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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.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing watches final match and awarding in SAC Chairman's Trophy Inter-Ministry Men's Football Tournament to mark Diamond Jubilee Independence Day



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents the trophy to the Ministry of Planning and Finance team at the event yesterday.

As a gesture of hailing the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day, the final match of the State Administration Council Chairman's Trophy Inter-Ministry U-25 Men's Football Tournament took place in

conjunction with the awarding ceremony at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon, and SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presented prizes to relevant winners and

teams.

In the final match, the Ministry of Planning and Finance team played against the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs. Both teams could put pressure on each other. In the 15th minute,

the Ministry of Planning and Finance started leading the match with an opening goal. But, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs got an equalizer by scoring a goal in the 19th minute. So, the match ended in a 1-1 draw

in the first half. Both teams conducted counterattacks on each other but the Ministry of Planning and Finance scored three more goals into the net of the opponent in the second half. So, the Ministry of Planning and Finance could lift the trophy with a 4-1 win over the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs at the final whistle.

SAC members U Mounghar, Jeng Phang Naw Taung, Daw Aye Nu Sein, U Khin Maung Swe and Mahn Nyein Maung presented honorary medals and cash awards to the best players in the respective places.

SAC member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun presented individual medals, trophies and cash awards to players of fourth-prize winning Ministry of Border Affairs, SAC member Admiral Tin Aung San, to third-prize winning Ministry of Home Affairs and SAC member General Mya Tun Oo, to second-prize winning Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs.

SAC Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo gave individual medals to champion Ministry of Planning and Finance.

The Senior General presented cash awards and a championship trophy to the Ministry of Planning and Finance and cordially greeted the players.

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Announcement of Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

9th Waxing of Pyatho 1384 ME
30 December 2022

AS it is necessary to continuously control infection of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), it is hereby announced that public requests, orders, notifications and directives (except for easing the restrictions) released by the Union-level organizations and Union ministries up to 31 December 2022 have been extended until 31 January 2023 for prevention, control and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Five National Objectives
of Diamond Jubilee
Independence Day

1. To ensure cementing the discipline-flourishing genuine multiparty democratic system and build the Union based on democracy and federalism;
2. To utmost strive for ensuring prosperity of the nation and food sufficiency as national work processes;
3. To build a better State and socioeconomic life in accord with the theme “Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal” focusing on interests of the State and ethnic national people;
4. To initiate national solidarity and peace of the Union with a firm vow;
5. To successfully hold the free and fair multiparty democratic general elections and emerge an electoral system in which all ethnic nationals would participate proportionately.

Public Notice for elimination of violence

1. SO called "CRPH", "NUG" and "PDF" terrorist groups are unlawfully committing killings of monks, teachers, civil servants and general people and looting under the pretext of saying "for the people".
2. Not rendering of encouragement, support and assistance to the "CRPH", "NUG" and "PDF" terrorists that are committing intimidations, killings and destructive activities could be construed as protecting lives and property of general public.
3. Giving information secretly relating to bearing of their arms, ammunition and terrorists to authorities could be tantamount to protecting lives and property of innocent people.

The people are urged to receive vaccination of Covid-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of Covid-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increasing of death rate based on the disease.

Tourists from ASEAN, western
countries visit Yepotegyi Village for
its traditional Myanmar hairstyles

YEPOTEGYI Village in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region, has become famous for its children who preserve the traditional “San-yit-wine” hairstyle (a style of hairdo with a top knot and a circular fringe) and the tourists from ASEAN countries, China, Japan, Korea and western countries visit there to observe their culture.



Village damsels are seen at the Myanmar traditional loom.

The Yepotegyi Village, San-yit-wine village as it is called, is located about seven miles northwest of Pwintbyu Township and the name “Yepotegyi” is derived from “Yezalotegyi” which refers to the lake in the form of a bird’s crop located on the east side of the village.

It is about three miles from Kyaung Kone Gyi village from Shautaw Village of Pwintbyu and about four miles from Kyaung Kone Gyi Village to Yepotegyi Village.

Yepotegyi Village is a village that hands down Myanmar’s traditional culture from generation to generation.

The boys and girls wear traditional topknot style with a circular fringe starting at five months



The Yepotegyi Village, San-yit-wine village as it is called, is located about seven miles northwest of Pwintbyu Township. Village children are pictured tackling each other in one of the Myanmar traditional games.

old and there are about 700 people who wear such hairstyle. There are five hairstyles such as “Oo-soon-phote” for infants, “Kyat-taung-si” for ones between the age of 3 and 4, San-yit-wine for ones between the age of 5 and 6, Japan’s “San-htauk” at the age of 16 and “Nauk-kauk” between the age of 17 and 18.

The San-yit-wine women’s organizations were formed in 2015. The town’s elders and villagers preserve their tradition-

al hairstyle. The visitors can pay homage to Ayeya Thukha Koetaungpyae pagoda (aka) YadanaU Pagoda which King Mani Sithu and the queen visited. Moreover, the village boasts pagodas, monasteries and lakes and preserve its traditions. Therefore, world travellers from ASEAN and western European countries pay a visit to Yepotegyi Village in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region. – Zeyar Htet (Minbu)/KTZH

Myanmar citizens to decide Myanmar’s affairs without external interference

“ENSURING peace and stability in the country is rather difficult as long as foreign involvement exists in our country’s internal affairs. Myanmar citizens, themselves are to decide the affairs of Myanmar. It is by no means possible to let other foreign countries interfere or decide. It must be the Myanmar citizens who are to decide the affairs of Myanmar.”

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the State Administration Council Meeting 4/2022 held on 12-5-2022)



Union Ethnic People. PHOTO BY SAI TUN NAY HLAING

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing watches final match and awarding in SAC Chairman’s Trophy Inter-Ministry Men’s Football Tournament to mark Diamond Jubilee Independence Day



The Senior General and dignitaries watch the final match yesterday.



FROM PAGE-1 With the aim of increasing the standard of Myanmar’s football sports and turning out talented footballers, the State Administration Council Chairman’s Trophy Inter-Ministry U-25 Men’s Football Tournament, organized by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, marking the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day, started on 16 December. In the final match held yesterday, the Ministry of Planning and Finance which won over the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs secured the championship trophy. — MNA/TTA

SAC members attend opening ceremony of Inter-Region/State traditional martial arts competition 2023 in Nay Pyi Taw

THE opening ceremony of the Inter-Region/State traditional martial arts (Myanma Thaing) contest 2023 marking Diamond Jubilee Independence Day was organized at Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium B in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The event was attended by State Administration Council members Daw Aye Nu Sein, Jeng Phang Naw Taung and U Shwe Kyein, Union Minister U Min Thein Zan of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, deputy ministers, officials from the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, President U Ye Myint and officials from the Myanma Thaing Federation (MTF) and managers, coaches and athletes.

The martial arts competition will be conducted from 30 December 2022 to 1 January 2023 and a total of 14 teams from regions and states will participate in the contest. — MNA/ MKKS

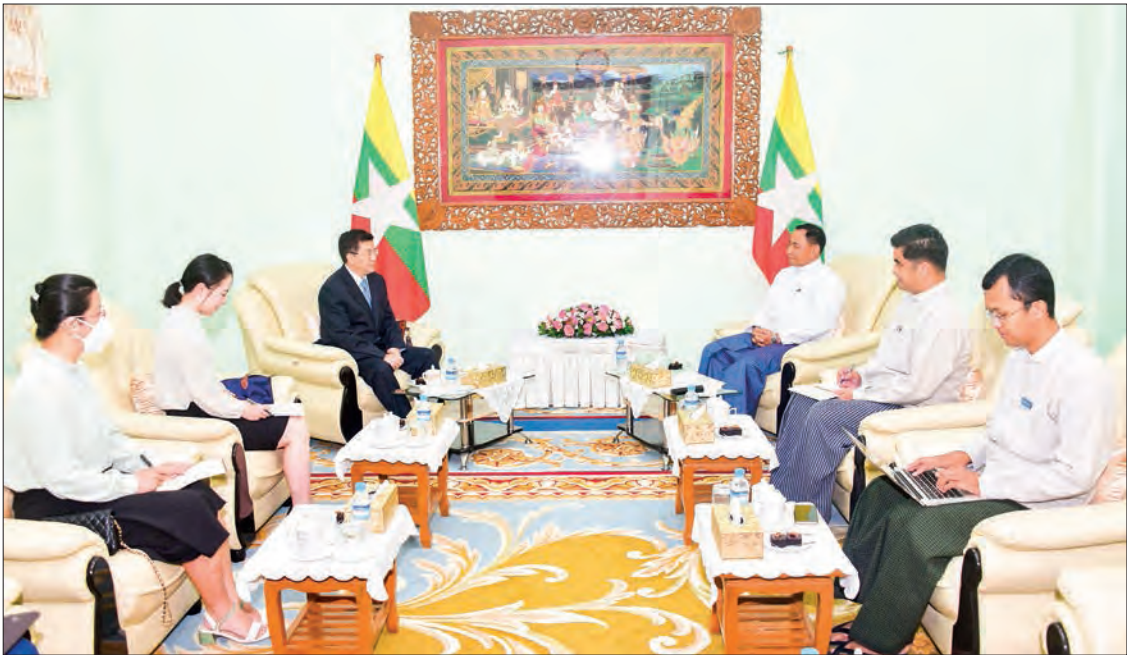


The Inter-Region and State Myanma Thaing competition 2023 kicks off yesterday.

