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.

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

5 October 2022

Esteemed teachers,

On the occasion of World Teachers' Day which falls on 5 October 2022, today, I wish all teachers and the people across the Republic of the Union of Myanmar physical and mental well-being.

Today's World Teachers' Day is significant to remember and honour the prestige and attributes of teachers who equip pupils with knowledge, skills, morale and morality.

Myanmar people have been paying respects to teachers for their attributes in the cultural traditions from the time of forefathers to date.

SEE PAGE-2

SAC Chair PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets MSMEs in Pyay District

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing observes the products exhibited at the meeting hall in Pyay on 4 October 2022.

THE tourism industry should be encouraged in the cultural heritage centres, railways are being upgraded to make journeys by train comfortable, the government aims to use electric trains to contribute to the development of the tourism industry, it is necessary to make the region and the cities clean and pleasant, and it is also necessary for the residents to work together to attract foreign tourists, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in his meeting with proprietors of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) in Pyay District yesterday morning.

At the meeting, Bago Region Chief Minister U Myo Swe Win first reported to the Prime Minister on the management of MSMEs and manufacturing and service industries, disbursement of loans to MSMEs and steps being taken to use modern machinery in turning out value-added products and organize exhibitions in Bago Region.

SEE PAGE-3

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

FROM PAGE-1

I praise and honour the attributes of teachers by paying respects, humbling themselves, acknowledging the gratitude of others and paying back the debt of gratitude to others in line with the auspiciousness "Gavaroca, Nivatoca, Katannuta, Katavedi" on the occasion of the World Teachers' Day.

The teacher is one of the infinity benefactors to whom Myanmar Buddhists pay homage. As such, those teachers are deserved to be paid homage on a daily basis dedicated to their infinity attributes. Hence, ceremonies to pay respect to teachers take place across the nation — in schools and universities at an opportune time.

The World Teachers' Day has been held since 1994 due to recommendations on standards of teachers in 1966 given by UNESCO and the International Labour Organization. 5 October every year is set as the World Teachers' Day to hold the ceremony, and the Ministry of Education takes responsibilities for observing the day on the national level in Myanmar as of 2002.

In line with the theme **"The Transformation of Education Begins with Teachers"**, it highlights the important role of teachers in the reform process of the education sector and indicates the requirements to consider the future life of teachers by fulfilling their needs so as to fully utilize talent and academic professions of teachers.

Teachers are compassionate persons to teach pupils for having skill and politeness, enlightenment and capability. As they teach pupils to have good moral and morality, they can be dubbed teacher-cum-mind trainers. Especially, they redirect the pupils from derailed path to the right track. Hence, Manlei Sayadaw composed the nature of teachers as "the teachers give advice to pupils for latter's interests with compassion and empathy not keep the sins of pupils in their minds".

It can be said that teachers never mean pupils any harm and nurture them to have greater lives. Teachers teach knowledge, technology, good practices, and dos and don'ts as manuals for their pupils in their future journeys.

Teachers accept themselves as beginning learners who learn any subjects at first to have skills. They open eyes and ears to self-learning with the use of the library, internet and IT technologies, always making efforts to teach modern subjects to pupils.

They give teaching and training to pupils to prefer education. The teachers today are learning the languages which contribute to their subjects. In order to effectively teach their pupils, teachers always revise lessons, teaching methods, curriculums and teaching aid. If so, ordinary teaching can be upgraded to academic measures based on technology.

It is necessary to train and teach the students who can be dubbed as today's youths will be adults in the future to have knowledge, courage and moral capacities in the future so as to overcome challenges in their lifetime.

As technology and knowledge can uplift family life and social life, a country, a state or a society can be improved through education. Hence, only when qualified teachers lead such a process will they shape the beautiful and pleasant world.

In conclusion, I'd like to deeply urge the teachers to strive to contribute to the modernization of Myanmar education by meeting the international standards and implementing the democratic system based on federalism through education so as to guide pupils to be free from dangers in line with the five ethics of teachers — teaching skills, giving advice, not leaving any topics, preventing danger and sending them to suitable institutions—, teach new generation youths to be able to bravely overcome global challenges, lead them to have the correct knowledge, works and practices on the occasion of the significant World Teachers' Day.

Myanmar highlights points concealed by human rights mechanisms against Myanmar

THE United Nations Human Rights Council has been conducting its 51st Regular Session in Geneva since 12 September 2022, in which it included unsupportive country-specific events against Myanmar. To continue the work of selectively targeting Myanmar, the EU and the OIC countries created a plethora of so-called Interactive Dialogues with the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) on 12 September 2022, with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar on 21 and 22 September 2022 and with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 22 September 2022 as well as with the Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights on 26 September 2022.

The Human Rights Council established the IIMM outside of its mandate which is not a prosecutorial body with no authority to establish such mechanism. The mechanism has been further allowed to operate for unlimited time spending 15 million USD every year. While there is no clear oversight tool to scrutinize the so-called three million pieces of information which are indeed never open for verification, its funding as IIMM now openly received the additional remuneration from the US government though such acceptance is strictly prohibited for the United Nations Special Procedure mandate holders as well as its staffing since selection and appointment of IIMM staff never go to the public. Such ambiguity of the IIMM is in fact carefully crafted to reach desired conclusions of its co-sponsors and Myanmar does not recognize the IIMM since its establishment. Myanmar reaffirms its position on non-recognition of the mechanism.

The Special Rapporteur has never failed to exploit his mandate but alleged the Government to have committed "such-and-such international crimes" by easily referring to unreliable dissident sources and without plausible knowledge of his own. The Special Rapporteur, beyond the prerogative of the United Nations, has been publicly lobbying to recognize the NUG terrorist group in addition to deceiving international community by hiding the acts of the NUG and PDF terrorists who brutally killed at least 3,800 unarmed civilians including 88 children. He turned a blind eye to the recent video footage that was widely spreading online about the merciless slaughter of two women teachers who were blindfolded by the PDF terrorists and asking for sparing their lives. Killing a headmistress and a teacher from Minywa village in Gangaw Township of Magway Region on 18 August 2022 is not an isolated event. Both the parents were shot dead by the PDF terrorists after dropping their eight-year-old daughter off at school on 23 August 2022 in Mandalay. While the Special Rapporteur has considered all fabricated stories, he omitted the facts which contradict to his narratives such as massive killing of over twenty persons committed by the NUG terrorists in Yinmabin Township, Sagaing Region in November 2021. These are a few incidents among 3,800 other cases largely covered up by the United Nations human rights personnel.

Myanmar observed that the report of the OHCHR is another provoking document identical to those of organizations and media outlets which enjoyed various supports from certain western countries to interfere in internal affairs of Myanmar in every aspect. Furthermore, the OHCHR eventually calls for imposing economic sanctions against Myanmar's state-owned enterprises, which is tantamount to deprive the people of Myanmar from their rights to development and such sanctions will have impact on the well-being of the people of Myanmar. No matter how the OHCHR is trying to hide this agenda, it is well known that the economic sanctions become effective only at the cost of the socio-economic life of the general population.

Similarly, the Acting High Commissioner overstated one-sided allegations against the Myanmar Government while the participation of Myanmar was intentionally left out from every Interactive Dialogue. She mentioned skirmishes in certain parts of the country but failed to reveal the heinous crimes committed by the NUG and PDF terrorist groups against innocent civilians with the support of armed organizations active in some ethnic areas. Myanmar wishes to highlight the undeniable fact that large parts of Myanmar in the absence of such armed organizations remain peaceful. Alleging denial of humanitarian access is not rational as 15 UN agencies and 26 INGOs are still functioning in Rakhine State. While Myanmar stands ready to receive the verified displaced persons, it never recognizes the term "Rohingya".

While Myanmar wishes to express its appreciation to the countries which uphold the principles of the Human Rights Council, Myanmar categorically rejects the above-mentioned flawed reports, their presentations and intrusive statements made by certain countries at the 51st Session of the Council.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4 October 2022

Our public security system will accelerate efforts to stabilize the politics and security of the country

IN order to hold a free and fair election, the nation must be peaceful and stable. The entire people will need to cast their vote as they wish without being exposed to threats, coercion and pressures in any form. The coming election must be held in all parts of the nation freely and fairly. To ensure there is no unfairness, threats or coercion in the coming election, armed conflicts must cease. To be able to hold the elections, our public security system will accelerate efforts to stabilize the politics and security of the country.

(The excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on the Occasion of the Eighteen Months of the Assumption of State Duties by the State Administration Council on 1 August 2022.)

SAC Chair PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets ...

