booty.

Long the daydream of treasure hunters worldwide, the wreck of the San Jose galleon was first located off Columbia's coast in 2015, but has been left untouched as the government determines rules for its recovery.

Colombia was a colony of Spain when the San Jose was sunk, and gold from across South America, especially modern-day Peru and Bolivia, was stored in the fort of its coastal city, Cartagena, before being shipped back to Europe.

The Colombian government considers the booty a "national treasure" and wants it to be displayed in a future museum to be built in Cartagena.



The problems for salvaging the galleon are not underwater exploration technological issues but the legal wrangling between a several countries and Colombia. PHOTO: COLOMBIA'S CULTURE MINISTRY/AFP

According to a presidential decree released Thursday, companies or individuals interested in excavating the ship will have to sign a "contract" with the state and submit a detailed inventory of their finds to the government as well as plans for handling

the goods. The uber-loot, which experts estimate to include at least 200 tonnes of gold, silver and emeralds, will be a point of pride for Colombia, Vice-President and top diplomat Marta Lucia Ramirez said in a statement.—AFP ■

Brussels accuses Moscow of trying to divide Europeans



Kiev has been battling a pro-Moscow insurgency in two breakaway regions bordering Russia since 2014, when the Kremlin annexed Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. **PHOTO: AFP/ALEXANDER NEMENOV**

THE European Union on Thursday accused Russia, as the Ukraine crisis churned, of trying to divide EU members by sending letters to individual countries seeking clarification of their stance on a principle of international security.

The EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said he had responded to the letters sent by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to several European countries asking them to give their interpretation of the doctrine of indivisible security.

Western leaders are engaged in intensive talks with

Moscow to try to avert what they see as the threat of Russia invading Ukraine following a massive build-up of Russian forces near their mutual border.

Russia has denied plans to attack its neighbour while demanding security guarantees from NATO.

Moscow says the concept of indivisible security, enshrined in international treaties, means that the security of one country is inextricably linked to that of another and that an enlargement of the NATO defence alliance to include the former Soviet republics of Ukraine and Georgia would automatically threaten Russia.

Borrell said he had answered on behalf of the entire European bloc.

"The EU has a common foreign and security policy and our aim is to act united on all issues of key common interest."

"This includes also coordinating replies to letters, as called for," he said in a statement, saying his move had "unanimous" backing among the EU's 27 members. Lavrov had specifically asked that the countries he approached replied in their own name and not that of the EU.—AFP ■

Japanese bell tower planned in Atlanta as symbol of friendship

PLANS are underway in Atlanta in the southern US state of Georgia to build a traditional Japanese bell tower that can house a functioning peace bell which originates from Hiroshima Prefecture in western Japan.

While cultural exchanges between Japan and the United States have stagnated due to the ongoing spread of the novel coronavirus, organizers of the project aim to make the tower a symbol of friendship between the two countries.

The metal bell, which is 1.5 metres in height, 64 centimetres in diameter and weighs 250 kilogrammes, is currently on display at the Carter Centre

in Atlanta, a nongovernmental organization headed by former US President Jimmy Carter, a Georgia native.

The bell, cast around 200 years ago, was offered by Shogunji Temple in Miyoshi, Hiroshima Prefecture, to the Japanese military during World War II to be converted into bullets, but the war ended before that could happen.

According to the Japan-America Society of Georgia, the bell later found its way to Britain, coming into the possession there of a man named James Taylor. His son Milos found the bell while sorting through his father's belongings.

Milos Taylor moved to Florida, a state neighboring Georgia in 1982, taking the bell with him. He put the bell up for sale in 1985 before moving back to Britain, and it was purchased by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Georgia and the Consulate-General of Japan in Atlanta.

In 1985, then Consul-General of Japan Tadayuki Nonoyama and Hiromitsu Araki, then president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, donated the bell to the Carter Centre on behalf of the local Japanese community in recognition of Carter's work promoting world peace and the construction of the Japanese garden there.—Kyodo ■



Photo taken in June 2021 shows a Japanese "peace bell" on display at the Carter Centre in Atlanta, Georgia. **PHOTO: JAPAN-AMERICA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA/ KYODO**

NATO seeks new chief and women top candidates' list

WHEN outgoing NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg returns home to head Norway's central bank later this year the western alliance will need a new champion, and for the first time she is expected to be a woman.

For seven decades the powerful military coalition has been led by a series of western European men and now many observers expect the 30-strong group to choose a woman — and perhaps a face from further east.

Stoltenberg is not expected to give up his seat until December, and still faces an enormous final challenge in guiding NATO through the crisis triggered by



Former Lithuania president Dalia Grybauskaite has also been touted as a future NATO chief. **PHOTO: AFP/BEN STANSALL**

Russia's aggressive build-up of forces around the borders of beleaguered Ukraine.