Encouragement needed for emergence of good human resources

Only when human resources are qualified, will it gain qualified work forces. Hence, encouragement must be given to emergence of good human resources.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 8/2022 of the Union government on 1 November 2022)



SAC Member receives Chinese Ambassador of Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SAC Member Union Minister at the Government Office Chairman of National Solidarity and Peace-making Negotiation Committee NSPNC Lt-Gen Yar Pyae received the delegation led by Ambassador Mr Deng Xijun of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China at 10 am in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They discussed friendly bilateral relations between Myanmar and PRC and frankly exchanged views in connexion with the peace and stability of common border areas and the implementation of peace processes in Myanmar. They also exchanged gifts. — MNA/TS

MRTV to live broadcast New Year Countdown music concerts

THE New Year Countdown Music Shows were planned to hold at the Nay Pyi Taw Water Fountain Park, the People's Park in Yangon and the Mandala Thiri Sports Stadium in Mandalay on 31 December for the relaxation of people.

The show will be celebrated in abundance with the performance of famous singers, the new year countdown at midnight, the LED display of fireworks and the stalls of the Night Market.

Famous singers: Myanmar Pyi Thein Tan, D Phyo and Jamie Mai will perform with unplugged bands at the New Year Countdown Show in the Nay Pyi Taw Water Fountain Park. Similarly, film academy winners Yan Aung and May Than Nu, stereo singer Jet Mya Thaung and other artistes will entertain with the Great Nine Band at the People's Park in Yangon. Other well-known singers will present their performances at the Mandala Thiri Sports Stadium in Mandalay as well.

All performances were to be live broadcast on the Farmer's Channel, the Sports Channel and the Parliament Channel of MRTV respectively, from the start of the show at 6 pm until the end.

The completed and combined live shows will be broadcast on the MRTV HD Channel after the eight o'clock news. — MNA/CT

Fresher welcome of Naypyitaw State Academy for 2022-2023 academic year held



The fresher welcome event of the Naypyitaw State Academy for the 2022-2023 Academic Year is in action yesterday.

A welcome ceremony for students of the 2022-2023 academic year from the Naypyitaw State Academy was held at the multipurpose hall of the academy yesterday.

Students of the academy commenced the ceremony with

the "Naypyitaw State Academy" theme song and Pro-Rector (Admin) Dr Nu Nu Lwin extended her greetings.

Then, Pro-Rector (Training) Dr Soe Soe Aung explained the must-known facts of the training, rules and regulations. The

master of ceremonies made an introduction of professors/associate professors (department heads) and officials. The ceremony concluded successfully after students entertained their singing and dancing performances. — MNA/CT

MCB announces closure and opening of its branches

MYANMAR Citizens Bank- MCB notified its investors and shareholders on 28 December, that five branches were closed and three new branches were opened with the permission of the Central Bank of Myanmar.

In a notice to investors and shareholders, it was mentioned that the Zigon Branch located at No 132, Bogyoke Aung San Street, Yangyiaung Ward, Zigon Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region, and the Taze Branch located at No 1112/B, Wingaba (South), Paw

Oo Ward, Taze, were terminated on 7 December 2022.

In addition, Mandalay Branch 4 at No 305, between 35th and 36th Street, 80th Street, Mahaaungmyay Township was also closed on 25 March 2022. The bank declared that the Muse Branch 1 at No (AA-27/A), Muse 105th-Mile trade zone, northern Shan State, and Monywa branch opened on the first floor of Chindwin Yadana Market, Aungmyingala Ward, Sagaing Region, were shut down on 9 October 2020.

After the closure of five branches, the MCB stated that the Kamakyi Branch of Thingangyun Township, Yangon Region, the PyinOoLwin Branch, Mandalay Region and the Hinthada Branch, Ayeyawady Region were opened on 1 November, 19 August and 26 December respectively. — TWA/CT

An opening event was organized at the Kamakyi Branch, 48th Branch of Myanmar Citizens Bank on 1 November 2022.



Travellers can visit China without health code: Chinese Embassy



Beijing Daxing International Airport. PHOTO: XINHUA

THE Embassy of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar announced that tourists who will visit China are no longer required to apply for the health code starting from 8 January 2023.

For these trips, the RT-PCR test must be performed within 48 hours before the trip, and the answer will have to be negative. Cancelling some of the requirements related to disease prevention, including

the requirements previously set to apply for the health code. The result of the RT-PCR test must complete the exit/entry health declaration form of the People's Republic of China. — TWA/KZW

Curfew revoked temporarily during New Year's Eve night

THE Yangon Region government announced on 29 December that the night curfew issued under Section 144 of the Criminal Code has been temporarily cancelled on New Year's Eve on 31 December.

On the night of New Year's Day, 31 December, the

Yangon Region government organized a programme in Yangon. An International New Year's Countdown Party is planned to be held in the People's Square and fireworks will be set off at the time of the New Year. The stage shows will also be organized in a

proper manner.

Therefore, the curfew issued under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code will be temporary cancellation from midnight on 31 December to 4 am on 1 January 2023 and the public would be widely informed. — TWA/KZW

600 container ships arrive at terminals in Yangon Port and Thilawa Port as of Dec third week

A total of 600 container ships carrying many containers docked at terminals in Yangon between January and the third week of December 2022, Myanmar Port Authority's statistics showed.

The number of cargo ships entering terminals at Yangon Port and Thilawa Port stands at 49 in January, 48 in February, 50 in March, 52 in April, 54 in May, 53 in June, 49 in July, 55 each in August and September, 50 in October, 51 in November and 34 until 19 December respectively.

Additionally, 20 more cargo ships are slated to enter Yangon Port in the last week of December. Earlier, the larger ships had draft problems preventing their sailing on the Yangon River. The draft extension is up to 10 metres with the new navigation channel accessing the inner Yangon

River and the international ocean liners can access the inner port for now.

Myanma Port Authority and Yangon inner terminals are providing services to ensure the fast and reliable cargo handling and withdrawal of the containers. Smooth freight flow of agriculture, livestock, finished industrial goods and other goods helps support the economic mechanism of the country. The five terminals in Yangon Port and two terminals in Thilawa Port play a pivotal role in the seaborne trade.

After customs procedures by Myanmar Customs, exports are carried out under Myanma Port Authority by presenting the necessary documents. The imported containers are temporarily stopped at the terminals and customers can claim them for withdrawal upon tax payments. — TWA/EMM



A container ship docks at Yangon Port.



Year-end review of currency, gold and fuel oil market

Currency rate, gold price and fuel prices in summery

CURRENCY market volatility resulted in price swings in gold and fuel oil in 2022.

The World Bank did not issue a Gross Domestic Product growth forecast for Myanmar. Other than Myanmar, the GDP growth forecasts stand at 2.9 per cent for Thailand, 3.8 per cent for Laos, 4.5 per cent for Cambodia, 2.4 per cent for Timor-Leste, 5.9 per cent for Viet Nam, 5.1 per cent for Indonesia, 5.5 per cent for Malaysia and 5.7 per cent for the Philippines. Myanmar is the only country among the ASEAN that the World Bank did not issue a GDP forecast.

Myanmar was hit the hardest by the pandemic-stricken economy and the political changes. The interrelations among three essential key players in the economy (the USD, gold and fuel oil prices) diversified the country's economy. Stability of those markets matters to the economy.

line with the official directives, illegal foreign currency holding, illegal trade and taking legal actions against price manipulators.

Furthermore, the officials concerned will crack down on those people involved in charging a percentage for money withdrawals at the banks as shadow money.

People can file complaints with the committee regarding threats to financial stability, as per this notification.

In 2022, Myanmar's currency, gold and oil prices fluctuated wildly. The remarkable factors of the changes are revealed as follows.

Foreign exchange market

The Central Bank of Myanmar frequently issued directives and notifications this year with the impacts of the uncertainty of the foreign exchange market.

According to the provisions

Committee (FESC) and further directives are to be issued.

The statement mentioned changes in the CBM's reference rate will be further noticed. Those who fail to comply with those directives will face legal action under the Foreign Exchange Management Law.

The impacts of those notifications negatively affected the exporters depending on the export value transactions.

