

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. IX, No. 262, 13th Waxing of Pyatho 1384 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Tuesday, 3 January 2023

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 Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla attend second-day ceremony to confer honorary titles in commemoration of 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day 2023



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing speaks on the second-day occasion of conferring honorary titles to mark the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day 2023 in Nay Pyi Taw on 2 January 2023.

THE second-day ceremony to confer honorary titles on relevant recipients in commemoration of the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day 2023 took place at the Thabin Hall of SAC Chairman Office yesterday

morning and afternoon, with an address by SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing.

Also present at the ceremony were Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife

of the Senior General, SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, the council secretary and wife, the joint secretary and wife, SAC mem-

bers and their wives, Union level officials, Union ministers and their wives, title recipient persons, members of the Sangha, religious leaders and families.

First, the Senior General delivered an address on the oc-

casian.

In the morning session, the Senior General presented the Thiri Pyanchi title to 168 recipients and the Wunna Kyaw Htin title to 21 recipients.

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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.

New one-tical, half-tical gold coins to be issued marking Diamond Jubilee Independence Day



Samples of new one-tical (left) and half-tical (right) gold coins.

MARKING the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar that will fall on 4 January 2023, the government will issue new gold coins weighing one-tical and half-tical.

The new one-tical gold coin will have 26.0 millimetres in diameter and 2.0 mm in thickness featuring White Elephant at the centre of the front of the coin and the inscription of “75th on the right side of the portrait.

At the bottom of the White Elephant, it etches “one tical” and “2023”, “Central Bank of Myanmar” and “75th Diamond Jubilee Independence Day” surrounding the coin in the Myanmar Language.

The back side of the gold

coin is created with a portrait of White Elephant and “75th” on the right side, “16.329 gm 2023” at the bottom and “Central Bank of Myanmar” and “75th Diamond Jubilee Independence Day” surrounding the coin in the English Language.

The new half-tical gold coin has a diameter of 22.0 mm and a thickness of 1.5 mm.

At the centre of the face of the new gold coin is a portrait of a White Elephant and “75th” with the words “half-tical” and “2023” written at the bottom. Along the circumference of the coin, “Central Bank of Myanmar” and “75th Diamond Jubilee Independence Day” are etched in Myanmar.

The opposite face of the

gold coin will feature a portrait of White Elephant and the words “75th” on the right side and “8.164 gm 2023” at the bottom and “Central Bank of Myanmar” and “75th Diamond Jubilee Independence Day” along the circumference of the coin in English.

The CBM governor and the gold coin casting department head will provide a certificate of authenticity when the gold coins are bought.

One-tical gold coins and half-tical gold coins will be available at the shops of the Myanma Gem Enterprise in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay starting 5 January.

— MNA/KTZH

MRTV to broadcast 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day 2023 ceremony live

THE ceremony of the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day 2023 will be held at the Grand Military Review Square in Nay Pyi Taw on the morning of 4 January 2023. The ceremony will be broadcast live on MRTV-HD Channel, MRTV-News Channel, MRTV Parliament Channel, MITV Channel, MWD HD Channel, MWD Variety HD Channel, Reader’s Channel, Sky Net Up to Date, Sky Net Ethnic Channel and MRTV Website and aired live on Radio Myanmar, Padamyar FM, Cherry FM, FM Bagan, Mandalay FM, Pyinsawady FM, Shwe FM and Star FM starting from 5:45 am on 4 January. — MNA/KZW

1 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 2 January, total figure rises to 633,686

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,686** after **one** new case were reported on 2 January 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **608,317** including **five** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 2 January 2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.

According to the research, it is found that people who have been vaccinated do not suffer severely from the disease, need not to be hospitalized and unlikely to die. If they have received booster shot, the death rates can be reduced more.

As such, the people need to follow the new normal way in living with COVID. Hence, all the people above five have to fully receive COVID-19 vaccination inoculated by the Ministry of Health free of charge. Six months after the vaccination, they have to take booster jabs at relevant health centres and ward/village administration offices without fail.

Moreover, they have to wear masks while in closed chambers and public places. They need to often wash hands with soap and water or the hand gel containing alcohol (at least 60 per cent) for 20 seconds.

People need to follow the social distancing rule and avoid the crowds as much as possible. While not wearing masks, if they cough and sneeze, they need to cover mouth and noses with elbows in line with the personal hygienic ways. COVID-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health. — MNA

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.

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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 Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla attend second-day ceremony to confer honorary titles ...

FROM PAGE-1

In the afternoon, the Senior General gave Wunna Kyaw Htin title to 132 recipients, the Alinkar Kyawswa title to 18 recipients and the Theikpa Kyawswa title

to five recipients. At the ceremony, honorary titles were conferred on the persons who significantly sacrificed life and limbs in the independence struggling period to date

in building a peaceful, tranquil, modernized and developed nation, safeguarding Our Three Main National Causes, pouring out significant endeavours into economic, social and public ad-



The Senior General gives the Thiri Pyanchi title to Archbishop Steven Than Myint Oo.



The Senior General presents the Thiri Pyanchi title to Union Minister Dr Thida Oo.



The Senior General confers the Thiri Pyanchi title to Dr Aye Maung.



The Senior General presents the Thiri Pyanchi title to LNDP Chair U Shwe Min.



The Senior General confers the Wunna Kyaw Htin title to PNLO Chair Khun Okkar.

ministration sectors of the State, military and civilian issues in nation-building tasks, initiating excellent adventures in science, arts and other subjects for the State and the people, creating wonderful literary and fine arts works and in discharging duties for security, peace and tranquility, and rule of law for the State with relentless endeavours and perseverance.

After the ceremony, the Senior General cordially greeted the attendees of the ceremony, title recipients and their families.

The Senior General then presented cash awards to staff members from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, ethnic youths and students who served at the honorary title presentation ceremony and architects who created designs for the Honorary Hall of the Residence of the State Administration Council.

Today’s ceremony comprised the presentation of the Thiri Pyanchi title to 168 recipients, the Wunna Kyaw Htin title to 153 recipients, the Alinkar Kyawswa title to 18 recipients and the Theikpa Kyawswa title to five recipients. — MNA/TTA

Region/ State-wise industries will generate more job opportunities and reduce number of workers moving to cities

- Region/State-wise industries should be set up. Such activities will generate more job opportunities and reduce the number of workers moving to cities.
- Region/state-wise model farms should be set up. MSMEs can boost production in the respective areas through the use of raw materials produced by local farming industry. In this way they will support the local economy.