But when the allies meet in Madrid at the end of June the national envoys represented on its North Atlantic Council are expected to have settled on a candidate, and speculation has already begun in Brussels — home to NATO's headquarters — on the names in the frame.

"The nomination process is opaque," a European diplomat told AFP, insisting on the anonymity that shrouds the closed-door and highly political hiring process. "No one campaigns openly, but many names circulate among the allies."—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

London police chief resigns as scandals rock force

LONDON'S police chief announced her resignation Thursday after a string of scandals rocked the British capital's force, including racism, sexism and a serving officer murdering a young woman.

Cressida Dick, who became the first woman to head London's Metropolitan Police in 2017, said she had "no choice but to step aside" after London mayor Sadiq Khan said he no longer had confidence in her leadership.

Khan said Thursday he was "not satisfied with the commissioner's response", after he told her of broad changes needed to "root out the racism, sexism, homophobia, bullying, discrimination and misogyny" in the force.

Dick said she felt "huge sadness", but it was "clear that the mayor no longer has sufficient confidence in my leadership to continue".

Her sudden announcement comes as her police force is charged with investigating the "Partygate scandal" swirling around Prime Minister Boris Johnson over alleged parties held in breach of coronavirus restrictions. Dick said she would stay on for a short while to "ensure the stability of the Met".—AFP ■

Inter-Region/State Cup Golf Tournament to mark 75th Union Day concludes



The winners receive the trophy at the award ceremony of the Inter-Region/ State Team Golf Tournament. PHOTO: MGF

THE third round and award-presentation ceremony of the Inter-Region/State Team Golf Tournament commemorating the 75th Union Day Golf Tournament organized by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and the Myanmar Golf Federation were held at the City Golf Course (Ngwe Thawdar) in Yangon yesterday morning.

After the third round, the award ceremony continued. Executive of the Myanmar Golf Federation U Tin Maung Maung Win presented a commemorative gift

for the City Golf Course (Ngwe Thawdar) through General Manager U Min Nyunt.

Next, Joint General Secretary of Myanmar Golf Federation U Myo Thiha presented prizes to the winners.

Then, the Central Executive of Myanmar Golf Federation U Maung Maung Tun awarded the winners of the women's individual event.

Next, Executive of the Myanmar Golf Federation Daw Lwin Lwin Aung presented prizes to the winners of the women's team

event.

After that, Myanmar Golf Federation Executive U Aung Ko Zaw presented prizes to the winners of the men's individual event.

Next, Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay presented trophies to the winning teams of the men's team event. A total of 129 golfers – 108 men and 21 women — from 15 regions and states competed in this competition.

The tourney was held from 9 to 11 February. — Ko Ni Lay/ GNLM

Hirano harnesses anger to win Olympic halfpipe gold

JAPAN'S Ayumu Hirano turned anger into Olympic gold on Friday, shrugging off a perceived injustice to win the Beijing Games men's snowboard halfpipe title with a dramatic final ride.

The dreadlocked Hirano, a silver medallist at both the 2014 and 2018 Games, said he "didn't understand" how he could be in second place behind Australia's Scotty James after a jaw-dropping second run in Friday's event.

He simply got back on his board and put in an even more spectacular performance on his third and final attempt, claiming the gold on the last run of the competition. "I didn't understand it — I was really angry," the normally mild-mannered 23-year-old said of the score



Japan's Ayumu Hirano stands on the podium after winning the snowboard halfpipe gold medal at the Beijing Olympics. PHOTO: AFP

for his second run, which saw him become the first rider ever to land the ultra-difficult triple cork move and complete the run.

"But I turned that anger to my advantage in the third run.

It helped me concentrate even more than usual."

Hirano finished with 96.00 points, beating James into silver on 92.50 and giving Switzerland's Jan Scherrer the bronze on 87.25.—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Champions League tie will not decide Mbappe's future, says Pochettino



Neymar (left) jokes with Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe during training on Thursday. PHOTO: AFP

PARIS Saint-Germain coach Mauricio Pochettino does not believe Kylian Mbappe's future will be influenced by their Champions League last 16 tie with Real Madrid.

Mbappe's contract with PSG expires in the summer and while the 23-year-old French international is widely expected to join Real Madrid, he suggested in December he could yet stay in France.

Real play the first leg of the last 16 tie at Parc de Princes on Tuesday. "I don't think that such an important decision

depends on a game, or a tie," Pochettino told Spanish radio station Cadena Ser on Thursday night.

"He is an intelligent, mature boy, with a tremendous ability to analyse and know perfectly well what he wants for his future.

"He has many people around him who I'm sure will advise him in the best way. So I don't think that's the case. I see him calm, focused on doing the best possible for PSG. You have to respect him. He will make a decision after the tie."—AFP ■