FROM PAGE-1

Next, the suppliers of agricultural inputs and MSME proprietors in Pyay District reported on the distribution of agricultural inputs to farmers at reasonable prices, the need for the government to disburse agricultural loans at soft interest rates, to render support and make necessary relaxations of rules for the development of hotels and tourism industry in the cultural heritage centre, to give MSME entrepreneurs extra time to be able to pay back loans and to continue giving loans. They also thanked the government for providing encouragement and necessary support.

The Senior General meets the business people of micro, small and medium enterprises-MSMEs in Pyay District on 4 October 2022.

The tourism industry in cultural heritage centres encouraged

After hearing the reports of entrepreneurs, the Prime Minister said that he encouraged the tourism industry in cultural heritage centres, that railways are being upgraded to make journeys by train comfortable, and that the government aims to use electric trains to contribute to the development of tourism industry, that it is necessary to make the region and the cities clean and pleasant, that it is also necessary for the locals to work together to attract foreign tourists, that Russian-Myanmar Friendship Associations will be organized in the respective regions so that Russian tourists can visit Myanmar and that the period for the payment of loans will be extended and more loans will be provided.

Important to produce cooking oil of good quality

Regarding the cultivation and production of crops, the Prime Minister said that, as the government is practising market economy, he encouraged private economy, that, as the government is providing all the necessary assistance, the farmers on their part need to do the cultivation systematically and use quality strains, that it is important to use modern machinery to be able to produce cooking oil of good quality.

Technologies to be provided to extract metal ores for iron production

The Prime Minister continued to say that fuel oil is imported from abroad and the government is trying for consumers to be able to get it at a reasonable price, that the government is making efforts to be able to generate the electricity needed for industries, that projects are being laid down to be able to use electric cars for public transport, the government has given private entrepreneurs the green light to extract minerals and respective ministries will provide necessary technologies to them to be able to extract metal ores for iron production.

Union Ministers U Win Shein, Dr Kan Zaw, U Tin Htut Oo, U Hla Moe, Dr Charlie Than and U Aung Naing Oo explained the implementation of work by respective ministries, relaxation of rules for payment of loans and disbursement of further loans, the necessity for the development of economic enterprises in accord with the economic policies laid down by the government, steps being taken for increased income of rural people and the necessity for rural development by organizing cooperative associations.

Discharging State responsibilities and overcoming difficulties in cooperation with the people

In his speech, the Senior General said MSME plays a key role in the development of the State economy and it is a primary economic driving force for developing countries. MSME industries are built for many percentages in developed and developing countries.

Politics and economy

If the economy does not develop, politics will not be stable. As the downtrend of the economy can cause political problems, efforts are being made to enhance the economy. In the market economic system, businesspersons must have self-reliance whereas the State will adopt coherent policies. State revenues comes from the people and trade as well as that of the non-trade process. These incomes are spent under the budget to develop the State. Only when the local economy improves will the nation develop.

Requirement of production based on agriculture and livestock and qualified human resources

Production is essential for operating businesses. Likewise, production needs raw materials. Myanmar is endowed with raw materials from underground and aboveground natural resources. Agriculture and livestock farming require fertilizers, feedstuffs, fuel, electricity and other inputs. Livestock farms can be utilized to produce many products. Agricultural produce and livestock products can be consumed at home and exported abroad to promote the economy.

As Myanmar's economy is starting to resurge, efforts must be made for increasing production. In doing so, the government will disburse loans to the business people facing difficulties based on various reasons.

Arrangements are being made to open agriculture institutes and livestock breeding institutes at basic education schools in each district for turning out skilful human resources. Hence, business people need to conduct on-job training courses as much as they can.

Only when socioeconomic life of individuals develops will the region and the country have economic development

The Senior General urged them to efficiently utilize land and water for achieving success in agriculture and livestock farming. Double and triple cropping can help them earn increased income. Only when individual socioeconomic life develops will the region and the country have economic development. Production must be done with raw materials from agriculture and livestock farming in Pyay District.

The Senior General cordially greeted MSME businesspersons of Pyay District at the meeting.

The Senior General then viewed round foodstuffs, personal goods, industrial products, Myanmar traditional goods, clothes and traditional medicines displayed at the meeting hall and asked about the market situation for these products.

— MNA

SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing pays homage to Shwesandaw Pagoda in Pyay

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, accompanied by his wife, Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, and party, the chief minister of Bago Region and the Southern Command commander, paid homage to Shwesandaw Pagoda in Pyay yesterday evening.

The Senior General and party were welcomed by the Shwesandaw Pagoda Board of Trustees U Soe Win and party. Then, they paid homage to Hnee Pagoda (woven with bamboo strips) and offered water, flowers and oil lights to the Buddha image. Next, he observed the historical museum of the Shwesandaw Pagoda and gave instructions to officials of the museum on the maintenance and renovation in systematic ways.

Afterwards, the Senior General and party also paid homage to Shwesandaw Pagoda and went round the pagoda clockwise. And he gave advice on the preservation of ancient cultural works.

The Senior General tolled the great bell in the precinct of Shwesandaw Pagoda. Then, he signed in the visitors' book of the Shwesandaw Pagoda and presented a cash donation to members of the Shwesandaw Pagoda Board of Trustees. — MNA

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views round the historical museum of the Shwesandaw Pagoda in Pyay on 4 October 2022.

Myanmar to kick off seven-day Myanmar Gems Emporium on 19 Oct

A seven-day Myanmar Gems Emporium will take place at Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw between 19 and 25 October, according to the Central Committee on for Holding Myanmar Gems Emporium.

The central committee will hold this emporium under the supervision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Myanmar's precious gems (pearl, jade lots, gems and jewellery) will be exhibited at the emporium.

Those Myanmar citizen entrepreneurs, who are legally involved in mining activities under the Myanmar Gemstone Law and engaged in gems trade by holding a licence, are therefore entitled to attend the emporium.

Last April, the central committee held its 57th Myanmar Gems Emporium at Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw between 22 and 28 April.

At present, Lonkhin, Phakant, Mawlu and Mawhan gem and jade mining businesses in Kachin State have been suspended with a view to supporting sustainable resource extraction for future generations, and ensuring the safe and efficient operation of jade and gems mines, the Myanmar Gems Enterprise under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation declared on 1 April. — NN/GNLM

Gem merchants were seen observing the jade lots in the previous emporium.

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

Shwedagon to hold Thadingyut Lighting Festival (Abhidhamma Day)

THE Thadingyut Lighting Festival (Abhidhamma Day) ceremony will be held in line with COVID-19 health rules at the Shwedagon Pagoda on the full moon of Thadingyut 1384 ME, the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees said.

Members of the Pagoda Board of Trustees, religious associations and staff will donate oil lamps on the auspicious precinct of the pagoda after circling round the pagoda clockwise by holding colourful lanterns and shrines with electric lights at 5 pm on 8 October (the day before the Buddhist Sabbath of Thadingyut).

At 6 am on 9 October (Abhidhamma Day), the ceremony will be convened to offer morning alms to the pagoda, conduct a question-and-answer session on salient points about Abhidhamma Day and share Metta with devotees.

At 9:30 am, the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees will offer alms-meals to Sanghas and provide food to devotees. Therefore, the trustees have sent invitations to all Buddhists who have done good deeds during Lent. — TWA/GNLM

The Abhidhamma Day was celebrated at the Shwedagon Pagoda in 1382 ME (2020).

28 train coaches trialled successfully in Mandalay

Chinese technical experts and officials from Myanma Railways are pictured together in Mandalay.

THE test run of a total of 28 train coaches, which were purchased with an interest-free loan from China, was carried out in Mandalay and it was successful, stated the Chinese Embassy.

Technical service experts from China helped facilitat the trial run of 28 train coaches on the track in September.

The purchased coaches arrived at Thilawa Port in Yangon on 5 January 2021 and included 14 upper-class carriages and 14 second-class carriages. This train route will enhance the running performance of the Mandalay-Yangon railway, as well as the socioeconomic development of the towns and cities en route, according to Myanma Railways.

The Chinese Embassy announced that a group of technical service experts from China brought China's train technology to Myanmar.

China is providing technical assistance training to the Myanma Railways and nurturing talented personnel who will be able to manufacture and maintain train coaches themselves. — TWA/GNLM

CBM says banks won't hike interest rates amid excess bank reserves

THE banks will not hike the interest rate and there are excess bank reserves for now, according to a statement (9/2022) of the decisions of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) meeting.

In order to tackle inflation, the committee considered whether it should raise interest rates or not. The economic growth in the 2021-2022 financial year was 2.4 per cent, which is lower than the target of 3.7 per cent.