(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 Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win inspects preparations for honorary dinner and entertainment programmes to mark 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day



VICE-CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, in his capacity as Chairman of the Central Committee on Organizing the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day, yesterday afternoon inspected preparations for holding the honorary dinner to mark the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day and the venues where the honorary entertainment programmes will be held.

The Vice-Senior General inspected arrangements for the reception, honorary dinner, awarding for decorated floats, the award for free fall parachute officers, other ranks and female

military personnel, launching of decorated drones and fireworks, and variety show and entertainment programmes and left necessary instructions.

SAC members, central committee members Union ministers, the chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, chairmen of subcommittee deputy ministers and officials who accompanied the Vice-Senior General viewed round the preparatory tasks and coordinated necessary measures.

The Vice-Senior General and party also inspected preparations for staging booths of Nay Pyi Taw Council, the opening of domestic traditional food stalls and souvenir shops on 4 January.

— MNA/TTA

Vice-Senior General Soe Win views the preparatory work in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Vegetable, Fruit and Horticultural show, awarding ceremony in commemoration of Diamond Jubilee Independence Day held in Yangon

THE opening ceremony of the Yangon Region Chief Minister's Cup Vegetable, Fruit and Horticultural Show and awarding ceremony were held in commemoration of Diamond Jubilee Independence Day at Maha Myaing Island in Kandawgyi Natural Park in Bahan Township of Yangon Region yesterday.

The event was held with the aims of studying advanced cultivation methods of vegetables, fruits and flowers by the people, distributing high-quality strains,

improving the socio-economic development of growers and contributing to the economic development of the nation through vegetable, fruit and flower cultivation.

It was attended by Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe and his wife, regional government officials and wives, judges, departmental officials, members of Myanmar Horticulturist Association and partner organizations and other invited guests.

First, Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe and Yangon regional ministers cut the ribbon to launch the ceremony.

Then, the commander gave an opening speech and observed the displayed fruits, vegetables, flowers and landscaping. At noon, the award ceremony was held at Western Park of Myay Pedetha Kyun and the commander and ministers presented awards to the winners in categories of the event.—Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH



Two dead men
bodies found in
Aung Mingala
Highway
Terminal

THE dead bodies of two unidentified men were found in the Aung Mingala Express Bus Terminal on 2 January and they were sent to a hospital, according to the Pale Auxiliary Fire Brigade.

Officials are investigating the name, age and address of the deceased. “The weather was very cold that day, so perhaps they died of a cold stroke,” one of the station owners told to GNLM.

The two dead bodies were sent to the Medawi hospital mortuary in North Okkalapa township by the Pale Auxiliary Fire Brigade and the police are investigating the case. — TWA/KZW



Bodies of the deceased.
PHOTO: PALE AUXILIARY FIRE BRIGADE.



A part of the Taungdawgwin Solar Power Project is shown in the picture.

Taungdawgwin
Solar Power Project
completed

THE Taungdawgwin Solar Power Project, which is being built near Thanywa, Myittha Township in Mandalay Region, has been completed, according to the announcement of Green Power Energy Co Ltd.

The project, which can produce up to 25 megawatts of electricity per year, is equipped with 45,980 solar panels, and a solar tracking system to maximize photovoltaic (PV) energy from the sun.

The electricity generated from the 132 kV Taungdawgwin Station will be sent

to the National Grid through the 33 kV overhead power cable.

The Taungdawgwin Solar Power Project was one of the 29 solar projects that were tendered during the previous government and the Green Power Energy Co Ltd won the project.

The Taungdawgwin Solar Power Plant is built on 80 acres out of 200 acres of land near Thanywa in Myittha Township, Mandalay Region, and it is the third solar power plant to have been completed in Myanmar. — TWA/CT

Public rental housing in
Dagon Myothit (South) Tsp to
be completed in March

PUBLIC rental housing which includes over 1,900 apartments will be completed in Dagon Myothit (South) Township in March.

As the first phase, 121 buildings with 1,936 apartments will be completed in March 2023 in the public rental housing construction project currently under construction. After the completion of this project, the local grassroots will be able to live comfortably. Priority is being given to facilitation of the water and electric supply.

The 194 rental housing projects in Yangon are currently

implemented by the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation (MCEF) and Myanmar Licenced Contractors Association (MLCA). The housing projects are implemented in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay to provide accommodation for civil servants, retired employees, and low-income people. As the first phase of public rental housing projects (10,000 apartments), 28 buildings in Nay Pyi Taw, 194 buildings in Yangon and 91 buildings in Mandalay are constructed with the 2022-2023 Union budget.— TWA/KZW



Some apartments of the public rental housing in Dagon Myothit (South) Township.

Onion price heads for three-week fall

ONION prices continued downward trends in early 2023 amid bulk supply, Ko Aung Win, a buyer at Bayintnaung Wholesale Market, told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

On 2 January 2023, 210,000 visses of onions from various regions flowed to Bayintnaung Wholesale Market. The prices of onion stood at K1,700-2,300 per viss from the Myingyan area and K2,000-2,600 from the Myittha area. Approximately 3.5 million visses of onions from various regions entered the Yangon mar-

kets in December, as per the daily market report.

Additionally, about five million visses of monsoon onions were supplied to Myingyan and Pakokku areas which are the main onion hub in December.

The prices decreased from K3,500 in early December 2022 to K1,950-2,100 per viss on 2 January 2023 in the regions outside Yangon.

The prices of newly harvested monsoon onions dropped by half owing to the large supply from the main producing areas



Onions are seen being supplied to warehouses in the Yangon wholesale market.

(Myingyan and Myittha) to Yangon Region. New monsoon onions from Taungdwingyi, Minbu, Minhla, Thayet, Sinbyukyun and Yenangyoung areas abundantly flowed into the markets.

At present, there is a match between supply and demand in the domestic market when there is a lack of foreign demand. In 2022, the onion prices declined to K350-775 per viss in March and K500-875 in April and K525-850 in May respectively when summer and winter onions entered the market. —TWA/EMM

Daily newspapers
available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma 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.

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Equestrian competition held to mark Diamond Jubilee Independence Day

TO hail the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day, the Myanmar Equestrian Federation President's Cup Equestrian Competition was held at the Myanmar Equestrian Federation Ground in Dagon Myothit (North) Township at 8 am yesterday.