Afterwards, the directive released on 30 June said that transactions for the exports of agricultural products including corn, rice, bean and oil crops are to be made in dollars instead of Yuan-Kyat/Baht-Kyat.

Therefore, export earnings have to be exchanged for US dollars according to the reference rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar (K1,850). Nonetheless, there is a large gap between the regulated rate and the unauthorized rate of the US dollar. Consequently, it weighed on agricultural exports and exports drastically fell compared to the previous years.

Of agricultural products exported to China through cross-border posts, rice and broken rice exports are given green light to proceed with Yuan as before. According to the US dollar policy, 65 per cent of earnings must be exchanged for local currency at the CBM's reference foreign exchange rate, while exporters can use 35 per cent of export earnings or transfer or sell them to Authorized Dealers or others with an over-the-counter rate within one month. Rice export was excluded from that restriction.

The US dollar was valued at only K1,900 in early 2022. Then, Kyat depreciation hovered and weakened at K3,000 in the grey market. Therefore, the relevant authorities also interrogated some gold traders and currency exchange operators in end-July.

Thereafter, the CBM made the four-month fixed rate of K1,850 hike to K2,100 on 5 August.

To strengthen the domestic currency in the local forex market, the CBM set the currency trading band at 0.3 per

A sign of a petrol station shows fuel prices.



cent for the Kyat to fluctuate between these two specified upper and lower exchange rates for transactions, selling or buying, according to a directive issued by the CBM on 10 August 2022.

Therefore, financial institutions including banks and informal money exchanges set a dollar value of K2,100 for buying and K2,106 for selling.

Nonetheless, those rates are not effective in trading for now.

Despite the CBM's notifications, a dollar value hit an all-time high of over K4,500 in the grey market at the end of July. The prices of pharmaceuticals, commodities, consumer goods, raw materials and other imported goods inflated, triggering a shortage of medicines and some important items.

The CBM practised foreign exchange intervention to steer its own currency value and sold the US dollar from the state's reserve funds at an auction rate for the edible oil, fuel oil and medical sectors. Thanks to the CBM's intervention, the Kyat-US dollar exchange rate declined to K2,850 at the end of the year.

Gold market

Domestic gold prices moved up and down this year along with instability in the currency market.

Gold export came to a halt owing to the restriction of international flights amid the pandemic. The price of gold was only K1,820,000 per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in early 2022.

The gold price had a bumpy ride because of the chaos in the foreign exchange market.

In a bid to end the black market and stabilize the volatile prices, Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association urged the members and gold traders to seek a business licence for gold shops and licence for gold bar transactions and it will take action against those unauthorized dealers involved in online trade platforms under the existing laws, accord-

ing to its statement released on 17 May.

Additionally, the CBM released a statement on 3 April 2022 that gold transactions were to be made depending on the reference exchange rate (K1,850) to control the price rally.

YGEA called for an urgent meeting on 8 April. The meeting determined to carry out gold transactions depending on the CBM's reference exchange rate. However, it has not come into force yet.

The local gold price correlates with the global gold spot price and foreign exchange market.

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 declared the sales of gold coins weighing one tical, 0.5 tical and 0.25 tical through state-run media on 2 September. The gold coins have been on sale at Nay Pyi Taw's Gems Emporium from 5 September, except on public holidays.

The sales have expanded to new locations in the Yangon and Mandalay regions in addition to Nay Pyi Taw.

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 in the afternoon of 14 September in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, the governor of the CBM remarked on the further coordination of the departments concerned, gold bar transactions to be made with the banking system and operations of the banks, further support of the ministries concerned and the CBM to achieve price stability, and further cooperation between gold businesspersons and the officials.



Gold bars were sold out.

As a result of this, under the guidance of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market was formed on 17 December 2021 as gold and currency market stability plays a crucial role in the trade facilitation.

The objectives of the committee are inspecting and prosecuting market manipulation, checking if there is compliance with payment rules or not in the domestic market, and proceeding against those unscrupulous traders who intend to interfere with the free and fair operation of the market under the existing laws, by-laws and regulations in

stipulated in Sections 11, 12 and 13 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, all the foreign currency earned by locals has to be exchanged for local currency at the Central Bank of Myanmar's reference rate by opening the accounts at the authorized dealers (ADs) in the country within one working day, according to the notification released on 3 April 2022.

The reference exchange rate for the US dollar was set at K1,850. The aforementioned notification is effective for all foreign currency accounts opened at the ADs before 3 April 2022.

From 4 April, outward remittance is to be undertaken through the ADs under the approval Foreign Exchange Supervisory



Year-end market outlook of Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre

THE prices of rice, edible oil, onion, chilli pepper, sugar and jaggery hit an unprecedented record high this year.

Similarly, the prices of related food groups also inflated. When the prices of commodities declined, the food prices did not show a price retreat. Those traders in possession of goods reaped a handsome profit amid the fresh peak in prices rather than the growers.

Rice

The low-grade rice price rocketed from K32,000 in early January 2022 to K48,000 per bag in December. However, new monsoon low-grade rice fetched only K42,000 per bag. The broken rice exported to foreign markets increased from K28,000 to K38,000 in December. In the second half of 2022, the price of broken rice hit a peak of K40,000 per bag. The price of sticky rice also surged from K60,000 per 102-pound bag in early 2022 to K95,000 in November and then, dipped to K80,000-85,000 per bag in December.

In early 2022, the price of high-grade Pawsan from the Shwebo area was only K43,500 per bag while those from Pathein and Myaungmya areas were priced at K45,000 per bag. In September, the prices rocketed to K70,000 for Pathein-Myaungmya Pawsan and K95,000 for Shwebo Pawsan. In December, new Pawsan rice was worth K64,000-70,000 per bag depending on the producing areas.

Palm oil

The palm oil wholesale reference price slipped from K4,450 to K4,360 per viss in December.

In March 2022, the original price of palm oil was K6,445 per viss if it was calculated on the dollar exchange rate at K1,787. The reference price was set at



Bayintnaung wholesale centre.

K6,575 per viss. The wholesale market price was K70,000 per viss.

From mid-2022, the reference price was issued on Mondays depending on the imported palm oil prices. The reference price increased to K5,815 per viss in the last week of June and then dropped to K3,525 per viss in early August. The reference price was set at K4,360 per viss at the end of December, while the delivery order price was K5,150.

The market prices are way higher than the reference price. The palm oil price rocketed to K9,500 per viss in August. The wholesale market price of palm oil fluctuated between K4,500 and K9,500 per viss in 2022. The wholesale prices of peanut oil stood at K6,000 per viss in early 2022, K13,000-K14,000 in August and K9,500 in December.

Pulses

The new black gram price was approximately K1.3 million per tonne in early 2022 and the price rose to K1.7 million in December. The price hit the highest of K2.1 million on 31 August.

Similarly, the price of pigeon peas rose from K1.2 to K1.7 million per tonne in December. It soared to K2.175 million per tonne on 19 September.

The price of chickpeas that is highly consumed in the domestic market slightly moved up to K4,050-K4,250 in December from K2,950-K3,050 per viss in early 2022. It hit a record price of K4,400-K4,700 per viss in mid-September. Also, the price of green gram (Shwewah variety) slightly decreased to K2,830-K3,000 in December from K2,950-K3,200 per viss. In early September, they were priced at K3,165-K3,500 per viss.

Onion

The wholesale prices of onions moved in the range between K800 and K1,050 per viss in early January 2022 depending on the size and varieties. The price data showed a three-fold increase of K2,400-K2,800 per viss in December. The highest price of old summer onion was K5,100 per viss on 2 December.

Early entry of fresh monsoon onions in November oc-

curred in the market. There has been no entry of old summer onions to the Yangon market since the second week of December. The prices of onion stood at K4,800 per viss from the Myittha area and K4,400 from the Myingyan area.

Garlic

The prices of garlic from Shan State (Aungban area) hit a five-year high of K3,700-K5,000 per viss on 20 December. The lowest prices were K1,500-K3,000 per viss in early December.

Meanwhile, Kyukok garlic price hit the highest of K7,000 per viss on 8 March. The price declined to K2,600-K2,800 in the last week of June and K3,400 per viss at the end of 2022.

Potato

The wholesale prices of potatoes were K1,800-K2,100 per viss of Shan potato and K1,650 for Chinese potato in early 2022, whereas the price is relatively the same as K1,700-K2,100 per viss of Shan potato and K1,750-K2,250 per viss of Chinese potato.

On 14 September, Shan potatoes were priced at K1,500-2,300 per viss and Chinese potatoes were valued at K2,450-K2,500 per viss. At the end of 2022, the supply of Chinese potatoes outstripped the entry of Shan potatoes.

Jaggery, sugar

This year, the prices of sugar and jaggery climbed to the fresh peaks in history. When the sugar mills are running, the prices do not usually go up. In December 2022, the wholesale price of sugar hit K2,620 per viss.