The committee decided at a meeting (5/2022) held on 30 May 2022 not to raise the interest rates as the country missed economic targets, cash deposits at the banks are declining, bank credit expansion still cannot happen and the currency in circulation of the banking industry just starts off.

For the ease of inflation, the committee made the Minimum Required Reserves (MRR) ratio remain unchanged at 3 per cent after mulling over banking operations.

The committee raised the current account balance (CAB) of the bank institutions at the Central Bank from 2.25 to 2.5 per cent and lowered the bank reserves (cash) from 0.75 to 0.5 per cent.

This way, the cash physically held by the banks will be deposited to the CBM and modifying reserve requirements will reduce the currency in circulation (CIC) and hope to steer the volatile inflation rate, as per the statement.

Additionally, bank reserves are exceeding at present. As the bank credit expansion cannot still happen, the committee decided to set an interest rate on the average excess CAB.

The statement said it will initially create an interest rate corridor for the money market. Furthermore, to steer inflation, the committee also discussed issuing the CBM Bill as a monetary policy instrument.

Regarding issuing CBM Bill, taking everything into account, advantages, procedures, setting face value and interest rate, types of issuing and payment methods were raised at the meeting and the committee determined to make the necessary preparations. — TWA/GNLM

Thailand grants Myanmar citizens visa-free 45-day stay

THAILAND has announced the extension of a visa-free period for Myanmar citizens from 14 days to 45 days, according to the statement of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Thai government extended the visa-free period for foreigners entering the country to 45 days from 30 days starting October 2022, and Myanmar citizens are also on the list for a 45-day visa exemption stay period.

According to the bilateral agreement, any Myanmar passport holder is also among those who will be granted 45 days of visa-free stay in Thailand.

When the Thai government granted up to 30 days of visa-free stay to foreigners entering the country, Myanmar citizens were allowed only 14 days but could stay for 60 days with tourist visas.

The announcement was issued by the Royal Thai Embassy in Ottawa, Canada on 30 September. But, the Thai Embassy in Myanmar has not released such an announcement yet. — TWA/GNLM

TOURISM

Authorities to open higher numbers of hotels at Ngapali beach for its autumn festival

THERE were huge crowds in Ngapali Beach's early cold season festival last year, and arrangements are being made to open a greater number of hotels than the previous year as the festival will be organized in early November this year.

The Directorate of Hotels and Tourism and the departments concerned launched the first autumn festival including sports games at Ngapali beach under the supervision of the Rakhine State government on 14 November 2021. Then, the people who were experiencing anxiety due to the COVID-19 pandemic came to the beach for relaxation and the hotels were fully booked and the domestic flights operated well.

The tourism management committee conducted the seminars and training courses in the first week of October for the service groups regarding the cleanliness of the beach, health issues and environmental conservation for the festival to be held in early November. The hoteliers also make preparations to open a larger number of hotels than last year in which 79 hotels opened, and the airlines sell the tickets in advance.

The situation of Ngapali beach is very peaceful annually. There were huge crowds last year. All are working hard to celebrate this autumn festival actively and so we invite the local and foreign travellers to pay a visit here. The Manaung island is a perfect place with its natural beauty and so the travellers are warmly welcomed," said U Tin Htut Aung, Director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism of Rakhine State. The tour season of Ngapali beach began in November second week of last year and it hosted visitors from the period of the Thadingyut festival to the Thingyan festival. Ngapali beach received the highest visitor numbers and it created job opportunities for residents.

PHOTO: KANU

This year, the new hotels are being constructed at Kanthaya beach in Gwa Township and the preparations are also being made at the hotels at Ngapali, Ngwehsaung and Chaungtha beaches.

A hotel containing 33 rooms and a resort with 24 rooms are also opened at Manaung island and the officials arrange better river transportation to Manaung island and expect to open a larger number of hotels for local and foreign visitors than last year during this Ngapali Beach's early cold season festival. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

Flood Warning

(Issued at 14:00 Hours MST on 4-10-2022)

ACCORDING to the (13:30) hours MST observation today, the water level of Myittha River at Kalay is observed as about 5 feet below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next 24 hours.

The people who settle near the river banks and low laying areas Kalay Township are expecially advised to take precaution measures.—MNA

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

LOCAL BUSINESS

Gold price ticks up tracking mild rebound in global gold price, dollar

Jewellery is pictured at one gold outlet in Yangon.

THE price of pure gold rebounded to K2.6 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in domestic markets.

The yellow metal price sank below K2.4 million on 1 October, whereas the price edged up to K2.66 million on 4 October.

The mild rebound in gold spot prices in international markets and Kyat weakening against the US dollar are contributing factors to the gold price increase in domestic markets.

The gold price hit over US$1,660 per ounce on 1 October. The gold spot price stands at over $1,700 per ounce at present.

Similarly, the dollar was exchanged at around K2,700 in the unauthorized markets on 1 October. The exchange rate currently ascends to K2,900.

The soaring dollar exchanging at over K4,500 pushed up the pure gold price to a record-high of K3.7 million per tical in late August.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation is, therefore, selling the gold bars and coins in order for the gold price to ease.

Furthermore, the governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) and officials of the Monitoring and Steering Committee on the Gold and Currency Market discussed matters regarding the stability of the gold and currency market and supporting plans of the banks for gold bar transactions to be made with banking system on 14 September in Nay Pyi Taw.

Then, on 30 September, seven private banks opened special counters at the designated 48 branches to offer banking services for gold transactions.

According to CBM's directive 43/2021 dated 3 November 2021, lumpsum payments worth more than K20 million for buying or selling assets have to be processed with the banking system.

Seven private banks are providing banking services by opening special counters at their 48 branches in Yangon and Mandalay regions and Mon State (Mawlamyine) to facilitate gold transactions with the banking payment system.

Those banks are Kanbawza Bank (KBZ Bank), Co-operative Bank (CB Bank) PCL, Ayeyawady (AYA) Bank, Myanmar Apex Bank (MAB), UAB Bank, Yoma Bank, Ayeyawady Farmers Development Bank (A Bank). — NN/GNLM

Imports indicate increase of $1.55 bln as of 23 September this FY against that of mini-budget period, MoC reports

THE value of Myanmar's imports between 1 April and 23 September of the current financial year 2022-2023 surged to US$8.159 billion, which reflects a sharp rise of $1.55 billion compared to the year-ago period, the Ministry of Commerce's data indicated.

The import value stood at $6.6 billion in the corresponding period of the past 2021-2022 mini-budget period.

The imports of capital goods and consumer goods declined, while the other import groups (intermediate goods and CMP businesses) witnessed a slight increase. The capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines and steel were brought into the country. The import value was estimated at $1.46 billion as of 23 September this FY. The figure was over $332 million lower than the value registered in the same period of the previous mini-budget period.

Meanwhile, Myanmar imported consumer products worth $1.49 billion, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil. The imports of consumer products showed a slight decrease of $207.9 million compared with the same period in the previous FY.

Intermediate goods make up the largest share of Myanmar's imports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. This year, imports of raw materials climbed up to $3.8 billion from $2.399 billion registered during the year-ago period.

During the same period, raw materials worth over $1.34 billion were also imported for the garment sector on the cut-make-pack (CMP) basis, showing an increase of $626.45 million compared with the same time of the last mini-budget period, as per data from the Ministry of Commerce. — KK/GNLM

Weekly market update of dry groceries

DURING the week ending 4 October, the prices of onion, Chinese potato and edible oil went up yet the prices of rice, pulses and Kyukok garlic declined.

Onion

The prices of onions rose last week on low supply. On 30 September, 90,000 visses of onion on 30 September and 48,000 visses of onion on 1 October flowed into the Bayintnaung Wholesale market.

The prices of large onions from the Seikphyu area slightly climbed to K2,600-K2,850 from K2,500-2,750 per viss on 1 October on the low supply.

However, the prices remained unchanged on 2 and 3 October with 180,000 visses of daily supply.

On 4 October, the maximum price of onions was K2,500 per viss at the Seikphyu commodity depot and K2,600 per viss of onions at the Pakokku commodity depot, which decreased from K2,700 per viss recorded in the previous days, according to price data of those two regions.

Garlic

On 4 October, the wholesale prices of garlic from Shan State (Aungban area) moved in the range of K2,800-K3,900 per viss while Kyukok garlic price dropped to K3,450 per viss.

Potato

The price of Chinese potatoes climbed to K2,250 on 4 October, while Shan potatoes were priced at K1,550-K2,000 per viss depending on quality.

Chilli pepper

The prices of chilli pepper moved in the range between K15,000 and K20,000 per viss depending on different varieties (bell pepper, Shankyun, and Moe Htaung chilli pepper varieties) and producing regions.