Myanmar traditional gallop-ride competition, Myanmar traditional ride, dressage and jumping demonstration are in-

cluded in the horse riding competition.

Myanmar traditional gallop ride competition and Myanmar traditional competition were included in yesterday's tourney.

"It has been three years since the competitions were held due to the Covid-19. Now, in order to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day, we had to prepare from last month.

"More than 40 athletes are



Jockeys are seen in competitive actions at the event in Yangon yesterday.



competing in four types of competition. The first, second, and third prizes will be awarded. As our federation, we are going to hold a competition like this in the coming month of February.

"Regarding equestrian

sport, there will also be small preparatory events to compete in the 80-kilometre horse marathon in the SEA Games to be held in Thailand. We are going to organize the events together with Thailand and Malaysia,"

said Myanmar Equestrian Sport Federation President U Pyone Maung Maung.

The equestrian sports competition will be held for three days from 2 to 4 January. — Lin Yarma/KZL

Illegal teak, foodstuffs, consumer goods and vehicles confiscated

SUPERVISED by the Shan State Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force, a combined team led by the Lashio Township Customs Department conducted inspections on 31 December.

Officials captured K30,768,400 worth of clothes, foodstuffs and consumer goods without official documents from two vehicles (approximately K27 million) near Shwenyaungpin on detour to Lashio. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 1 January, a combined team confiscated illegal home-made alcohol and beer worth K169,000 in Falam, Mindat, Tonzang and Paletwa townships. The action was taken under the Chin Special Division Act.

In addition, a total of 1.0644 tonnes of illegal sawn teak worth K464,904 was captured in Ye-

dashe township. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, 12 arrests (estimated value of K58,402,304) were made on 31 December and 1 January, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee.— MNA/MKKS



Officials check confiscated illegal commodities in Shan State.

Drugs seized in Toungoo, Pyigyidagun, Lashio townships

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force searched a suspected Naing Myint Aung in Toungoo township and captured 5,850 stimulant tablets at 12:30 pm on 1 January.

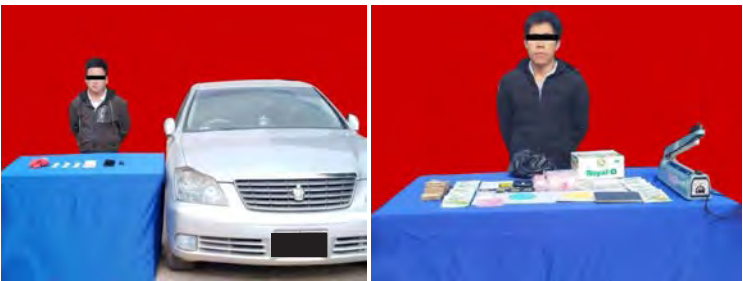
In addition, at 5 pm, the Police Force searched the house of Ma Kyi Kyi Win on 67th street between 118th and 119th streets in Pyigyidagun township and seized 0.05 kilogramme of opium extract.. and 9,750 stimulant tablets.

At 4 pm on 31 December, the Police searched a Crown car driven by Aung Thet Naing in the

No 5 ward of Lashio township and seized 0.03 kilogramme of ketamine from the car.

According to the investigation, the Police Force searched the house of Han Win Shein (aka) Ar Phuu in the No 5 ward of Lashio township at 4:30 pm and captured 162 ecstasy tablets, 0.055 kilogramme of ketamine and 0.425 kilogramme of Happy Water.

The suspects were prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA/MKKS



Two arrestees are separately seen along with seized drugs and a saloon.

Human trafficker sentenced to 10 years

THE Pyapon District Court sentenced a man to 10 years' imprisonment with labour on 31 December for his role in torturing and forcing a boy to work on a fishing boat.

The victim Maung..., aged 14, from Monywa Township of Sagaing Region, was forced to work on a fishing boat and tortured by U Maung Maung Kyi, the owner of the fishing boat of Pyapon Township, Ayeyawady Region. The trafficker was prosecuted at the Kyonkadun police station under Section 24 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. — MNA/MKKS

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LOCAL BUSINESS

Watermelon, muskmelon sell fast for Chinese New Year celebration

AS Chinese New Year is approaching, watermelon and muskmelon traders involved in the Muse border are doing a roaring trade and the fruits fetch a good price.

The prevailing prices stand at 4 Yuan per kilo for 855 watermelons, and 4.7-4.8 Yuan for Taiwan watermelons and muskmelons depending on quality.

Additionally, the demand watermelon outstripped the supply. The fruits are selling fast.

In the third week of December last year, inferior quality resulted in a price drop of 1.2 Yuan per kilo for 855 watermelons, 2.5 Yuan for Taiwan watermelons and 1.5-2 Yuan for seedless watermelons depending on quality.

In the past years 2017 and 2018, poor quality eroded customers' trust and lost market share, traders pointed out.

Myanmar's watermelon and muskmelon are heavily reliant

on the Chinese market. The traders grappled with China's strict virus policy.

Last year, the COVID-19 restrictions hindered Myanmar's watermelon and muskmelon exports to China. Chinese Customs Regulation increased delay. Long delays of trucks caused harm to watermelon quality and only one in five trucks heading to China remained undamaged with quality watermelons.

The traders are observing delivery time, price and profitability as they are perishable fruit, while they are trying to explore new markets besides China.

On 1 April, Nantaw and Sinphyu border posts were suspended in the wake of COVID-19 impacts. China has closed down the major border crossing of Mang Wein from 30 March 2021 following the COVID-19 cases in Myanmar.

On 8 July 2021, the two-re-

maining cross-border posts Kyinsankyawt and Panseng were suspended. As a result of this, the border trade between Myanmar and China was completely halted.

Among Sino-Myanmar bor-

der posts, Kyinsankyawt border posts resumed operations on 26 November on a trial run.

At present, Myanmar daily delivers rice, broken rice, rubber, various beans and pulses, fishery products, chilli pepper and

other food commodities to China through Kyinsankyawt by 100 trucks and building materials, electrical appliances, household goods and industrial raw materials are imported into the country by 40 trucks. — NN/EMM



Watermelons are seen before being exported to China on the Sino-Myanmar border.

Palm oil wholesale reference price regains

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil in the Yangon market has rebounded, according to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution.