The prices were estimated at K2,000 per viss of sugar and K1,950-K2,750 per viss of jaggery in early 2022. On 21 September, the maximum prices were K2,550 per viss of sugar and K3,700-K3,750 per viss of jaggery.

Tamarind

Only the prices of tamarind remained unchanged in 2022, ranging from K2,000 to K2,900 per viss in January and the prices stood at K1,900-K3,200 per viss at December-end.

Chilli pepper

The chilli pepper was recorded with the highest fluctuation in 2022. The price tremendously jumped to K31,000 per viss of bell pepper, K20,000 per viss of Moehtaung variety and K21,500 per viss of long chilli pepper processed in cold storage.

In early January, Moehtaung chilli pepper was priced at K8,000, while long chilli pepper from delta regions is valued at K5,000 and bell pepper was valued at K8,500-K9,500 per viss. At the end of the year, the fresh supply of new chilli peppers drove the prices down to K13,500 per viss for long chilli peppers, K12,000 for Moehtaung variety and K14,000 for bell pepper. — TWA/EMM

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

OPINION

Define politics based on various missions for all

IF POLITICS can be dubbed as a war, it is a similar act of using political techniques based on hostility to persuade those from the opposition into following the influence of a status.

The word politics can be defined into two kinds. One of the two emphasizes all activities of the people on a daily process relating to the national cause which is concerned with all walks of life. One definition of politics expresses the activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the debate between political parties grasping the State power.

In this regard, party politics is very busy with so many branches to tackle the problems such as applying various techniques to coerce the opposition parties to place their acts under pressure. Especially, the ruling party primarily handles propaganda and psychological warfare to be able to influence the opposition in all aspects.

The moves of propaganda are based on various attitudes, some of which are based on hostility and some of them focus on taking upper-hand positions, aimed to manipulate those from the opposition forces. Moreover, psychological warfare especially leads to strategic plans for the purpose of governing the country and cementing the position of the ruling party in addition to making preparation to fence the possible moves of armed forces or civil societies.

In party politics, any ruling party applies techniques to suppress the opposition forces not keep abreast of the government. In this regard, the ruling party may pose fear to their rivals to be weak in the opposition's movements. On the other hand, the ruling party gives priority to serving the interests of the State and the people by creating a proper

way for the development of the nation with posing pressure on other opposition forces not to destroy its political programmes.

As such, it can be said that the word politics depends on endeavours to influence rivals in the political arena, posing pressure on the opposition in the economic trend and handling the strategic preparations to emphasize diplomatic relations. The politics are similar to the military operations not because it kills anyone but because it eliminates all rivals.

The finalized mission of political war aims to change the attitudes of the oppositions and their functions in order to take an upper-hand position in the interests of a country without the need to deploy military power. In fact, the political war is a debate to make friends happy as well as rivals downhearted.

Prosperous and Happy New Year 2023: Essential Health and Peace

By Dr Than Lwin Tun

AUSPICIOUSLY, we are here again with a tremendous article on New Year 2023 Wishes. If you like to know what we have in our tools then give this article a decent read. First of all, we would like to wish you a very prosperous and happy new year. The New Year is all set to make its impressive entry in the near future and we are here to talk extended, but exciting about it.

We are here today especially to create our readers' New Year absolutely special. The Happy New Year 2023 Wishes that we are going to present in this particular article will definitely confound you to the heart. It is common for all of us to exchange wishes for the New Year.

The first day of the New Year is by far one of the most inspiring holidays of all. It is also the perfect time to connect with loved ones and wish them a happy 2023. It's a thoughtful wave and can happen in all manner of ways, from a quick phone call to sending off a card or even a sweet text. Here, we've rounded up some heartfelt New Year wishes in the hopes that they'll make it that much easier to reach out to your loved ones.

What is the role of Health in peacebuilding

Health interventions are particularly well-suited for peacebuilding because caring for the sick and injured is considered both a neutral activity and a universal good. Health is often seen as a common goal for all sides of a conflict, capable of aligning warring factions towards a shared perspective.

Health and peace are closely linked, and one cannot have one without the other. Although health and peace are desirable conditions, we human beings often prevent our best intentions to achieve and maintain them. The conflict has profound impacts on human health. In addition to direct consequences, including the fact that 90 per cent of all deaths related to recent conflicts were among civilians, the conflict has several indirect consequences, including long-term physical and psychological adverse health effects,



damage to the social fabric and infrastructure of society, displacement of people, damage to the environment, drainage of human, financial, and other resources away from public health and other socially productive activities, and fostering of a culture of violence. Many public health issues can be both a consequence and a cause of conflict, including infectious diseases, mental health disorders, the vulnerability of population groups, disparities in health status within and among countries, and the weakening of human rights. We, all health professionals, can promote peace in many ways and facilitate this work by demonstrating our values, vision, and leadership.

Renewed thinking and galvanized action are central to bringing peace and health to fragile and conflict-affected environments. With COVID-19 offering a potential opportunity to rebuild social cohesion and bring communities together, we can mitigate the spread of the virus, recover and do better moving forwards.

The determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. Political decisions and ideologies are strong determinants of health and have an impact on health policies at all levels. In the World Health Organization-WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region, where conflicts and humanitarian crises affect more than half the countries, political determinants including peace play an important

role in health-related decisions at both the community and service delivery levels.

The fundamental importance of peace for development is recognized in Goal 16 of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in the WHO Constitution of 1948, in the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion of 1986 and, more recently, in WHO's 13th General Program of Work, 2019-2023. However, in practice, a narrow view of health focused on preventing and treating disease has largely prevailed in public health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated deep existing injus-

tices in societies, highlighting socio-economic, health and gender inequalities and a lack of trust in institutions. It has further strained already-compromised health systems in fragile and conflict-affected settings. At the same time, however, it offers an opportunity to address underlying inequities by looking at health holistically, as envisioned in the WHO Constitution. Decisive leaders are increasingly acknowledging and acting upon this in responding to COVID-19. In countries where people have suffered from the absence of peace for years, there are new instances of collaboration among opposing parties, demonstrating that health

can be a platform to create greater understanding and cooperation. COVID-19 thus offers a potential avenue to rebuild trust and social cohesion, bring communities together to mitigate the spread of the virus, and recover and build back better.

Peace promotion or peacebuilding is complex and deeply political, making it challenging for the health community to undertake. But the COVID-19 pandemic has given health unprecedented attention while also highlighting the need to embrace the concept of holistically acting on the determinants of health.

Health for Peace

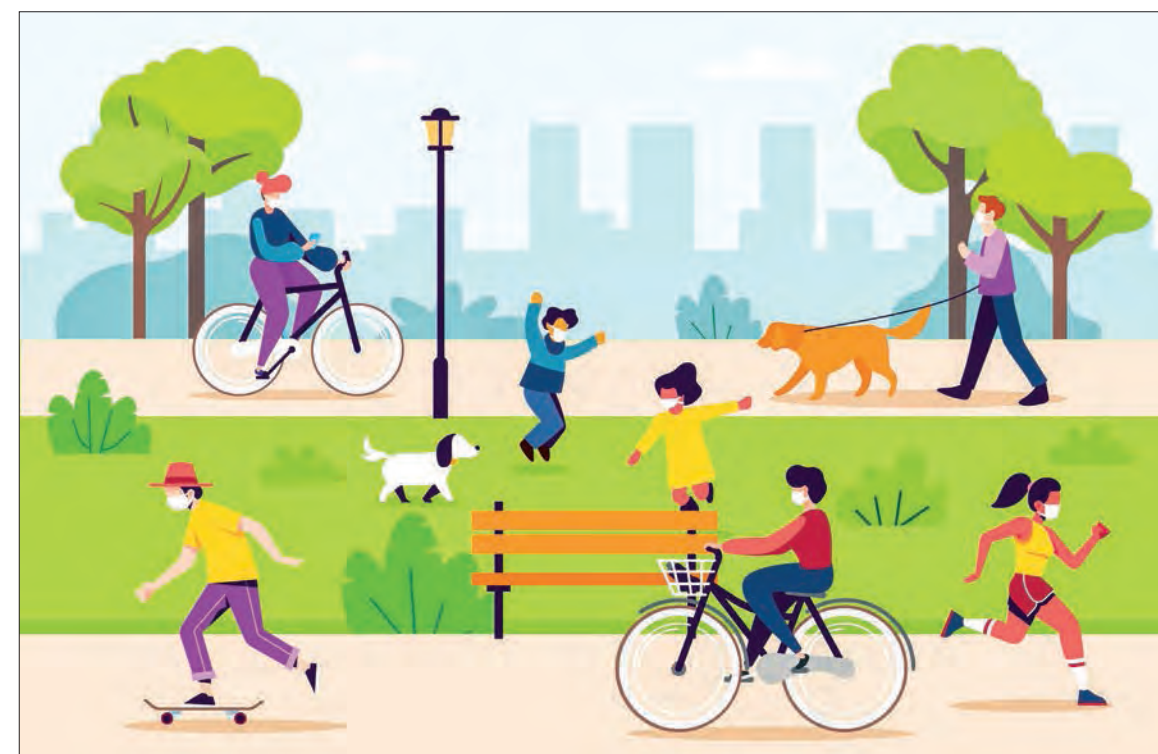
Recognizing the need to act on peace as a determinant of health, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in collaboration with interested member states and partner organizations, launched the Health for Peace initiative in 2019. The initiative is inspired by the WHO's strategic framework for health and development in the region, Vision 2023, and guided by the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals and the General Program of Work. Its central premise is

that health programs can achieve their primary health objectives and, in the process, contribute to building peace by fostering trust in institutions, facilitating health cooperation and improving social cohesion. The idea of health as a bridge to peace is not new; the Pan American Health Organization led a similar initiative in the 1980s.