The market offers six-viss bags of chilli pepper instead of 18-20 visses large bags following the price hike. But buyers could not keep up with the selling price, depot owners said.

Rice

The prices of low-grade rice and broken rice dipped. The prices of high-grade Pawsan varieties were K92,000 per bag from the Shwebo area, K62,000-K63,000 from Pyapon, K68,000-K69,000 from Myaungmya and Pathein areas and K63,000 from other areas. Meanwhile, the prices of short-mature rice (90 days) stood at K46,000-K47,000 per bag. The prices of low-grade rice varieties moved in the range of K39,500-K44,000 per bag respectively.

Palm oil

The wholesale reference price of palm oil in the Yangon Region for a week from 3 to 9 October declined by K640 per viss compared to the last week's price. The reference price for that week was set at K4,020 per viss.

Consequently, palm oil rebounded in the markets. The wholesale prices gradually rose from K6,000 on 1 October to K6,700 per viss on 4 October.

Pulses

On 4 October, the prices of various pulses stood at over K1,817,000 per tonne of black gram (Fair Average Quality/RC), K2,1327,000 per tonne of black gram (Special Quality/RC), K1,980,000 per tonne of pigeon pea (red gram) RC and K3,950-K4,100 per viss of chickpea in Yangon markets.— TWA/GNLM

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OPINION

Heartily honour and uplift lives of benefactor teachers

MYANMAR people pay respect to the attributes of teachers who give the teaching on various subjects or share their experiences with them, identifying the teachers as benefactors forever because education and knowledge given by the teachers can be utilized for the whole their lifetime.

Those teachers nurture all the people in Myanmar society without any expectation for ensuring their wealth. Most of those teachers stand for their lives without giving up anything despite facing difficulties and challenges in their lives. Although they are facing hardship for daily consumption due to their salaries which are not enough for their family, they are keen to provide assistance or give food to pupils.

As a nature of Myanmar society, teachers are satisfactory for wealth, booming business and outstanding of their pupils who have completed learning at schools although their attributes of teaching and nurturing are not acknowledged by students. As such, those teachers are deserved to accept respect paid by not only their students but by the people, as one of the invaluable benefactors to society.

> In Myanmar society, the word of teachers is all-inclusive of the persons who give school education, create a chance for anyone to learn techniques behind them and do something aloud to complete the works which acts are designed to let anyone study some knowledge and techniques without actual advice and teachings. Hence, people recognize them as teachers in teaching, seeing and hearing.

World Teachers' Day is held annually on 5 October every year to honour as well as pay respect to the attributes of all teachers across Myanmar and throughout the world. The day honours the teachers regarding their rights and responsibilities, and standard for their initial preparation and further education, recruitment, employment, and teaching and learning conditions.

The theme for World Teachers' Day 2022 is "The transformation of education begins with teachers". Celebrations will address the commitments and calls for action made at the Transforming Education Summit, in September 2022, and analyze the implications they have for teachers and teaching.

It is a day to celebrate how teachers are transforming education but also to reflect on the support they need to fully deploy their talent and vocation, and to rethink the way ahead for the profession globally.

In Myanmar society, the word of teachers is all-inclusive of the persons who give school education, create a chance for anyone to learn techniques behind them and do something aloud to complete the works which acts are designed to let anyone study some knowledge and techniques without actual advice and teachings. Hence, people recognize them as teachers in teaching, seeing and hearing.

Indeed, teachers are a driving force for the nation in taking nation-building measures without hoping for positions, ranks and income for their lives. They all are passing their lives very simply. As such, all people need to heartily honour and uplift their lives. ■

WE HAVE got children who are our own or not. They can be named our future generations. It is natural that older people or adults always lay genuine seeds for their new generations from time to time. In this process, society gets flourished. No one can deny it. However, it is general. In reality, older people or adults especially only teachers can perform this responsibility effectively and successfully. In society, the role of teachers cannot be forgotten. Moreover, to become a better society, teachers are essential and the techniques they will have to utilize to make their students bloom are more essential than any other one.

Teachers today are encouraged to help their learners develop life competencies during each life stage of education from pre-primary to secondary. 21st-century course materials integrate opportunities to work on competencies such as communication, collaboration, creative thinking, critical thinking, social responsibilities, and learning to learn. They offer the teacher a range of activities and ideas to encourage and motivate their learners to develop these competencies.

Among those six main competencies, we can have identified in the Life Competencies Framework is the last one i.e., learning to learn. So, why is it important for our learners to develop learning to learn skills at school and how will such skills equip them for life beyond secondary school education?

Learning to learn is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organize one's learning, including effective management of the time and information both individually and in groups.

Learning to learn strategies include any thoughts, behaviours, beliefs, or emotions that facilitate the acquisition, understanding, or later application and transfer of new knowledge and skills in different performance contexts. They range from active rehearsal to help remember word lists, to the use of elaboration and organization to encode, integrate, and later recall or apply knowledge across several content areas. Learning to learn strategies help generate meaning for the new information that is to be learned. Repeating the names of the planets in order, organizing the discoveries of the great explorers by creating timelines and mind maps, and comparing and contrasting the causes of World War I and World War II, are all examples of learning strategies.

They all are designed to help the learner generate meaning and store the new information in memory in a manner that will facilitate integration with related knowledge and increase the probability of later recall and use, particularly in transfer contexts.

A learning strategy is also a plan for orchestrating cognitive resources to help reach a learning goal. Learning to learn strategies have several characteristics in common.

First, they are goal-directed. Learning strategies are used to help meet a standard of performance or to reach a learning goal.

Second, learning strategies are intentionally invoked, which implies at least some level of active selection. The selection of one or more of these strategies is determined by a number of factors, such as a student's prior experience with the strategy, his or her prior experience with similar learning tasks, his or her ability to deal with distractions, and the student's commitment to his or her goals.

Third, cognitive learning strategies are effortful; they require time and often involve using multiple, highly interactive steps. Because of the effort required, a student must be motivated to initiate and maintain strategy use (*e.g., see Motivation, Learning, and Instruction*). In addition, the student must believe that the strategy will be effective and that he or she can be successful using the strategy.

Finally, cognitive learning strategies are not universally applicable—they are situation-specific. The student's goals, the task requirements, the context, and other factors all interact to help determine which strategy may be best. To be successful in selecting and using a strategy, a student must understand under what circumstances a given strategy is, or is not appropriate.

When developing learning-to-learn competencies in the secondary classroom we are equipping our learners with the practical skills to participate in, take control of, reflect on and evaluate their learning in higher education and the workplace.

Students in higher education are expected to be more independent and less reliant on their tutors and play an active role in directing their learning. Being equipped with a variety of study skills and knowing how to use them effectively is crucial. Examples include the ability to create an effective learning environment without distractions, or being able to manage time effectively to stay focused and meet deadlines.

In higher education, students are fully responsible for organizing the time they spend outside class to work on projects and assignments or to prepare for exams. We know from our understanding of how memory works that the human brain can retain and retrieve information more effectively when we review it systematically.

Therefore, for example, a university student who paces their learning uses mind maps or graphic organizers to make clear, structured notes from their lecture notes or own reading and reviews them periodically during peak concentration levels will improve their learning outcomes far more effectively than a student who opts to spend hours cramming for an exam the night before. This "distributed practice" or spacing out study times into short, regular sessions over a long period will undoubtedly have a positive impact on their learning.

In addition to distributed practice, learners should aim to make the retrieval of information as useful as possible by not only recalling the information but applying it to answer a specific exam question, solve a certain problem or complete a particular task as part of a piece of coursework. Learners need to be able to identify and select relevant information by making connections.

Those students who have been shown how to use graphic organizers and make connections to organize information will be better equipped to identify which information is necessary to complete a task or answer a question and identify which further relevant information they need to source. So, it is not simply a case of regurgitating information but retrieving it in a useful way. Students who were encouraged at school to regularly create and carry out low-stakes quizzes to review course content or explain how to answer certain questions to their peers will be better able to review information effectively.

Higher education students today are expected to know how to reflect on and evaluate their learning to achieve desired learning outcomes. At college or university, they will need to plan schemes of work and keep a record of the progress made. They will also be expected to carry out longer written assignments and projects and may need to work collaboratively with others to produce them.

Students who have had the opportunity to use formative assessment at school will have had invaluable experience in reflecting on their learning and becoming more involved in the learning process. They will be used to reflect on the success of their learning and identify where their learning needs to go next. This training will help them stay focused during projects and assignments at university as they systematically reflect on their progress at various stages of the process, identity what the next steps are, and have a clear idea of how to go about achieving them.