The reference price stood at K4,470 per viss in the week from 2 to 8 January, indicating an increase of K110 from last week's rate.

The Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia including transportation cost, tariff and banking service, and issuing the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil on a weekly basis.

Despite the reference price, the current market price is too high.

If those edible oil retailers and wholesalers are found overcharging, storing inventory intentionally and attempting unscrupulous action to manipulate the market, they will face legal action under the Specific Goods Tax Law, MoC released a statement.

The Ministry of Commerce is striving for consumers not to worry over the supply of edible oil. The ministry is also trying to secure edible oil sufficiency, supervise the market to offer reasonable prices to the consumers and maintain price stability.

At present, mobile market trucks operated by oil importing companies, in coordination with Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association, were back to business in some townships on 17 July in order to offer palm oil at a subsidized rate. They sell

palm oil at K4,700 per viss to consumers directly. However, there are limited sources of supply although they directly sell palm oil at a reference rate depending on the volume quota.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the oil sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported through Malaysia and Indonesia. — NN/EMM



Residents line up to buy palm oil at the reference price.

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 2 January 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,060
Octane 95	K2,120
Diesel	K2,355
Premium Diesel	K2,435

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,147,500 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,718,000 per tical

Dollar Price

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market	K2,830 to K2,850

The above prices may change from time to time.

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OPINION

Keep promise and follow disciplines to restore perpetual peace

THE Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services recently issued a declaration, saying that with the objective of continuing to implement the peace process in a practical manner and achieving the perpetual peace that the entire people aspire to, the military operations will remain to be suspended for one more year from 1 January to 31 December 2023 except for the time when the national security and the State's administrative machinery are disturbed as well as matters concerning national defence and administration are adversely affected.

All stakeholders are responsible for restoring peace through talks. Both sides in the talks need to take care of keeping promises for their future plans and following prescribed disciplines. If so, it is sure that both sides of peace talks would restore perpetual peace for the whole nation.

In ensuring the peace and prosperity of the Union which is the aspiration of the entire people and in the effectuation of the socioeconomic development as well as in attempting to reach the goal of perpetual peace, the discussion and negotiation approach shall be employed to conform to the democratic practices.

The State Administration Council has formulated the Five-Point Roadmap for strengthening a genuine, discipline-flourishing multi-party democratic system and building up a Union based on democracy and federalism. The peace process is being constantly undertaken to be able to implement the fourth point of the roadmap, "the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) will be abided by as much as possible to ensure attainment of enduring peace across the nation".

In accord with the objective of attainment of perpetual peace across the nation, enhancing the peace process and more effectively carrying out the nation's Covid-19 prevention, control, and treatment, Tatmadaw has over four years issued 21 ceasefire statements between 21 December 2018 and 31 December 2022.

Up to now, Tatmadaw has been able to meet two times with the seven NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations namely DKBA, KNU-KNLA/PC, PNLO, NMSP, ALP, RCSS(SSA) and LDU, and three NCA non-signatory UWSA, NDAA, and SSPP (SSA), totalling ten.

During the peace talks, matters relating to the pursuit of a genuine multi-party democratic system, the building up of the Union based on democracy and federalism, the demands made by the ethnic armed organizations, and things that are essential to respective regions and the country and feasible to implement were discussed frankly for the benefit of the Union with the positive results achieved. The peace process is ongoing to effectuate the path to peace based on the 2008 Constitution and the NCA.

All stakeholders are responsible for restoring peace through talks. Both sides in the talks need to take care of keeping promises for their future plans and following prescribed disciplines. If so, it is sure that both sides of peace talks would restore perpetual peace for the whole nation.

Conspiracy believers more likely to support mythical causes of cancer: Study

Actual causes of cancer included smoking, consuming alcohol, low levels of physical activity, getting sunburnt as a child, family history of cancer, HPV infection, and being overweight.

ACCORDING to a study published in the December issue of The BMJ, people who believe in conspiracies, oppose the covid-19 vaccine, or prefer alternative medicine are more likely to support mythical causes of cancer than non-conspiracists, but less likely to support actual causes of cancer.

These findings highlight the difficulty that society faces in distinguishing the actual causes of cancer from mythical causes owing to the mass information on the news and social media platforms, say researchers.

Lifestyle changes and vaccination

Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, yet up to half of diagnosed cancer is preventable through lifestyle changes and vaccination, such as human papillomavirus (HPV).

illomavirus (HPV).

Misinformation about what causes cancer can lead to people refusing to adopt such preventive measures. But no data exist on vaccination scepticism or conspiracy beliefs in relation to beliefs about and attitudes to cancer prevention.

To examine this, researchers surveyed users of several popular online discussion platforms on their beliefs about cancer from January to March 2022.

They asked participants to provide information on their age, gender, country of birth, country of residence, education level, and whether their job was medical related.

Conventional or alternative medicines

Questions on health habits and behaviours included a preference for conventional or alternative medicines.



Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, yet up to half of diagnosed cancer is preventable through lifestyle changes and vaccination, such as human papillomavirus (HPV). **PHOTO: AFP**

ence for conventional or alternative medicines, attitudes towards covid-19 vaccination, smoking status, alcohol consumption, weight and height, and personal history of cancer.

Further questions assessed conspiracy beliefs (flat earth or reptilian theories) and beliefs about both actual and mythical (non-established) causes of cancer based on the validated Cancer Awareness Measure (CAM) and CAM-Mythical Causes Scale (CAM-MYCS).

Responses were recorded on a five point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Actual causes of cancer included smoking, consuming alcohol, low levels of physical activity, getting sunburnt as a child, family history of cancer, HPV infection, and being overweight.

Mythical causes included eating food containing artificial sweeteners or additives and genetically modified food; using microwave ovens, aerosol containers, mobile phones, and cleaning products; living near power lines and feeling stressed.

Incomplete questionnaires

After excluding incomplete questionnaires, 1,494 responders were included in the analysis. Of these, 209 were unvaccinated against covid-19, 112 preferred alternative rather than conventional medicine, and 62 reported flat earth or reptilian beliefs.

Among all participants, awareness of causes of cancer was poor, although awareness of the actual causes of cancer was greater (median CAM score 64 per cent) than that of mythical causes (42 per cent).

The most endorsed actual causes of cancer were active and passive smoking, family history of cancer, and being overweight. The most endorsed mythical causes of cancer were eating food containing additives or sweeteners, feeling stressed, and eating genetically modified food.