It is a massive undertaking to realize Health for Peace initiative in a complex and emergency-affected region such as the Eastern Mediterranean. The WHO's implementation approach is therefore multifaceted and gradual. It involves gathering evidence on the links between health and peace, promoting advocacy, nurturing partnerships and building capacity. Current evidence on the contribution of health to peace is inconclusive. Health for Peace Initiative is addressing this by investigating conflict and related determinants through the WHO's Regional Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. Peace needs partnerships and vocal advocates in the health community. With the pandemic putting health in the spotlight, we need to renew our thinking and stimulate action on peace as a determinant of health in fragile and conflict-affected environments. Better health and well-being for people in these societies is possible if the health community strongly believes in, speaks and acts for health as a bridge to peace. So, peace is fundamental to public health development and future aspirations.

Last, but not least we hope and wish that in this New Year 2023, may you have a deep understanding of your true value and that every day is the best day in the year.

Reference,
-<https://www.globalgovernance-project.org/peace-the-fundamental-determinant-of-health>
-Croatian Medical Journal, 01 Apr 2002, 43(2):114-116
-www.who.int/initiatives/who-health-and-peace-initiative



Health and peace are closely linked, and one cannot have one without the other. **ILLUSTRATION: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/ FREEPIK**

Study finds increase in obesity among three and four-year-olds during pandemic



The findings of a recent study suggest that during the Covid-19 pandemic an increase in obesity was seen in children between the ages of three and four. **ILLUSTRATION: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/ HEALTHLINE**

THE findings of a recent study suggest that during the Covid-19 pandemic an increase in obesity was seen in children between the ages of three and four.

The study, published in the European Journal of Public Health, is based on data concerning 25,049 children aged three to five who have undergone regular health checks at child health centres. The countries taking part were Dalarna, Jonkoping, and Sormland.

FullscreenPrevious studies in this area have often focused on children of school age or in countries with tighter restrictions than Sweden during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this country, activities at preschool and compulsory school (up to age 16) continued broadly as usual. The study was headed by Anton Holmgren, a research associate at paediatrics at Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, and Anna Falt, a researcher in child health and parenthood at Uppsala University.

Significant rise in BMI

The study documents a statistically significant rise in the BMI (body mass index) of three-year-olds during the pandemic. Among the girls, the proportion of obesity rose from 2.8 per cent before to 3.9 per cent during the pandemic. For the boys, the corresponding proportions were 2.4 and 2.6 per cent.

The proportion of three-year-old girls with what is usually classified as normal weight declined from 82.6 per cent before to 80.9 per cent during the pandemic. There was no corresponding change in normal weight status in the group of three-year-old boys.

Among the four-year-olds, there was a significant increase in BMI. Obesity rose in girls and boys alike: Overweight rose from 11.1 to 12.8 per cent of girls, while underweight boys fell from 2.0 to 1.4 per cent. The group of five-year-olds showed no BMI changes. BMI changes and socioeconomic status were found to be associated, most clearly among children in the most disadvantaged areas. There, the proportion of three- and four-year-olds overweight rose from 9.5 to 12.4 per cent, while the proportion with normal weight decreased.

More focused measures needed

Socioeconomic variables were measured using an established method, the Care Need Index (CNI), which classifies expected care requirements based on education level; the proportion of unemployed or in labour-market programmes; the proportion of single parents; and the proportion born outside the western world.

SOURCE: ANI

**FROM PAGE 6**

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

The 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 and Ayeyawady Farmers Development Bank (A Bank).

With an aim at reducing gold prices, the YGEA and Mandalay Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association sold gold bullion supplied by the executive members, the members, gold refinery shops and traders as well.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation sold three visses of gold ingots each in Yangon and Mandalay under the auction system on 6 October.

This move resulted in the gold price decrease of K2,697,000 per tical at the end of the year.

Despite the YGEA's reference price of K2,140,000 per tical, the market price still rocketed to

K2,697,000 per tical. There is a price difference of over K500,000 per tical between the reference price and the market price.

YGEA calculated the price depending on the Central Bank of Myanmar's reference exchange rate of K2,100, with some addition. The dollar was exchanged at K2,850 in the black market in the end-2022. Meanwhile, YGEA called for the gold shops in Yangon Region to sell pure gold at K2,530,000 per tical, according to its notification released on 30 October 2022.

Fuel oil market

In 2022, the fuel oil market went up and down along with the currency market.

Ninety per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. The domestic fuel price is highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss between the importers, sellers and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries.

Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices than Myanmar. However, Malaysia's oil sector receives government subsidies and the prices are about 60 per cent cheaper than

that of Myanmar. Every country lays down different patterns of policy to fix the oil prices. Myanmar also poses only a lower tax rate on fuel oil and strives for energy consumers to buy the oil at a cheaper rate.

Myanmar annually imports 6 million tonnes of fuel oil from foreign countries. As a result of this, the global crude oil prices and currency market conditions highly affected the fuel oil market.

In early 2022, the prices touched a low of K1,390 per litre for Octane 92, K1,440 for Octane 95, K1,375 for diesel and K1,385 for premium diesel.

Tracking the Kyat devaluation against the US dollar in the forex market, a fuel oil price rally happened.

The Ministry of Commerce in coordination with the Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association carried out a scheme to distribute fuel oil at fairer rates through the government-sponsored petrol station chains. And, the energy consumers could buy them in early 2022. The total volume of fuel oil that is sold at very cheap rates is equivalent to the amount that the oil importers directly purchased the foreign currency from the CBM.

The Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil is issuing the daily reference rate for oil to

offer a reasonable price to energy consumers. The reference rate is calculated as per the price index set by the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), shipping cost, profit margin, premium insurance, tax and other general costs.

The rates for regions and states other than Yangon are evaluated after adding the transportation cost and the retail reference rates daily cover on the state-run newspapers and are posted on the media and official website and Facebook page of the department on a daily basis starting from 4 May.

The committee is inspecting the fuel stations whether they are overcharging or not. The authorities are taking action against those retailers of fuel stations under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law 2017 if they are found overcharging rather than the set reference rate. The committee is steering the oil sector effectively not to have a shortage of oil in the domestic market and ensure price stability for energy consumers. In early August, some fuel stations in regions and states ran out of oil following the surging US dollar.

Some petrol stations were allegedly suspending fuel sales and setting limited sales on the possible shortage of fuel oil, sparking consumers' concerns and raising fuel prices. They seemed to take

advantage of the consumers' concerns for their benefits, according to the statement released by the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods on 16 August. The committee has assured adequate fuel supply until end-August. It is also working together with Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association to ensure a steady fuel supply for energy consumers to mitigate concerns, the statement mentioned.

The consumers can complain about the halt in fuel sales and limited sales through the contact numbers of the respective regions and states if they find those stations that violate the rules, the committee stated. Nonetheless, fuel prices continued to gain at K2,605 per litre of Octane 92, K2,670 for Octane 95, K3,245 for diesel and K3,330 for premium diesel at the end of August.

The CBM also announced on 31 August that it will provide more than US\$200 million through the foreign exchange market according to the decision made by Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee to ease the commodity inflation triggered by fuel price spike. Later, the fuel prices slightly declined. The year-end market data showed that the fuel prices stood at K2,010 per litre for Octane 92, K2,080 for Octane 95, K2,365 for diesel and K2,445 for premium diesel.—NN/EMM

Linde village residents of Ngaphe Tsp earn regular income through pineapple wine production



Pineapples are pictured at the wine production process workplace.

THE Linde Village in Ngaphe Township of Mibu District of Magway Region is located beside the Minbu-An road. The local Asho Chin people earn their annual income from pineapple plantations in addition to agricultural and perennial crops and manageable-scale production of pineapple wine, according to pineapple farmer Mai Mya Wutyi Aung.