One of the most useful skills they will have developed is how to identify what information is needed and how to source it. Identifying which member of a team is best prepared to contribute certain skills or knowledge or develop certain parts of the project will also improve its overall execution. As autonomous learners, they will also be better equipped to manage the resources available, source reliable information either online or from the library or self-study centre, and use this information appropriately while avoiding plagiarism and respecting copyright.

Curriculum policies increasingly focus on competencies that students are expected to develop during the whole process of learning across specific subjects or disciplines and that they need to succeed in education and for personal development, employment, and inclusion in a knowledge society. A variety of terms are used to indicate these competencies, the most frequent ones being competences or competencies (defined as key, core, general, generic, basic, cross-curricular, or transversal competencies) and skills (defined as key, foundation, core, basic, essential, cross-thematic, cross-curricular or 21st-century skills). Beyond the European Union area, several organizations, partnerships, and consortia have defined and endorsed different core competencies/skills frameworks.

All of these competencies that our students further develop during their time in higher education will also be relevant and necessary in the future workplace. It is clear that building up a wide range of learning to learn skills during our formative years will stand us in very good stead for the years ahead.

Reference: Teaching Teen

■

ARTICLE

Learning to learn that intends life

By Yin Nwe Ko

A learning strategy is a plan for orchestrating cognitive resources to help reach a learning goal. Learning to learn strategies have several characteristics in common. **ILLUSTRATION: COURTESY OF FREEPIK**

Vietnam reports its first monkeypox case

VIETNAM'S Ministry of Health said on Monday that a 35-year-old woman had been diagnosed with monkeypox, who became the first case of monkeypox detected in the Southeast Asian country.

A resident in southern Ho Chi Minh City, the patient fell ill on 18 Sept while travelling in Dubai with symptoms of fever, fatigue, chills, muscle aches, headache and a cough, as well as red and itchy bumps on her arms, body and face, before returning to Vietnam on 22 Sept, Vietnam News Agency cited the ministry as reporting.

On 23 Sept, she was admitted to Tu Du Hospital in the city and transferred to the municipal Hospital of Dermato Venereology, where she was isolated.

Two days later, the patient tested positive for monkeypox and was transferred to the municipal Hospital for Tropical Diseases for further isolation, treatment and genetic sequencing. She is currently in stable condition with no fever, according to the report.

According to the Vietnamese prime minister's recent dispatch about preventing monkeypox and the health ministry's guidance, localities have been requested to intensify the monitoring of possible transmissions at border gates and health clinics, and hold training sessions for their healthcare staff.

When a positive case of monkeypox is detected, the locality involved is required to carry out contact tracing and quarantine to prevent the epidemic from spreading in the community, Vietnam News Agency reported.

SOURCE: Xinhua

According to the Vietnamese prime minister's recent dispatch about preventing monkeypox and the health ministry's guidance, localities have been requested to intensify the monitoring of possible transmissions at border gates and health clinics, and hold training sessions for their healthcare staff. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE/ PIXABAY**

Those wishing to enter the legal fold can contact respective townships' Red Cross Society, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, Social Welfare Office and social welfare organizations authorized by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in addition to reception centres in border areas, Tatmadaw units and police stations

THE Information Team of the State Administration Council has released statements inviting CDM staff, students and youths, who are in border areas and ethnic armed groups, they can contact the nearest reception centres in border areas, Tatmadaw units and police stations if they want to enter the legal fold and the government will guarantee their lives following the rules and regulations.

In order to prevent the unnecessary loss of human resources, the State Administration Council has publicly invited the basic education staff who are absent from duty to resume their duties and those who take part in armed resistance under various names of groups, including PDFs. Meanwhile, 3,156 education workers, who were absent from their duties, another 1,009 people, who want to withdraw the cases that were opened against them, and 231 PDF members have contacted and returned to the legal fold. Then, they were given back to their parents systematically and the numbers of people who enter the legal fold and those who wish to are rising. Therefore, the government is making efforts to accept more numbers of those people.

The government opens reception centres in border areas for those who would like to return to the legal fold. Moreover, those wishing to return home can contact respective townships' Red Cross Society, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, Social Welfare Office and social welfare organizations authorized by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. It is guaranteed that they will be able to lead their daily lives peacefully.

Information Team
State Administration Council

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions

Governmental staff contribute masks to the public in Lashio Township in Shan State (North).

VACCINATION is being carried out in full swing in various regions and states as the vaccination programmes are one of the most important activities in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 disease.

Yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, and relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 307 people from Yankin and Tamway townships in Yangon Region, 5,360 people from twenty-six townships in Ayeyawady Region, 1,826 people from four townships in Rakhine and Chin states, 3,689 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region, and 268 people from Toungoo and Htantabin townships in Bago Region, respectively.

Similarly, on that day healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 762 students from five townships in Rakhine and Chin states, and 1,884 students from seven districts in Mandalay Region.

In addition, to assist in the control and prevention of the COVID-19 disease, military officials from various regional commands in collaboration with district and township administrative officials, departmental personnel and members of civil society organizations (CSOs) conducted educational campaigns such as prevention of COVID-19, wearing of masks in public places and distribution of masks to the locals at schools, markets, streets, city entry points and crowded areas in Lashio township, Shan State (North), Myeik and Bokpyin townships in Taninthayi Region, 44 townships in Yangon Region, TadaU Township in Mandalay Region yesterday. — MNA

Objectives of 23rd Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions 2022

(a) To uplift national prestige and integrity and to preserve the cultural heritage and national characteristics

(b) To discover, preserve and uplift the traditional cultural heritage of performing arts of ethnic nationals and national cultural characteristics

(c) To preserve traditional cultural performing arts in order to further revitalize adoration of the State and hand it down to new generation youths

(d) To contribute much to the restoration of perpetual peace

390 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 4 October, total figure rises to 624,682

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **624,682** after **390** new cases were reported on 4 October 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **598,994** have been recovered from disease. Death toll reaches **19,463** after two deaths.

Myanmar reported 145 COVID-19 deaths between 28-1-2022 and 26-9-2022. Of them, 102 deaths (70 per cent) had underlying chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, liver, kidney, lung and cancer.

According to the analysis of the COVID-19 vaccination rate of deaths with underlying chronic diseases, 81.4 per cent have received no vaccination at all and have not been fully inoculated, 17.2 per cent have received full vaccination and 1.4 per cent has received booster shots.

COVID-19 vaccination rate of deaths with underlying chronic diseases

Out of COVID-19 deaths with underlying chronic disease		
81.4 per cent	17.2 per cent	1.4 per cent
have not been vaccinated at all and have not been fully vaccinated	**have been fully vaccinated**	**have received booster shots**

Therefore, according to the analysis of the COVID-19 vaccination rate of deaths with underlying chronic diseases, it causes fewer deaths obviously among those who are fully vaccinated and those who receive the booster shots. The people who are suffering from chronic diseases should follow the COVID-19 health rules, wear face masks and contact the nearest health departments, and village/ward administrative offices to receive the vaccines and booster shots.

More detailed information about COVID-19 can be found on the website of the Ministry of Health: moh.gov.mm. — MNA

Sri Lanka plans to earn US$3 bln through indigenous medicine: official

SRI Lanka plans to earn three billion US dollars in foreign exchange within three years by exporting indigenous medical products and services, State Minister of Indigenous Medicine Sisira Jayakody has said.

"This is one of the main areas where we can earn foreign exchange since a lot of foreigners are interested in the medical system," said the official, quoted by local media on Sunday.

Laws on facilitating export of indigenous medical products have been drafted and would be presented at the parliament shortly, he said.

Laws on facilitating export of indigenous medical products have been drafted and would be presented at the parliament shortly. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ WHO**

Around 75,000 people can be provided with direct and indirect job opportunities through these initiatives, said the official, adding that 1,200 people will be trained next year to treat foreigners who seek indigenous treatment.

The official said the government has earmarked 3.3 million dollars for the promotion of indigenous medicine aimed at foreign markets. —Xinhua

Legal marijuana, but Uruguayans still prefer black market

Uruguay legally produced 1,200-kilogrammes of marijuana between July 2017 and July 2018, 100 per cent of which was sold to registered users. **PHOTO: LARS HAGBERG/AFP/FILE**

URUGUAY was a pioneer in the legalization of recreational cannabis use, a move that helped to push many drug traffickers out of the domestic market.

But a bland and insufficient state supply has meant most consumers still prefer the diversity of the black market.

In 2013, Uruguay became the first country in the world to legalize recreational marijuana use — which came into effect four years later — even permitting its sale in pharmacies.

There are three legal ways for registered users to get hold of marijuana: purchasing it at pharmacies, through home growing for personal use, and by belonging to an official cannabis-producing club.