Awareness of the actual and mythical causes of cancer among the unvaccinated, alternative medicine, and conspiracy groups was

lower (average 55 per cent and 19 per cent for actual and mythical causes, respectively) than among their counterparts (average 64 per cent actual and 42 per cent mythical).

Almost half (673; 45 per cent) of the participants, whether conspiracists or not, agreed with the statement "It seems like everything causes cancer." No significant differences in this outcome were seen among the unvaccinated (44 per cent), conspiracist (42 per cent), or alternative medicine groups (36 per cent), compared with their counterparts (45 per cent, 46 per cent, and 46 per cent, respectively).

These are observational findings and the researchers acknowledge that their results may have been affected by "troll" or fake responses, which could overestimate conclusions, but also may be prone to other biases that could underestimate conclusions.

Beliefs about cancer

Nevertheless, they say this study is the first to show the possible patterns of beliefs about cancer among conspiracy believers and results on the overall endorsement of causes of cancer are mostly in line with previous studies.

SOURCE: ANI

Chinese oral COVID-19 drug equally effective with Paxlovid: study

The China-developed anti-coronavirus drug has shown improved performance during the early onset of Omicron infections. Its developers include several institutes under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

AN oral antiviral agent called VV116, which is a potent anti-COVID-19 drug, is just as effective as Paxlovid in increasing the speed of clinical recovery, according to a scientific study published on Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The China-developed anti-coronavirus drug has shown improved performance during the early onset of Omicron infections. Its developers include several institutes under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Previously, a preliminary small-scale study showed a shorter viral shedding time in

patients with COVID-19 who received VV116 within five days after the first positive test than in those who received regular care.

Those in the treatment group, who received VV116 within five days of their first positive test, had an average viral shedding time of 8.56 days, while those in the control group had an average time of 11.13 days.

In the new study published Wednesday, in a phase-3, randomized trial during the outbreak caused by the Omicron variant, the median time to sustained clinical recovery for

the VV116 group was four days, compared to five days for those taking Paxlovid.

Among adults with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 who were at risk of progression, at seven hospitals in Shanghai, VV116 was not inferior to Paxlovid or nirmatrelvir-ritonavir and showed fewer safety concerns, according to the study.

As the global supply of Paxlovid is currently falling short of demand, VV116 can be considered a better option, said the researchers.

SOURCE: Xinhua



Paxlovid is an antiviral therapy that consists of two separate medications packaged together. Paxlovid, Pfizer's anti-viral medication to treat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), is displayed in this picture illustration. **PHOTO: PFIZER**



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 2 January 2023)

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

FORECAST VALID NOON MORNING OF THE 3 January 2023: Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing and Magway regions and Chin State and partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Decrease of night temperatures in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan and Chin states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 January 2023: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 January 2023: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 January 2023: Generally fair weather.

ENVIRON WORLD

Cambodian leader orders Mekong safe zones to save rare dolphins

CAMBODIAN premier Hun Sen on Monday ordered the creation of conservation zones on the Mekong river to protect critically endangered dolphins, after three were killed by fishing nets and lines last month.

The Irrawaddy dolphins, known for their bulging foreheads and short beaks, once swam through much of the mighty Mekong but in recent

decades have been limited to a 190-km (118-mile) stretch from northeast Kratie province to the border with Laos.

Their population has been in steady decline since the first census was taken in 1997, dropping from 200 that year to around 90 currently due to habitat loss and destructive fishing practices.

Speaking at a ceremony in Kratie, Hun Sen ordered author-

ities to set up floating markers around designated protection zones, in which there will be an “absolute ban” on all fishing.

“The Mekong river, which is home to near-extinct dolphins and fish species, must be well managed so that dolphins will not die from entanglement in gillnets,” he said. Gillnets are nets strung across parts of the river to snare fish.—AFP



This handout photo taken on 24 March 2012 and released by the World Wildlife Fund - Cambodia (WWF-Cambodia) on 20 February 2014 shows a dolphin swimming in the Mekong river in Kratie province some 300 kilometres northeast of Phnom Penh. **PHOTO: AFP PHOTO / GERRY RYAN / WORLD WILDLIFE FUND-CAMBODIA**

China revises law on wildlife protection

CHINESE lawmakers on Friday voted to adopt a revised Law on the Protection of Wildlife, which will take effect on 1 May 2023.

The revised law was passed at a session of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, which was held from Tuesday to Friday.

It strengthens the protection of the habitats of wildlife and refines measures for the regulation of wildlife populations in detail.

The revised law explicitly prohibits consumption of wild animals under special state protection as well as terrestrial wildlife of important ecological, scientific and social values and others on the list of national protection.



Aerial photo taken on 18 October 2018 shows tourists taking a boating trip on Lijiang River in Yangshuo County of Guilin, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. **PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHANG AILIN**

Any acts of hunting, trading or transporting for meat of terrestrial wild animals that grow and reproduce naturally in the wild shall be forbidden, according to the revised law. It also intensifies punishment on related offenses.—Xinhua

In Uruguay, an effort to save horses from foreign plates



Uruguay, a country of 3.5 million people, has one horse for every seven inhabitants. A local resident waits for tourists for carriage rides in Pueblo Garzon, 187 Kilometres east from Montevideo. **PHOTO: DANIEL CASELLI/AFP/FILE**

AMONG a motley collection of rescued farm animals, four horses graze peacefully on a farm out-

side the Uruguayan capital Montevideo, blissfully unaware they had narrowly escaped the chop-

ping block. Uruguay, a country where horses are not considered food but companions, has seen a rise in equine meat exports, prompting efforts to rescue horses destined for slaughter.

In 2020, the small South American nation was the seventh-largest exporter of horse meat, according to the OEC economic data site, with Belgium, Russia, France and Japan among the top importers.

Most of Uruguay's tens of thousands of race, sports and work horses end up on someone's plate somewhere else in the world after they become injured, old, or their owners simply cannot care for them anymore.—AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Israeli govt to axe plastic tax despite public health concerns

THE new Israeli government will soon abolish taxation on disposable plastic utensils, the Finance Ministry said Sunday, despite public health concerns.

This is one of the first two decisions taken by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, leader of the Religious Zionist Party, after the new Israeli government was sworn in on Thursday. His other decision was to cancel the tax on high-sugar drinks.

Ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties, which have an important say in the far-right new coalition led by Benjamin Netanyahu, have claimed that the plastic tax was intended to harm their communities which consume plastic goods at high levels.

The Israeli Environmental Protection Ministry has reported a 50-per-cent decrease in the use of disposable plastics just four months after a tax on disposable plastics was imposed on 1 November 2021.—Xinhua

San Francisco Bay Area hit by historic storm

AT least one person was killed by a falling tree Saturday as a historic weekend storm swept San Francisco Bay Area, Northern California, said authorities.

Many roads in the region remained closed due to the storm-induced flooding, while nearly 15,000 Bay Area residents were without power due to storm activity, reported Pacific Gas and Electric Company on Sunday. The weekend storm nearly broke San Francisco's one-day precipitation record, just 8 hundredths of an inch shy of the all-time mark of 5.54 inches set in 1994. The National Weather Service reported it as the second wettest day in more than 170 years of record-keeping.—Xinhua

Food reform to reduce regulation takes effect in Israel

THE Israeli Ministry of Health on Sunday announced the entry into force of a national food reform for facilitating imports, and reducing food prices while protecting public health.

The reform is based on a uniform European regulation, aiming to remove import barriers for sensitive food to Israel, said a statement issued by the ministry.

The move will allow a trader who meets the supervised standard of a “proper importer” to go through a quick process of releasing goods from the port, and increase control and enforcement in the marketing channels, it added.—Xinhua

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

Malaysia reports 420 new COVID-19 infections, 4 more deaths

MALAYSIA reported 420 new COVID-19 infections as of midnight Sunday, bringing the total tally to 5,027,097, according to the country's health ministry.

There were three imported cases, with 417 cases being local transmissions, data released on the ministry's website showed. Four more deaths were reported, taking the death toll to 36,857.

The ministry reported 547 new recoveries, bringing the total number of cured and discharged to 4,978,369. Currently, there are 11,871 active cases, with 30 being held in intensive care and nine of those in need of assisted breathing.

The country reported 1,079 vaccine doses administered on Sunday alone and 86.1 per cent of the population have received at least one dose, 84.3 per cent are fully vaccinated and 49.9 per cent have received the first booster and 1.9 per cent have received the second booster.—Xinhua

Singapore reports 390 new COVID-19 cases

SINGAPORE reported 390 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday, bringing the total tally to 2,203,146.

A total of 66 cases are currently warded in hospitals, with two of them held in intensive care units, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Health.

One new death from COVID-19 was reported on Monday, pushing the total death toll to 1,712.—Xinhua

India reports 173 new COVID-19 cases

INDIA reported 173 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday, with the active caseload standing at 2,670.

The South Asian country logged two more deaths related to COVID-19, taking the death toll to 530,707 since the beginning of the pandemic, the ministry said.

According to data released on Monday morning by the federal health ministry, a total of 44,145,445 COVID-19 patients have been cured and discharged from hospitals.

So far, over 911 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted across the country, including 92,955 tests on Sunday, showed the ministry's data.—Xinhua

Chinese hospitals go all out to treat severe COVID-19 patients



Medical workers treat patients at a fever clinic at Shengjing Hospital of China Medical University in Shenyang, northeast China's Liaoning Province, 15 December 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

AS multiple regions in China are hit with surging COVID-19 infections, local hospitals are going all out to offer timely treatment, particularly for severe cases.

Many hospitals are actively allocating resources and adding beds while medical workers are working around the clock to treat severe cases and save lives.

In Harbin, capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, the First Affiliated Hospital of Harbin Medical University has added intensive care beds and ventilators to cope with a surge in COVID-19 patients, even while struggling with staff

shortages over infections.

"Many doctors continued working and caring for patients while they themselves were ill, and we are going all out to rescue every severe patient," said Yu Kaijiang, president of the hospital.

The hospital has set up a medical experts team to prevent severe cases from worsening into critically ill. It has already received over 140 critically ill COVID-19 patients over recent days.

In Taiyuan, capital of north China's Shanxi Province, the ICU section of Shanxi Bethune Hospital has been running at

full capacity. The hospital has increased the number of ICU beds from 30 to 54.

"We are not fighting alone. With the support of the whole hospital, we would surely get through the difficult times," said Wu Wenjing, head nurse of the hospital's ICU department.

As the number of severe COVID-19 patients rose, hospitals in Beijing have also done their best to increase beds, better allocate medical resources, and have even carried out training on rescuing severe patients to ensure that every severe patient could receive timely treatment.—Xinhua

Police authority orders crackdown on counterfeit COVID-19-related drugs

CHINA'S Ministry of Public Security has ordered a strict crackdown on the production and sale of counterfeit COVID-19-related medicines, as well as relevant medical devices such as testing kits, oximeters and oxygenators.

According to a statement issued on Monday, the ministry has ordered relevant police forces across the country to keep a close eye on the production, wholesale and retail

of COVID-19-related medical supplies, as well as relevant trading on online platforms.

It also asked the police to work with other authorities to investigate possible violations reported by members of the public.

It pledged special attention to organized or serial violations and those involving multiple regions to resolutely bust the criminal networks and cut their profit chains.—Xinhua

Burundi declares cholera outbreak

BURUNDIAN Public Health and AIDS Control Minister Sylvie Nzeyimana on Sunday evening declared an outbreak of cholera in the east African country's commercial capital Bujumbura, she said here in a press release.

"Nine suspected cholera cases were identified on 30 December 2022 in the northern health district in the commercial capital Bujumbura with symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting, mainly in Bukirasazi neighbourhood in Kinama zone. The next day, two other suspected cases were identified in Mutakura neighbourhood, close to Bukirasazi," said Nzeyimana in the statement.

According to her, another suspected case was notified in Buyenzi, near the Bujumbura city centre and the latter had been in contact with one of the suspected cases located in the north of Bujumbura.

"Results of the National Public Health Institute (INSP) issued on 31 December 2022 have confirmed that it was cholera. Today, we take this opportunity to announce that five cholera patients are hospitalized at Prince Regent Charles Hospital while seven others have already been discharged from hospital," said Nzeyimana.

Nzeyimana said that some preventive measures have al-

ready been taken. According to her, they include disinfecting infected households, sensitizing the community on the risks of the epidemic propagation and behaviour to be adopted, and the search for other cholera cases in the community.