The pineapple wine production processes are washing the pineapples, peeling them and chop them and putting them

into a pot or plastic box. Then, add the sugar to a similar weight to the pineapple and cover it. After four-month pineapple fermentation, it is converted into pineapple wine and is marketable. The taste of one-year-old or over two-year-old wine is better.

"The pineapple plants are grown on about 0.5 acre of land. There are about 1,000 pineapple plants. We sell fruits and wine with other fruits at the shops beside the road for over six years.

The pineapple season is from July and October. The

travellers come and buy here. A pineapple fetches K500 and one bottle of pineapple wine is between K1,000 and 1,500. We get about K20,000 per day. A pineapple field earns about a K1 million yearly," she said.

The pineapple and pineapple wine from Linde village is popular and the people buy them for donations/wedding ceremonies and also for presents. There are about three people who sell pineapple wine in Linde village. — Ma Yu (Ngaphe)/KTZH

**Daily newspapers
available online**

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

HEALTH/PANDEMIC
WORLD

China’s outbound tourism expects revival after COVID response shift

CHINA’S outbound tourism sector is expected to regain its vitality, with the country’s newly adjusted COVID-19 response lifting restrictions on Chinese citizens’ overseas trips and promoting cross-border personnel exchanges.

China will manage COVID-19 with measures against Class B infectious diseases, instead of Class A infectious diseases, according to a statement released by the National Health Commission on Monday.

The statement said outbound tourism for Chinese

citizens will be resumed in an orderly manner. Disease control measures targeting inbound travellers and imported cargo will also be lifted, it said.

Words expressing enthusiasm for traveling abroad quickly flooded China’s social networks, as early birds flocked to the country’s online travel platforms to search for ideal destinations and book flights. The search volume for outbound flight tickets and overseas hotels reached a three-year high just half an hour after the release of the statement, data

from online travel service provider Trip.com Group showed.

Other Asian countries are among the first ones set to be benefit from this wave of outbound travel.

Data from Trip.com Group showed that the number of orders for outbound flight tickets soared 254 per cent on the morning of Dec. 27, compared with the same period a day earlier. Singapore, Republic of Korea, Japan and Thailand were among Chinese tourists’ most popular destinations.

—Xinhua



A passenger poses for a photo with an airport mascot at Athens International Airport in Greece, on 22 Dec 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/MARIOS LOLOS

Belgian mayor urges Covid checks on Chinese tourists



Tourists visit the Grand Place in Brussels, Belgium, on 28 June 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHANG CHENG

THE mayor of Belgian tourist hub Bruges called Wednesday for Chinese visitors to face Covid tests or mandatory vaccine requirements after an explosion of cases in China, Belga news agency reported.

China on Monday said it would dismantle its tough border restrictions from 8 January, completing Beijing’s sudden pivot away from its stringent zero-Covid policy. The move has sparked jitters across the world, with Italy becoming the first country in the European Union to make tests mandatory for visitors from China. Bruges mayor Dirk De fauw told Belga that he was alarmed at the prospect of an influx of tourists from China to the city — which used to welcome up to 150,000 visitors from the country each year before the pandemic. “The infection rate is still very high. I think we have to work either with a vaccination certificate or with tests,” he said. —AFP

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Laos speeds up COVID-19 vaccination to meet target in 2022

THE Lao government is speeding up COVID-19 vaccination for children aged between five to 11 years and people who are still unvaccinated in order to meet the government’s target of 80 per cent full vaccination coverage by the end of 2022. According to a report issued on Thursday by the Centre of Information and Education for Health under the Lao Ministry of Health, new COVID-19 infections were continuing to be recorded in Laos and worldwide, and it is essential for everyone to get the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, followed by a booster dose, to strengthen immunity to the virus. —Xinhua

S Korea imposes restrictions on travellers from China over Covid surge

SOUTH Korea took steps on Friday to limit travellers from mainland China, imposing visa restrictions, testing requirements and limiting flights as Beijing grapples with a surge in Covid-19 infections. Seoul’s decision comes after countries including Italy, Japan, India and the United States announced their own measures, which they say are a bid to avoid importing new coronavirus variants from China. “Until the February next year, those entering (South Korea) from China will be required to undergo a Covid test before and after their arrivals,” Seoul’s Prime Minister Han Duck-soo said Friday. —AFP

Tunisia may see new COVID-19 wave in January: official

A Tunisian health official warned that the North African country may witness a new wave of COVID-19 infections at the beginning of 2023, the Tunis Afrique Presse (TAP) reported Thursday.

“Tunisians should ... get to strengthen immunity and prevent the (COVID-19) transmission in anticipation of an increase in infections in Janu-

ary 2023,” Riadh Daghfous, director-general of the National Centre of Pharmacovigilance, told TAP. Daghfous, also the president of the COVID-19 Scientific Vaccination Monitoring Committee, highlighted the importance of vaccination.

“A vaccination campaign against the Omicron BA4 and BA5 strains, currently dominant in Tunisia, will start this

week,” he said, urging people with chronic diseases or immunodeficiency, the elderly, and those who received the last dose of vaccine more than six months ago to get vaccinated. —Xinhua

People wearing protective face masks walk in Avenue Habib Bourguiba in the Tunisian capital Tunis. PHOTO: AFP/FILE



ECONOMY WORLD

Australia open to dropping WTO cases against China: report

AUSTRALIAN Trade Minister Don Farrell has signalled that Canberra is prepared to withdraw two World Trade Organization cases against China if the Asian power shows “goodwill” in dropping its trade bans, local media reported Thursday.

Ahead of his anticipated visit to China in February, Farrell was quoted by the media as saying that the Australian government is prepared to consider withdrawing the cases on wine and barley tariffs “on the basis that there’s some goodwill shown on both sides”.

“We’ve made it very clear to

the Chinese government that we would much prefer to sort out our differences on trade issues by discussion rather than arbitrations,” Farrell said, adding that the ball was in China’s court to open dialogue on the disputes.

According to the media, Farrell pointed out that if China dropped its trade sanctions against Australia, it would reduce one of the significant barriers for its bid to join the 11-member Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

He said that if China over-turned its trade bans against

Australia, it would also send a message to TPP countries, which remain unconvinced of Beijing’s commitment to free trade rules, prior to a decision on its application, the media said.

China has imposed a number of sanctions on Australian wine, barley and coal in recent years, after bilateral ties soured over a series of issues including human rights concerns and Canberra’s call for an independent investigation into the origins of COVID-19, first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

—Kyodo



China has imposed a number of sanctions on Australian wine, barley and coal in recent years. A bucket-wheel reclaimer stands next to a pile of coal at the Newcastle Coal Port, in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, on 12 October 2020. **PHOTO: SAEED KHAN /AFP**

World economy faces more pain in 2023 after a gloomy year



A man walks past a discount store in the city centre of Bradford in northern England. **PHOTO: AFP**

THIS was supposed to be the comeback year for the world economy following the Covid pandemic.

Instead, 2022 was marked by a new war, record inflation and climate-linked disasters. It

was a “polycrisis” year, a term popularized by historian Adam Tooze.

Get ready for more gloom in 2023.

“The number of crises has increased since the start of the

century,” said Roel Beetsma, professor of macroeconomics at the University of Amsterdam.

“Since World War Two we have never seen such a complicated situation,” he told AFP.

After the Covid-induced economic crisis of 2020, consumer prices began to rise in 2021 as countries emerged from lockdowns and other restrictions.

Central bankers insisted that high inflation would only be temporary as economies returned to normal. But Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in late February sent energy and food prices soaring.

Many countries are now grappling with cost-of-living crises because wages are not keeping up with inflation, forcing households to make difficult choices in their spending.—AFP

Maldives says economy has recovered to pre-pandemic levels

MALDIVIAN President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih said the island country’s economy, guided by the government’s sound economic policies and recovery measures, has successfully recovered to pre-pandemic levels this year.

The president expressed these views on Wednesday while briefing the media at the President’s Office about the progress of the administration’s socio-economic plans.

Noting that the financial burden of the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in eastern Europe on the Maldives’ economy had been heavy, Solih stated that his government’s sound economic policies and measures had led to substantial economic recovery. The Maldives’ economy is forecast to grow 12.3 per cent this year, while economic growth is expected to be at 7.6 per cent next year.

The president described the tourism industry’s recovery as the main reason behind the development, saying that tourist arrivals had also reached pre-pandemic levels this year.

The Maldives is also one of the 10 fastest-growing economies after the pandemic, while in 2021 and 2022 it was listed among the top five across the globe, according to the statement of the President’s Office.—Xinhua

Japan’s ‘Little Trains that Could’ battle for survival

IN the driver’s seat of a two-carriage train, Katsunori Takemoto puts on his white gloves and checks the antiquated gauges before setting out alongside cabbage fields in Japan’s rural Chiba.

Like many small railway lines across Japan’s countryside, the 60-year-old trains that ply this route are a loss-maker, but Takemoto has found a way to keep the business afloat.