The most sought after legal method is membership of one of the 249 consumer clubs, which offer a greater variety to their 7,166 members than pharmacies do.

But many clubs have long waiting lists to join as they are limited by law to between 15 and 45 members.

Pulla, the treasurer and technical manager of a cannabis club in Montevideo — who uses a nickname to avoid falling foul of the ban on promoting cannabis use — explained that the waiting list "is an indicator that demand is not satisfied".

"Many more people want to access the legal market who still cannot," he said.

There are just over 14,000 registered home growers and another 49,600 people are registered to purchase marijuana at one of the country's 28 approved pharmacies at around $10 for five grammes — below the black market rate.

According to a study by the local IRCCA institute that regulates cannabis, only 27 per cent of Uruguayan consumers buy their drugs through approved channels, a figure that reaches 39 per cent when taking into account sharing with friends.— AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

S Korea reports 16,423 new COVID-19 cases

SOUTH Korea reported 16,423 new COVID-19 cases as of midnight Monday compared to 24 hours ago, raising the total number of infections to 24,848,184, the health authorities said Tuesday.

The daily caseload was up from 12,150 in the prior day, but it was lower than 39,410 tallied a week earlier, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency.

For the past week, the daily average number of confirmed cases was 24,947.

Among the new cases, 106 were imported from overseas, lifting the total to 68,018.—Xinhua

Russia reports 21,687 new COVID-19 cases

RUSSIA has registered 21,687 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the nationwide tally to 21,094,872, the official monitoring and response centre said Tuesday.

The nationwide death toll increased by 107 to 387,666, while the number of recoveries grew by 45,437 to 20,221,339, the centre said. Meanwhile, Moscow reported 1,442 new cases, taking its total to 3,202,944. — Xinhua

Kyiv asks residents to wear masks as Covid cases surge

AUTHORITIES in the Ukrainian capital on Monday asked residents to resume wearing face masks due to a surge in Covid cases and a health system battered by the Russian invasion.

In the past week, 2,515 coronavirus cases were registered in Kyiv, 242 people were hospitalized and 22 people died, the city hall said. Residents should wear a mask in "public transport, in places that serves clients, and in educational facilities", it said.—AFP

Kyrgyzstan launches 90-day vaccination campaign against COVID-19

KYRGYZ authorities announced on Tuesday the start of a 90-day vaccination campaign against the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

The Republican Headquarters for Combatting COVID-19 said the campaign aims to increase the population's vaccination rate with booster doses.

COVID-19 booster doses can be received by all citizens of the republic four to six months after their second shots. At present, Sinopharm and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines are available in sufficient quantities in the country, it said.—Xinhua

A batch of China's Sinopharm vaccine is transported by a cart at the Manas International Airport in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 19 March 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

ECONOMY
WORLD/AD

UN agency warns of global recession induced by monetary policy in advanced economies

MONETARY policy moves in advanced economies risk pushing the world towards global recession and prolonged stagnation, inflicting worse damage than the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 shock, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said on Monday.

Rapid interest rate increases and fiscal tightening in advanced economies, combined with the crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine conflict, have already turned a global slowdown into a downturn with the desired soft landing looking unlikely, said a UNCTAD report titled "Trade and Development Report 2022".

In a decade of ultra-low interest rates, central banks consistently fell short of inflation targets and failed to generate healthier economic growth, the report said, adding that any belief that they can bring down prices by relying on higher interest rates without generating a recession is an imprudent gamble.

A currency dealer walks past a screen showing South Korea's benchmark stock index in a trading room at Hana Bank in Seoul on 21 Jan 2022. **PHOTO: JUNG YEON-JE/AFP/FILE**

At a time of falling real wages, financial turbulence and insufficient multilateral support and coordination, excessive monetary tightening could usher in a period of stagnation and economic instability, it said.

UNCTAD expects the world economy to grow 2.5 per cent in 2022, and the growth in 2023 is expected to decelerate further to 2.2 per cent.

The synchronized slowdown is hitting all regions but is ringing alarm bells for developing countries, where the average growth rate is projected to drop below three per cent, further squeezing public and private finances and damaging employment prospects, the report said.—AFP

Italian economy expected to contract for three consecutive quarters: Treasury

A woman walks across the Piazza del Duomo, in central Milan. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Italian economy contracted in the third quarter of this year, the Treasury said Monday, with more negative growth forecast into next year.

This means the country could fall into recession just as the next government is launching its economic programme.

Italy's new parliament, elected in the 25 Sept general election, will sit for the first time on 13 Oct. This will set the stage for a new government most likely dominated by the right-wing party Brothers of Italy, led by Giorgia Meloni.

Forecasts from the Italian Treasury show an economic contraction in the quarter ending 30 Sept and at least two more quarters of negative growth. A recession is defined as two consecutive quarters of negative growth.— Xinhua

EU commissioners urge European answer to energy price shock

TWO key members of the EU's executive Monday criticized Germany over its 200-billion-euro plan to address the current energy shock and called for a joint European response.

In a highly unusual move, representatives from France and Italy to the European Commission said Berlin's plan to help German consumers and businesses "raised questions" of fairness.

There are "member states that do not have the same budgetary leeway as Germany" and may not be able to support their economy equally, wrote commissioners Thierry Breton and Paolo Gentiloni in the French newspaper Les Echos and other European publications.—AFP

Nord Stream 1, Russia's largest gas pipeline to Europe, has been closed indefinitely after a number of leaks were found in it and a parallel pipeline, Nord Stream 2. EU leaders say the leaks were caused deliberately. Russia denies it's to blame. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ AFP**

Transferring Registered Pesticides

Registered pesticides distributing by **Myanmar Byter Agro Tech Co.,Ltd** in the territory of Myanmar for the product as following are transferring to **Myanmar Golden Byter Co.,Ltd** as per mutual consent from both parties. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No
1	Dinomat	Dinotefuran 10% + Spirotetramat 10% SC	P2021-4690

Myanmar Golden Byter Co.,Ltd
No.125-127, Kha 11st, Myoe Thit (A+B) Quarter, Inn Sein Township, Yangon.

Transferring Registered Pesticides

Registered pesticides distributing by **Myanmar Golden Byter Co.,Ltd** in the territory of Myanmar for the product as following are transferring to **Myanmar Kete Co.,Ltd** as per mutual consent from both parties. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No
1	Naza 20 WP	Dinotefuran 20% WP	F2021-3264
2	Assassin	Thiamethoxam 30% SC	P2018-4384

Myanmar Kete Co.,Ltd
No.125-127, Kha 11st, Myoe Thit (A+B) Quarter, Inn Sein Township, Yangon.

Policy incentives set to sustain China's NEV boom

CHINA has renewed its policy support for the new-energy vehicle (NEV) sector, a move that experts believe will further fuel an industry that is already in the fast lane.

Days ahead of the National Day holiday, usually seen as a peak shopping season, China announced that the purchase tax exemption for NEVs will be extended to the end of 2023. This marks the third extension since the country first implemented the policy in 2014.

Based on the selling prices of mainstream new-energy vehicles in the market, experts estimate that the policy will help car buyers save about 10,000 yuan (about 1,408 US dollars), while policymakers expect it to result in 100 billion yuan of taxes waived nationwide. Tax exemption has been proven an effective tool in spurring consumption. In the first seven months of the year, the policy has cut around 40.68 billion yuan in taxes, up 108.5 per cent from the previous year, according to the State Administration of Taxation.

Experts believe that such a favourable policy will further unleash market demand for NEVs, a sector that has registered rapid expansion in recent years.In the first eight months of this year, a total of 3.86 million NEVs were sold in China, surging about 110 per cent year on year, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM).—AFP

Japan PM asks firms to match pay hikes to inflation

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Tuesday asked companies to aim for pay hikes that keep pace with accelerating inflation in wage negotiations next spring, as he seeks to achieve both economic growth and redistribution amid the rising cost of living.

Smoothing the way for wage growth, the government will expand subsidies for small and midsize firms on condition that they raise pay, according to a government plan.

It will also prod bigger companies to accept higher prices set by subcontractors by making public the names of those that refuse to do so repeatedly or without providing justification.

A woman writes down responses from major Japanese companies in annual wage negotiations on a white board in Tokyo on 16 March 2022. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ POOL PHOTO /KYODO**

"I hope negotiations will take place between management and labour unions to realize pay hikes that can make up for inflation," Kishida told a government panel meeting on creating a "new form of capitalism." The request was included in a list of priority items that will go into a new economic package to be compiled later this month. Kishida has already instructed officials to focus on three areas -- coping with inflation and a weak yen, spurring wage growth, and achieving growth through investment and reform.—Kyodo

Twitter Blue subscribers getting edit feature

TWITTER on Monday said a feature to edit tweets is being rolled out to those subscribing to its Blue service in Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The long-awaited editing tool test "went well," so it is being made more widely available, the San Francisco based tech firm said in a tweet, adding that it is "coming soon" to the United States.