The cholera outbreak happens at a time when heavy rains hit several parts of Bujumbura and its surroundings from 26 to 31 December, causing overflows of toilets.

The Burundian health ministry has also banned the sale of cooked and raw food products on the streets in Bujumbura following the disease outbreak.—Xinhua

ECONOMY WORLD

Int'l arrivals to Viet Nam hike in 2022



A staff member arranges information booklets at a tourist information counter in the arrival hall of Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi on 15 March 2022, as Viet Nam announced the return of a visa exemption policy for 13 countries in an effort to kickstart its tourism sector. **PHOTO: AFP**

VIET Nam saw approximately 3.7 million international arrivals in 2022, surging 23.3 times from the previous year, but still much lower than the pre-pandemic period in 2019, the country's General

Statistics Office said on Monday.

The number fell short of the target which was set at 5 million.

From January to December, visitors entering the country by air amounted to nearly 3.3 million,

accounting for 89.5 per cent of the total.

In 2022, roughly 2.6 million foreign visitors to Viet Nam were from Asia, hiking 19.5 times compared to 2021.

The number of tourists from Europe, the Americas and Oceania also saw surges of 31.8 times, 67.6 times and 125.2 times respectively from the previous year.

Viet Nam received a record number of over 18 million international arrivals in 2019, the last full year before the pandemic broke out.

In 2020 and 2021, the number of international arrivals to Viet Nam plunged 78.7 per cent and 95.9 per cent year on year respectively.

The country targeted serving over 8 million overseas tourists in 2023, according to the Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism.—Xinhua

Tourist destinations in India house-full for New Year revelry amid new COVID-19 scare

TOURIST destinations in India, be it the hills in the north, beaches in the south, or heritage properties and palaces in the west, were full to their capacity as people thronged them in large numbers to celebrate and welcome the New Year on Saturday night, amid a fresh COVID-19 scare.

Celebrations continued on Sunday too, as popular market areas, hotels and restaurants in Delhi were packed to their fullest.

Despite the latest guidelines from the federal government about observing COVID Appropriate Behaviour (CAB), people hardly chose to wear face masks or observe social distancing at major markets in Delhi.

On 22 December Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a COVID-review meeting with senior cabinet members and high-ranking health officials, when he laid stress on the CAB.

"COVID is not over yet. Strengthen ongoing surveillance measures, especially at international airports. Audit COVID-specific facilities to ensure readiness of hospital infra, including oxygen cylinders, ventilators and staff," a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said. Citing the pattern of past COVID-19 outbreaks in the South Asian country, a few days ago the federal health ministry warned that the next 40 days would be crucial as India could see a surge in COVID-19 cases in January.—Xinhua

Russian gas exports outside ex-Soviet states fell 45.5% in 2022

RUSSIAN gas exports to countries outside a group of former Soviet republics plunged by 45.5 per cent in 2022, figures from gas giant Gazprom showed on Monday.

Gazprom said in a statement that exports outside the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) totalled 100.9 billion cubic metres compared to 185.1 billion in 2021.

Europe was previously Gazprom's main export market but supplies have been drastically reduced because of sanctions following Russia's offensive in Ukraine in 2022.

Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller said the company had been steadily increasing supplies to China during the year but did not give details on the quantities.

"From 1 January we are on a fundamentally new level of gas supplies to China," Miller said in the statement.

President Vladimir Putin last month inaugurated the Kovykta natural gas field in eastern Siberia that will allow Russia to increase its exports

to China.

Russia does not have pipelines to transport gas from its Western Siberian and Arctic gas fields -- which have served Europe -- to China.

But Russia began efforts around a decade ago to develop new fields and build the Power of Siberia pipeline to deliver to the rapidly expanding Chinese market.

The first Power of Siberia pipeline went into operation and began to ship gas from eastern Siberia to China at the end of 2019.

Moscow plans to build a Power of Siberia 2 pipeline.

At a conference last week, Miller admitted Gazprom had had a "very, very difficult" year.

Miller noted a "total change in the energy markets" driven by sanctions in response to Putin's decision to send troops to Ukraine.

Gazprom accounts for 11 per cent of the global natural gas production and has the largest gas reserves in the world.—AFP

Sri Lanka freezes recruitment in fresh austerity drive

SRI Lanka began a fresh austerity drive Monday, freezing government recruitment as new taxes and higher electricity prices kicked in with authorities trying to secure an IMF bailout.

The Indian Ocean island nation needs to achieve debt sustainability as a precondition to a \$2.9 billion bailout from the Washington-based lender after it defaulted in April as its economy went into crisis.

The IMF has also asked Colombo to trim its 1.5 million strong public service, sharply raise taxes and sell off loss-making state enterprises.

A record 20,000 civil servants retired at the end of December — eight times as many as usual according to the public administration ministry — after President Ranil Wickremesinghe reduced their retirement age from 65 to 60.

They will not be replaced, the ministry said.

Doubled personal income and corporate taxes kicked in on New Year's Day to shore up state revenue, while electricity prices went up 65 per cent after a 75 per cent tariff increase in August.

Wickremesinghe, who came to power after Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country and resigned in July following months of protests, said the crisis was not yet over despite the restoration of fuel, food and fertilizer supplies.

"Our problems have not been resolved yet," he told his staff on the first working day of the year.

"We need to reduce our debt burden if we are to move forward."

Key creditors such as China and India are yet to announce agreement to a "haircut" on their loans to the South Asian nation.