With a combination of savvy marketing partnerships with pop stars and branded souvenirs, the president of the Choshi Electric Railway navigated the firm into the black in 2021, while helping promote the local region.

“I feel strongly that this is the mission of all local trains.

We want to serve as advertising vehicles for communities”, Takemoto told AFP.

“Towns without trains wither away. So rebuilding rural trains must be done as part of rebuilding communities.”

But the 99-year-old business he took over in 2011 is the exception rather than the rule in Japan, home to hundreds of loss-making rural rail lines.

Depopulation, car ownership, freight trucking and the Covid-19 pandemic have decimated revenues.

“If we leave things as they are and don’t do anything, it is clear to everyone that sustainable public transport systems will fall apart,” Transport Minister Saito said earlier this year.—Kyodo



Tiny two-carriage trains servicing rural areas, a legacy of Japan’s former economic boom, are now struggling to stay afloat. **PHOTO: AFP**

Global gas demand expected to decline by 65 bln cubic meters in 2022: Gazprom

THE world's demand for gas is expected to decrease by 65 billion cubic metres in 2022, with 55 billion cubic metres falling on the 27 European Union countries, head of Russian gas giant Gazprom Alexei Miller said on Wednesday. According to preliminary estimates, the decline in global gas demand in 2022 is equal to 65 billion cubic metres, and "55 billion cubic metres from these 65 billion fall on the 27 European countries," Gazprom said in a statement, citing Miller as speaking at a year-end meeting. Miller said 2022

turned out to be very difficult, with energy markets experiencing great changes, noting that at the start of the year, such changes could be described as extreme volatility, and by the end of the year, it became clear that the markets are undergoing turbulence.

According to preliminary long-term forecasts, global gas consumption would grow by 20 per cent over the next 20 years, he said, adding that in this context, Gazprom is reflecting on the future, the company's new projects and energy security in general. — Xinhua



A man fuels a vehicle at a gas station in Berlin, capital of Germany, on 11 May 2022. PHOTO: STEFAN ZEITZ/XINHUA

Surging UK energy bills spark tensions among tenants

BRITAIN'S cost-of-living crisis has turned into a bitter winter in households trying to keep their energy bills down: Some lecture flatmates for keeping the lights on. Others move to better heated homes. Common energy-saving measures also include not using heating during the day -- and buying an electric blanket instead of switching on radiators. It can be complicated for people in shared accommodation, with relationships complicated by different lifestyles

and salaries, which means they must compromise to lower their bills. "Everyone is conscious about not leaving lights on," said Joe, a 33-year-old schoolteacher who shares an east London home with five other people.—AFP

ExxonMobil seeks to block EU tax on windfall energy profits

US energy giant ExxonMobil filed suit Wednesday against the European Union seeking to block its temporary tax on oil firms' windfall profits, a company spokesperson said.

With energy prices soaring following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen announced in September the plan for major oil, gas and coal companies to pay a

"crisis contribution" on their elevated 2022 profits. Details later outlined a 33 per cent tax on profits for 2022, which are more than 20 per cent higher than the average for 2019-21.—AFP

Algeria offers Sahara tourists visas on arrival

ALGERIA will allow foreign tourists heading to its vast desert south to obtain visas on arrival, part of efforts to "promote tourism in the Sahara", the interior ministry announced Wednesday. In a statement, it said that "foreigners heading to the south of the country" who have tours booked with licenced local companies could obtain visas "on arrival at airports and land borders, instead of going through normal visa procedures". Algeria, Africa's biggest country by surface area, comprises a major chunk of the Sahara including nature reserves and prehistoric sites. It also boasts 1,200 kilometres (745 miles) of Mediterranean coastline and several historical cities. But the North African country hosts far fewer tourists than its neighbours, Morocco and Tunisia, relying instead on its vast oil and gas revenues.—AFP



Algeria will allow foreign tourists heading to its vast desert south to obtain visas on arrival, part of efforts to "promote tourism in the Sahara", the interior ministry announced Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V IAL 001 VOY.NO. (W141)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (W141)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-12-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/AWPT** 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 INTER ASIA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V TIAN EN 2 VOY.NO. (2208)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V TIAN EN 2 VOY.NO. (2208)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **01-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MKH** 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 RK SHIPPING & TRADING PTE LTD

Notice for Change of distributor

We, SHANGHAI E-TONG CHEMICAL CO.,LTD, would like to change the Distributor of the following products, which registered under Pesticide registration Board, Myanmar, from YONTA MYANMAR COMPANY LIMITED to SEINN LAE THWIN Co, LTD. If any objection or enquiry, please contact to Co-secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon from here to next(2)weeks.

Sr.	The Old Distributor	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration no.	The New Distributor
1.	YONTA MYANMAR Co.,Ltd	Yonta Biso	BISPYRIBAC-SODIUM40%SC	Provisional	P2022-5543	Seinn lae Thwin Co.,Ltd
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GLOBAL
AFFAIRS

Japan's imperial family eyeing social media to stay in touch

SHUNNING social media, Japan's imperial family has long been reluctant to open up about the daily lives of its members, but the year 2023 could be a turning point with the agency in charge of the family's affairs set to explore the potential use of social media platforms as part of a new approach to public relations.

With experts in agreement that an overhaul by the Imperial Household Agency of its communication style, including giving increased exposure to the family, is long overdue, the agency said in late December that it will set

up a formal public relations office in April after its budget request to hire more staff was approved by the Cabinet.

Currently, the agency only has a single website as a direct interface with the public, where it posts images and statements related to the public appearances of imperial family members, including Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, a certain period after they take place.

This approach contrasts sharply with the big online presence of European royal families, including the British royal family,

which, in addition to websites, has accounts on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, each with more than a million followers. All accounts are updated almost daily with images of royal family members making visits or meeting people. Some conservatives in Japan are opposed to shining more of a light on the lives of imperial family members and bringing the emperor, once deemed a god, too close to the people. Under the Constitution, his role is defined as being "the symbol of the state and the unity of the people of Japan". — Kyodo



Emperor Naruhito (C), Empress Masako (L) and their daughter Princess Aiko gather at the Imperial Palace in a photo taken on 21 December 2021. PHOTO: THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AGENCY / KYODO

Armenia lashes out at 'bystander' Russia over Karabakh blockade



Military vehicles of the Russian peacekeeping force move on the road outside Lachin on 29 November 2020, after six weeks of fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. PHOTO: KAREN MINASYAN/ AFP

ARMENIA on Thursday accused Russian peacekeepers of failing to protect ethnic Armenians in

the Nagorno-Karabakh region of neighbouring Azerbaijan and called for a multinational peace-

keeping force to step in.

"The behaviour of Russian peacekeepers is unacceptable to us. They have become silent bystanders (in Karabakh)", Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said.

Moscow has rebuffed the criticism.

Russia deployed peacekeepers in Karabakh under a ceasefire it brokered in 2020 to end a six-week war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the long-disputed enclave.

Earlier this month Armenia accused Azerbaijan of creating a humanitarian crisis in Karabakh by blocking the sole land link connecting the mountainous enclave to Armenia. —AFP

Dubai court authorizes jailed Brit's fraud extradition

A Dubai court Thursday authorized the extradition of a British national wanted over an alleged 1.7 billion euro tax fraud in Denmark, authorities said, ahead of a further ruling by a higher court.

Hedge fund trader Sanjay Shah was arrested in Dubai in June, but the emirate's Court of Appeal in September rejected an extradition request by Denmark.

The Court of Appeal overturned that decision on Thursday, according to the media office of Dubai's government.

"The Dubai Court of Appeal has issued a ruling to extradite Sanjay Shah, a British citizen, to Denmark... for alleged fraud and money laundering," it said in a statement.

Horizons & Co, a firm representing Shah, noted that "today's decision confirms that Mr Shah can be extradited from the UAE".

Shah will not be extradited immediately.

"We now have 30 days in which to appeal today's judgement in the Court of Cassation, the highest Court in the UAE", said Horizons & Co's Managing Partner Ali Al Zarooni. —AFP

RUSSIA - UKRAINE CONFLICT

Ukraine reports 'massive' Russian missile attack

UKRAINE was hit with "massive" Russian missile strikes across the country on Thursday, including in the capital Kyiv, the military said.

"29 December. Massive missiles attack... The enemy is attacking Ukraine from various directions with air and sea-based cruise missiles from strategic aircraft and ships", Ukraine's air force said on social media.

According to presidential aide Mykhaylo Podolyak, more than 120 missiles were fired. — AFP

Ukrainian missile lands in Belarus

BELARUS said a Ukrainian missile fell on its territory on Thursday, raising fears of the conflict spilling over, with the Moscow ally sending investigators to establish the cause of the incident.