"Edit Tweet is a feature that lets people make changes to their Tweet after it's been published," the company said on its blog. "Think of it as a short period of time to do things like fix typos, add missed tags, and more."

The tool will let users edit a tweet up to five times within 30 minutes of initially posting, Twitter said.

An icon looking like a slanted pen or pencil will indicate that a tweet has been edited, and a "version history" will be available to show what was changed, Twitter said.

Twitter Blue subscriptions are priced at $5 monthly, according to the company's website.

Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk, who is locked in a lawsuit with Twitter over his effort to break his $44 billion deal to buy the global social media site, had backed an edit button shortly before the company said in April it was studying the change.—AFP

Paris waves goodbye to cardboard Metro tickets

The metro ticket has had a colourful career.
PHOTO: AFP

THE Paris Metro is phasing out cardboard tickets after 120 years, taking the capital's urban transit into a contactless future but leaving behind nostalgic fans who will miss the humble rectangular cards.

Beyond their intended use as a transport token, the tickets with their trademark magnetic strip have inspired artists, filmmakers and singers, served as emergency notepads and, most of all, bookmarks.

"As the metro ticket disappears, so does a part of our lives," said Gregoire Thonnat, a collector and author of a book on the history of the metro ticket. "The metro ticket is part of how we picture Paris."

Ile-de-France Mobilites, which operates the metro's ticketing system, had wanted the pack of 10 tickets known as "carnets" to be gone by the first quarter of this year.

But then the Covid-19 pandemic erupted, and Russia's war in Ukraine, and with it a global shortage of microchips needed to make the smartcards to replace the tickets — whose sales still total 550 million per year, more than 50 tonnes of paper.

"We were in a hurry, but the chip crisis slowed us down," Laurent Probst, director-general at Ile-de-France Mobilites told AFP.

The operator has started cutting the number of metro stations that still sell carnets to nudge clients towards plastic cards, and many turnstiles can no longer read cardboard tickets.

'Change their habits'

As a result, the share of card tickets used on urban trips has dropped from more than two-thirds a year ago to well under half now. "Our customers are beginning to change their habits," Probst said.— AFP

Transferring Registered Pesticides

Registered pesticides distributing by **Myanmar Kete Co.,Ltd** in the territory of Myanmar for the product as following are transferring to **Myanmar Golden Byter Co., Ltd** as per mutual consent from both parties. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No
1	Chlorfensu	Chlorfenapyr 10% SC	P2020-4869

Myanmar Golden Byter Co.,Ltd
No.125-127, Kha 11st, Myoe Thit (A+B) Quarter, Inn Sein Township, Yangon.

Transferring Registered Pesticides

Registered pesticides distributing by **Myanmar Byter Agro Tech Co.,Ltd** in the territory of Myanmar for the product as following are transferring to **Myanmar Kete Co., Ltd** as per mutual consent from both parties. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No
1	Dami	Azoxystrobin 200g/l + Difenoxonazole 125 g/l SC	P2018-4370
2	Hex	Hexaconazole 10% SC	P2018-4346
3	Soldier 48 SL	Glyphosate Salt 480g/l SL	F2021-3268

Myanmar Kete Co.,Ltd
No.125-127, Kha 11st, Myoe Thit (A+B) Quarter, Inn Sein Township, Yangon.

Transferring Registered Pesticides

Registered pesticides distributing by **Myanmar Golden Byter Co.,Ltd** in the territory of Myanmar for the product as following are transferring to **Myanmar Byter Agro Tech Co.,Ltd** as per mutual consent from both parties. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No
1	Byter Fruitful 3 EC	Gibberellic Acid 3% EC	P2018-4176
2	CR 7	Triacontanol 0.1 % ME	P2018-4174
3	Hexa Suyan 5 SC	Hexaconazole 5% SC	P2018-4221
4	Byter Kaung Myan	Matrine 0.5 AS	P2020-4965
5	Byter Changer 10 SP	Mepiquat chloride 10% SP	P2018-4175
6	Byter Shal One	Clothianidin 10% + Pymetrozine 40% WP	P2021-4696

Myanmar Byter Agro Tech Co.,Ltd
No.125-127, Kha 11st, Myoe Thit (A+B) Quarter, Inn Sein Township, Yangon.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Russian parliament backs Putin's annexation bill

RUSSIAN lawmakers on Monday voted unanimously in favour of legislation to annex four regions of Ukraine, rubber stamping a move that escalates the conflict and was already approved by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Members of the Kremlin-loyal lower house of parliament, the State Duma, all voted to incorporate Donetsk, Lugansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia with no abstentions or votes against the annexation, its website showed.

Putin last Friday presided over a grand ceremony at the Kremlin during which he signed agreements with the Moscow-installed leaders of the four regions to become subjects of the Russian Federation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is seen on a screen set at Red Square as he addresses a rally and a concert marking the annexation of four regions of Ukraine Russian troops occupy - Lugansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, in central Moscow on 30 September 2022. **PHOTO / AFP**

Ukraine responded by officially lodging an application with the US-led military alliance NATO for membership and said it would never negotiate with Russia as long as Putin was in power. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, addressing parliament, appealed to lawmakers to back the bill to defend Russian language, culture and borders.—AFP

North Korea defends Russian annexation of Ukraine land

NORTH Korea voiced support Tuesday for Russia's annexation of areas of Ukraine that its troops occupy, and accused the US and its allies of acting like a gangster by leading a drive at the UN against Moscow's behaviour.

Last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Moscow had annexed four areas of Ukraine which held Kremlin-organized referendums on land seized by Russia's military.

The United States and other Western countries have called those referendums shams carried out at gunpoint and vowed never to recognize the annexation.

But North Korean Foreign Minister Jo Chol Su defended those referendums on joining Russia as perfectly legitimate and "held in keeping with the UN Charter laying down the principles of the equality of peoples", the state-run KCNA news agency said. North Korea is an ally of Russia.—AFP

Elon Musk in row with Zelensky over Russia 'peace plan'

US billionaire Elon Musk was embroiled in a social media spat with Ukrainian officials including President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday over his ideas on ending Russia's invasion.

Musk sparked the controversy on Twitter by proposing a peace deal involving re-running under UN supervision annexation referendums in Moscow-occupied Ukrainian regions, acknowledging Russian sovereignty over the Crimean peninsula and giving Ukraine a neutral status.

The Tesla and SpaceX founder created a poll to let his more than 107 million followers vote on the idea.

Zelensky responded with a Twitter poll of his own, asking: "Which @elonmusk do you like more?" with the options "One who supports Ukraine" and "One who supports Russia".

Kyiv's ambassador to Germany Andriy Melnyk replied bluntly: "My very diplomatic response (to Musk) is to get lost." Ukrainian presidential aide Mykhaylo Podolyak suggested a "better peace plan" under which Ukraine took back its territories including Crimea, Russia was demilitarized and denuclearized and "war criminals" faced an international tribunal.—AFP

Relatives of Ukrainian prisoners involved in the battle of the Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol, attend a demonstration demanding to speed up their release with Russia, downtown Kiev, on 1 October 2022. **PHOTO: DIMITAR DILKOFF / AFP**

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Bestseller or dark horse for 2022 Nobel Literature Prize?

THE Swedish Academy will on Thursday announce the 2022 winner of the often-criticized Nobel Literature Prize, with the award committee known for its penchant for spotlighting lesser-known writers over bestselling authors.

In the past two years, the 18-member Academy has bestowed the prestigious prize on US poet Louise Gluck and Tanzanian author Abdulrazak Gurnah, two writers whose work had not been widely translated and was not known to the broad public — or even some publishers.

Books by Tanzanian-born novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah are on display at the Swedish Academy in Stockholm after the author was announced as the winner of the 2021 Nobel Prize in literature. **PHOTO: JONATHAN NACKSTRAND / AFP/ FILE**

"After last year, I think it's maybe even a bit harder to guess" who could win this year, admitted Lina Kalmteg, literary critic for public broadcaster Swedish Radio, recalling the "total surprise" in the studio when Gurnah's name was read out last year.— AFP

32 children died in Indonesia stadium disaster

AT least 32 children died in Indonesia's stadium disaster, an official said Monday, as the government ordered police to identify the "perpetrators" of one of the deadliest disasters in football history.

The tragedy on Saturday night in the city of Malang saw a total of 125 people killed and 323 others injured after officers fired tear gas in a packed stadium to quell a pitch invasion, triggering a stampede.