President Alexander Lukashenko "was immediately informed", said a statement posted on a Telegram channel close to the presidency.

It said an S-300 missile from Ukrainian territory landed between 10 am and 11 am local time (0700 GMT and 0800 GMT), but gave no location.

According to two possible leads considered by the author-



According to two possible leads considered by the authorities, the missile either deviated from its trajectory or was shot down by Belarusian air defences. PHOTO: AFP

ities, the missile either deviated from its trajectory or was shot down by Belarusian air defences.

The statement said there was no information yet about possible injuries or casualties.

In November, a missile landed in a village in NATO member Poland and killed two people, also sparking concern the US-led alliance would be drawn into the conflict in Ukraine.

Russia denies having fired the missile, while Warsaw said it was likely caused by a Ukrainian air defence missile launched to intercept Russian attacks. —AFP

NEWS IN
BRIEF

Yoon wishes for return to best period of
S Korea-Japan relations

SOUTH Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has wished for a return to the period when his nation's relations with Tokyo were "at their best", the leader of Japan's junior ruling party Komeito said Thursday.

Following a meeting with Yoon in Seoul earlier in the day, Komeito leader Natsuo Yamaguchi told reporters that the South Korean president expressed a strong desire to improve bilateral ties, which have been damaged significantly by wartime labour issues.

Komeito is the junior coalition partner of the Liberal Democratic Party, headed by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who took office in October 2021.—Kyodo

30,000 flee ethnic violence in South
Sudan, says UN

ARMED raids in a region of South Sudan plagued by ethnic clashes have forced around 30,000 civilians to flee their homes, the UN's emergency response agency said Thursday as international partners demanded an end to the violence.

On 24 December armed men from Jonglei state, an eastern region beset by gun violence, attacked communities in nearby Greater Pibor Administrative Area, the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement.—AFP

Peruvian shamans gather
to make 2023 prophesies

ATOP a sacred hill in Lima, Peruvian shamans scatter coca leaves and flower petals while a snake named Maria slithers over posters of world leaders including Russia's Vladimir Putin and Brazilian president-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

It's the time of year that the shamans beat drums, chant, blow smoke and drink a potent hallucinogenic brew to make their divinations for the 12 months ahead.

What did they see on the proverbial cards for 2023?

The war in Ukraine will end. Brazilian football icon Pele will die. There will be "many dead" due to natural disasters in North America. And Lula will have a difficult start to his third presidential term.

"There will be peace (in Ukraine) this coming year, it will not go beyond August," shaman Cleofe Sedano told AFP after the vibrant ceremony.—AFP



Peruvian shamans warned 2023 would be a year of 'many dead' due to natural disasters in North America. PHOTO: AFP

Prayers and emotion in ailing
ex-pope Benedict's German
home region

THE declining health of former pontiff Benedict XVI has sparked a wave of emotion in the region of Bavaria where he was born, while the controversies that marked his time in office remain vivid for many.

A handful of faithful in the German town of Regensburg braved the early morning cold on Thursday to attend mass at the gothic cathedral, where a large portrait of the pope emeritus sits on the altar. "I am asking you to accompany Benedict on his final journey", Regensburg's auxiliary bishop told worshippers.

The homage to Benedict is particularly poignant in the medieval city on the banks of the Danube, where the former pope lived and worked at the local university for years. On Wednesday, current Pope Francis called on all Catholics to say a "special prayer" for his predecessor, whose health had worsened considerably in recent days.



A handful of faithful in Regensburg braved the early cold to attend mass at the cathedral, where a large portrait of the pope emeritus sits on the altar. PHOTO: AFP

Theologian

In Regensburg, everyone has their anecdote about the former pope, who taught at the university between 1969 and 1977 and came back regularly to visit his brother, the leader of the cathedral choir.

"He often came past our house", said Birgit Steib, 53, on her way out of the morning mass. A biologist by profession, she said she was "shaken" by the news from the Vatican, where Benedict still lives.—AFP

Amid tight security, Brazil hosts
'Lulapalooza' to toast Lula inauguration



Peruvian shaman with a poster of Brazil's soon-to-be President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. PHOTO: AFP

BRAZIL'S leftist icon Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva returns triumphant to the presidency Sunday after years out in the cold, with plans for a spectacular inauguration amid ultra-tight security.

Some 300,000 revellers and more than a dozen heads of state and government are expected to attend the swearing-in extravaganza in the usually tranquil

capital Brasilia.

Dubbed "Lulapalooza" on social media, the event will combine institutional rites with a mega concert gathering some of Brazil's biggest musical stars.

A failed Christmas Eve bomb attack had threatened to put a damper on proceedings, prompting a never-before-seen security deployment for a Bra-

zilian presidential inauguration.

Lula, 77, will officially become president for a third, non-successive, term after taking the oath with his vice-president Geraldo Alckmin at a ceremony in Congress.

But the moment his followers are waiting for is when he ascends the stage at Planalto palace, the seat of the presidency.

There, Lula is set to receive the presidential sash, a green-and-yellow silk band embroidered in gold and diamonds.

Normally, the new head of state receives the sash from his predecessor, but outgoing far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro — who has gone unusually silent since his electoral loss to Lula in October — has not said whether he would attend the ceremony.

Bolsonaro has not publicly accepted defeat nor congratulated Lula on his narrow victory.—AFP



‘Football in four letters’: Global media bows to ‘King’ Pele



In this file photo taken on 22 December 2010, Pele poses with his six champion medals during a ceremony in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. **PHOTO: AFP**

HIS face appeared on televisions around the world and dominated the homepages of news outlets everywhere as global media bowed to the late, great Pele, the undisputed “King” of football.

News organizations across the planet hailed the legendary Brazilian, who died Thursday at the age of 82 and was widely considered the greatest footballer to ever play the game.

To the Brazilian daily O Globo, Pele may have died, but he remained the “immortal king of football”.

The Folha de S Paulo quoted the late Brazilian poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade, who said: “The difficulty, the extraordinary, is not to score 1,000 goals like Pele — it’s to score one goal like Pele.”

Their obituary suggested

that while Edson Arantes do Nascimento — Pele’s birth name — may have passed on, “it isn’t true that Pele is dead”.

In Argentina — home of Diego Maradona and Lionel Messi, both also contenders for the title of greatest of all time — the Clarin remembered Pele as “a supreme symbol of football’s spectacle” and a “great among the greats”.

The Argentine sport daily Ole wrote: “Beyond the rivalry that exists between Argentina and Brazil, no one can doubt that Pele was one of the greatest footballers in history, for many the best, on top of Diego Maradona and Lionel Messi”.

In Britain, The Times hailed him as “football’s first world superstar”.

“Pele popularized the description of football as ‘the beautiful game’ and no one played it more beautifully or with such joy than the man known as the King in his native Brazil,” The Times said in its obituary.— 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.

FIFA Women's World Cup, Asian Games to draw eyes in 2023

THE FIFA Women’s World Cup, FIBA Men’s World Cup and Asian Games are among the major sports events that are set to gain attention in 2023.

The FIFA Women’s World Cup will be played between 20 July to 20 August in Australia and New Zealand, with the United States women’s national team facing a tough challenge from some European rivals.

While the US men’s team was knocked out from the round of 16 at the Qatar Men’s World Cup, their women’s counterparts will start the pursuit of a third consecutive title in the women’s elite tournament.

The four-time champion will face the Netherlands in the group phase in a repeat of the 2019 final.—AFP

Myanmar ties Laos 2-2 in AFF Cup 2022 Group match

THE Myanmar national team played a home match of the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022 Group B against the Laos team yesterday at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon and the score was drawn 2-2.

In the early minutes of the first half, the Myanmar team played with the ball possession advantage, but the Laos goalkeeper was able to prevent every of Myanmar’s attempts. In the 12th minute of the match, the Laos team took the lead as back number 17 Vongchiengkham delivered a solid kick in the penalty area through a counterattack.

In turn, the Myanmar team attacked the Laos team in the 14th minute of the game, Kyaw Min Oo scored the equalizer with a header. The Myanmar team tried to score a goal, but Aung Kaung Marn and Myat Kaung Khant’s kicks were not accurate enough to change the op-



At the start of the second half, the Laos team substituted two players, and Ekkamai scored the second lead-

ing goal in the 46th minute.

The Myanmar team changed some players to score an equalizer and penetrated the Laos team several times, but goalkeeper Xaysavath saved it skillfully.

Team captain Maung Maung Lwin scored the equalizer for the Myanmar team through a free kick in extra time.

The Myanmar national team will play the final match of the group against Vietnam on 3 January. — KZL

portunities into goals. The Laos team made counter-attacks again, but the score was tied 1-1 at the end of the first half.

Myanmar team defender David Htan (red) looks for spaces to pass the ball to his teammates during the AFF Cup 2022 group match against the Laos team at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 30 December 2022. **PHOTO: MFF**