Dozens of children caught in the chaos lost their lives, an official at the women's empowerment and child protection ministry told AFP on Monday.

"From the latest data we received, out of 125 people who died in the accident, 32 of them were children, with the youngest being a toddler age three or four," said Nahar, who like many Indonesians only goes by one name.

As anger mounted against police, Indonesia's chief security minister Mahfud MD announced that a task force had been formed for an investigation.—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

N Korean missile flies over Japan for 1st time in 5 years

A large screen in Tokyo's Akihabara area shows news on 4 Oct 2022 that a ballistic missile fired by North Korea has flown over Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO**

NORTH Korea on Tuesday fired a ballistic missile over northeast Japan, the first it has sent across the Japanese archipelago in nearly five years, just days after launching missiles towards the Sea of Japan despite an international outcry.

Japan's Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada told reporters that the missile flew 4,600 kilometres, the longest distance ever for an intermediate-range or longer one fired by North Korea, reaching an altitude of 1,000 km.

White House National Security Council spokeswoman Adrienne Watson said in a statement that according to a US assessment North Korea launched a "long-range" missile.

Hamada said the missile flew over Japan for around one minute and landed outside the country's exclusive economic zone some 3,200 km east of the nation in the Pacific Ocean, adding there were no reports of damage to aircraft or ships.

The missile could have been a Hwasong-12 intermediate-range ballistic missile, which Pyongyang has fired four times in the past, Hamada said.

It is the seventh time North Korea has launched a missile over Japan. The last occasion was in September 2017.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno lambasted North Korea's action as an "imminent threat" to the region and the international community.—Kyodo

Trump sues CNN for defamation, may act against 6 January panel

IN a lawsuit filed in a US District Court in Florida, Trump accused CNN of waging a campaign of "libel and slander" against him because it "fears" he will run for president again in 2024.

"CNN has sought to use its massive influence — purportedly as a 'trusted' news source — to defame the plaintiff in the minds of its viewers and readers for the purpose of defeating him politically," Trump's lawyers said in the 29-page complaint. In a follow-up statement laced with outrage, Trump said Monday that "in the coming weeks and months we will also be filing lawsuits against a large number of other Fake News Media Companies for their lies, defamation, and wrongdoing," notably regarding coverage of the 2020 election.

The 76-year-old Republican also said his team "may bring appropriate action against" the congressional committee currently investigating the 6 January 2021 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters, saying the panel refused to probe "the massive Presidential Election Fraud" which he insists occurred.

Trump, who requested a jury trial, had a caustic relationship with CNN and other major news outlets like The New York Times during his term, branding them "fake news" and repeatedly raging against them on social media.

The former president, who has hinted repeatedly at another White House run, accused CNN in the lawsuit of involvement in a "concerted effort to tilt the political balance to the Left".

He said CNN has tried to "taint" him with a "series of ever-more scandalous, false, and defamatory labels of 'racist', 'Russian lackey', 'insurrectionist', and ultimately 'Hitler'".—AFP

In this file photo taken on 15 December 2015, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is introduced during the CNN presidential debate at The Venetian Las Vegas in Las Vegas, Nevada. **PHOTO: AFP**

Brazil heads for runoff vote with Bolsonaro buoyant

BRAZIL entered the final stretch of a deeply polarized presidential race Monday after an inconclusive first voting round put far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro in an unexpectedly strong position.

Bolsonaro, 67, garnered 43 per cent of Sunday's first-round votes compared to 48 per cent for leftist frontrunner Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva — a five-point difference that polls had predicted would be a much larger gap of 14 points. Ex-president Lula, 76, had appeared to be within arm's reach of taking the election in the first round with more than 50 per cent of the vote — but the race now heads to a 30 October runoff. Not only Bolsonaro surpassed expectations: many allies of his "God, country and family" brand of conservative politics also performed better than poll predictions in congressional and gubernatorial races.—AFP

Seeking to make a spectacular comeback, ex-president and frontrunner Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (L) failed to garner the 50 per cent of votes plus one needed to avoid 30 October runoff against far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro (R). **PHOTO: EVARISTO SA/ AFP**

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Far-right Trump backers on trial for Capitol riot 'sedition'

THE landmark sedition trial of five members of the far-right Oath Keepers opened Monday with prosecutors telling a jury the group mounted an "armed rebellion" at the US Capitol last year in a bid to keep Donald Trump in power.

Justice Department attorney Jeffrey Nestler said that Stewart Rhodes, the eyepatch-wearing former soldier and Yale law school graduate, knew exactly what he was doing when he led the militia's followers towards the Capitol on 6 January 2021.

Showing videos of the violent assault by dozens of group members dressed in military-style combat gear, Nestler said Rhodes directed them "like a general on the battlefield" as they sought to prevent 2020 election winner Joe Biden from being certified as the next president.—AFP

At least 15 dead in new Ecuador prison riot

AT least 15 prisoners died Monday in the latest unrest inside Ecuador's prison system, officials in the South American country reported. The agency that manages Ecuador's prisons, SNAI, gave the death toll in a statement which also said 21 people were injured in the clashes between inmates.

It had earlier announced that tactical units conducted operations to regain control of the facility, located in the Ecuadoran city of Latacunga. The prison houses about 4,300 prisoners and is one of the largest in the country.Violence in Ecuador's prisons, where drug gangs vie for power, is often carried out with knives and sometimes involves beheadings. The violence has left more than 400 prisoners dead since February 2021.—AFP

N Korean missile flies over Japan for 1st time in 5 years

PAGE-15

5 OCTOBER 2022
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

SPORT

Saudi to host Asian Winter Games in NEOM megacity

SAUDI Arabia was chosen on Tuesday to host the 2029 Asian Winter Games at a $500 billion futuristic megacity in the desert that planners say will feature a year-round winter sports complex.

"The deserts and mountains of Saudi Arabia will soon be a playground for winter sports," the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) said in a statement on the decision made during its general assembly meeting in Phnom Penh.

The Saudi bid was "unanimously approved", the statement said, noting that the megacity known as NEOM will be the first West Asian city to host the event.

First announced in 2017, NEOM has consistently raised eyebrows for proposed flourishes like flying taxis and robot maids, even as architects and economists have questioned its feasibility.

In July, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman unveiled plans for a project within NEOM known as The Line, two parallel mirror-encased skyscrapers extending over 170 kilometres of mountain and desert terrain.

The Asian Winter Games are slated to take place in Trojena, an area of NEOM "where winter temperatures drop below zero celsius and year-round temperatures are generally 10 degrees cooler than the rest of the region", according to the project's website.

Set to be completed in 2026, Trojena will include year-round skiing, a manmade freshwater lake, chalets, mansions and ultra-luxury hotels, the website says.

The Asian Winter Games include competitions for skiing, snowboarding, ice hockey and figure skating — 47 events in all, 28 on snow and 10 on ice, the OCA said.

Saudi Arabia has drawn criticism for alleged "sportswashing" — hosting high-profile boxing, Formula 1 and other contests to divert attention from its human rights record. —AFP

The Asian Winter Games include competitions for skiing, snowboarding, ice hockey and figure skating – 47 events in all, 28 on snow and 19 on ice, the OCA said. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

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.

Miss Universe Myanmar 2022 winner Zarli Moe to compete in 71st Miss Universe pageant

Miss Universe Myanmar 2022 winner Zarli Moe.

THE winner of Miss Universe Myanmar 2022, Zarli Moe, who will represent Myanmar, will compete in the 71st Miss Universe pageant to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, in January 2023.

Zarli Moe booked a ticket for the 71st Miss Universe pageant after winning the 9th Miss Universe Myanmar finals which were held in Yangon in August 2022.

The winner of Miss Universe Myanmar 2022, Zarli Moe, is a native of Bhamo, Kachin State, and will compete in the pageant abroad for the first time.

The Miss Universe Myanmar 2022 winner will compete in the world-class competition along with beauty queens from more than 80 countries. — Bala Soe/GNLM

India bans Olympic javelin thrower until 2025 for doping

INDIAN anti-doping authorities have suspended Tokyo Olympic javelin thrower Shivpal Singh for four years after he tested positive for a banned drug. Shivpal, India's second best javelin athlete after Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra, was tested out of competition in September last year.

Shivpal, who finished 27th in javelin qualifying at last summer's pandemic-delayed Games, tested positive for methandienone, a performance-enhancing steroid.

The 27-year-old's ban by India's anti-doping disciplinary panel comes into effect from his provisional suspension in October last year. It ends in October 2025, the panel said.—AFP

Shivpal, India's second best javelin athlete after Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra, was tested out of competition in September last year. **PHOTO: AFP**