As part of the new measures, the finance ministry has also banned non-essential capital expenditure.—AFP



This handout photograph taken on 2 January 2023 and released by the Sri Lanka President's Office shows Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe (C top) addressing the staff of the presidential secretariat in Colombo. A record 20,000 civil servants retired at the end of December — eight times as many as usual according to the public administration ministry — after Wickremesinghe reduced their retirement age from 65 to 60. **PHOTO: SRI LANKA PRESIDENT'S OFFICE / AFP**

Indonesia sees new trade regulations in place following RCEP taking effect for it

THE Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement has taken effect for Indonesia on Tuesday, with the country putting new regulations in place for its trade with other members of the world's largest trade bloc in terms of population and the size of economy and

trade. So far, the trade pact has taken effect for 14 of the 15 members of the RCEP, which comprises 10 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member countries and their five trading partners, namely China, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia,

and New Zealand. The RCEP entered into force on 1 January 2022. Indonesia's new regulations on origin of goods and issuing documents of origin for goods exported from it have been in place starting from Tuesday, as part of implementing the RCEP agreement. Trade Minister Zu-

lkifli Hasan said in a press release last Friday that the new regulations specify the procedure of obtaining certificates of origin for goods exported from the Southeast Asian country. The business sectors in Indonesia can also choose between the two types of document, a cer-

tificate of origin and a declaration of origin to claim "preferential rates". Both documents can be issued independently. "This new rule is in line with a trade commitment facilitated by the RCEP, the world's largest trading bloc. Business sectors will be benefited by this measure as the

RCEP scheme will make the flow of exported goods in the region become smoother," Hasan said. Over the past year, the trade agreement has helped lower the cost of trade, facilitated the integration of industrial chains, and benefited consumers in the region. —Xinhua

European markets start New Year on high note



Brokers work at the stock exchange in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany on 30 December 2022. PHOTO: AFP

EUROPEAN stock markets started the New Year on a high note on Monday after a tumultuous 2022, with the IMF chief warning that a third of the global economy faces recession in 2023. The Paris CAC 40 rose more than one per cent and the Frankfurt DAX was up 0.7 per cent but London, Wall Street and oil markets were closed

for the holiday. Most Asian stock markets were also shut. Of those that opened, Jakarta was flat while Seoul fell and Mumbai rose. Wall Street recorded its worst annual drop since 2008 last year while Hong Kong had its biggest drop since 2011 and Tokyo saw its first annual fall since 2018. Paris and Frankfurt

also had their largest annual falls since 2018 while London bucked the trend as it finished almost one per cent higher for the year. Investors were rocked last year by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February, soaring inflation and rising interest rates. Inflation has been fuelled by surging food and energy prices, but Euro-

pean gas prices, which had climbed to a record 345 euros per megawatt hours in March, fell by more than four per cent on Monday to 73 euros — its lowest level since the war started. The new Covid outbreak in China — where authorities loosened restrictions after a wave of protests — poses fresh challenges for the world economy. The head of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, said in a US television interview aired on Sunday that 2023 will be "tougher than the year we leave behind" for the world economy. "Why? Because the three big economies, US, EU, China, are all slowing down simultaneously," she told CBS's "Face the Nation" programme. "We expect one third of the world economy to be in recession," Georgieva said.—AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V GSS YANGON VOY.NO. (160N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GSS YANGON VOY.NO. (160N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V OUTLANDER VOY.NO. (22.6151)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V OUTLANDER VOY.NO. (22.6151)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **IBTT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon. Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel. No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: **2301928** Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority
Agent For:
M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Malaysia looks to Chinese companies to grow EV sector: official

MALAYSIA aims to draw greater investment from Chinese companies to develop its electric vehicle (EV) sector to build up the infrastructure to enable wider adoption of EVs, a Malaysian official said. The development of the supporting infrastructure for EVs is a major hurdle

for Malaysia, but the government seeks to overcome this by encouraging companies with the expertise and technology to set up their operations in the country, Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook told Xinhua in an interview. —Xinhua

Announcement

Tat Hong Intraco Heavy Equipment Company Limited hereby announces that a reduction of its capital by an amount of USD 150,000 has been approved by its sole member on 2nd January 2023.

Thousands pay tribute to ex-pope Benedict at lying-in-state



People wait in line to pay respect to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican on 2 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

THOUSANDS of Catholics paid their respects Monday to former pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican, at the start of three days of lying-in-state at St Peter's Basilica before his funeral.

They began queueing before dawn to view the German theologian's body, which was transferred early Monday from the monastery in the Vatican grounds where he died Saturday aged 95.

"I arrived at 6:00 am, it seemed normal to come and pay

homage to him after all he did for the church," said an Italian nun, sister Anna-Maria, near the front of the queue that snaked around the edge of the vast St Peter's Square.

Benedict led the Catholic Church for eight years before becoming the first pope in six centuries to step down in 2013, citing his declining and physical health.

His successor Pope Francis will lead the funeral on Thursday in St Peter's Square before

his remains are placed in the tombs beneath the basilica.

Benedict's body was laid out Monday on a catafalque draped in gold fabric in front of the altar of the church, flanked by two Swiss Guards.

Many of those filing past took pictures on their smartphones of the body, which was dressed in red papal mourning robes with a gold-edged mitre on his head, while some prayed or made the sign of the cross. —AFP

Mauritius, UK open talks on status of contested islands

BRITAIN and Mauritius have begun talks on the sovereignty of the disputed Chagos archipelago, the Mauritian prime minister announced Sunday.

Mauritius claims the remote archipelago in the Indian Ocean in full but it is administered by Britain, which has a joint military base there with the United States.

"The latest developments on the Chagos issue are very encouraging. Negotiations between Mauritius and Britain have begun," Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth said in a New Year address.

In November 2022, UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said in a written ministerial statement that the countries "have decided to begin negotiations on the exercise

of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory / Chagos Archipelago".

He said they had agreed to hold "constructive negotiations" and hope to reach an agreement early next year.

That followed a meeting in September between the countries' prime ministers at the United Nations General Assembly.

Cleverly said the UK intends to "resolve all outstanding issues, including those relating to the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago".

The countries agreed that a joint UK and US military base on Diego Garcia, the largest of the isles, will continue to operate whatever the results of the talks, the minister said. —AFP

Cruise passengers stranded by 'marine growth' on hull



Cruise liner Viking Orion is moored at Station Pier in Melbourne on 24 March 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

PASSENGERS on a luxury New Year's cruise around New Zealand and Australia have reportedly been stranded on board for a week because of a "marine growth" on the ship's hull.

Divers had to remove the "biofoul" — an accumulation of microorganisms, plants, algae or small animals — from the 930-berth Viking Orion while it was anchored in international

waters, the Australian government said.

The cleaning was required to protect Australia's waters from "potentially harmful marine organisms", the fisheries department said in a statement sent to AFP.

The nine-deck Viking Orion, built in 2018 with a spa, theatre, sports deck and pool, left Auckland on 23 December, according to tracking website vesselfinder.com.

But the cruise ship had made no port calls since leaving the New Zealand capital Wellington on 26 December, the tracker said, apparently missing scheduled stops in Christchurch, Dunedin and the Tasmanian state capital of Hobart. —AFP

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Ukrainian capital under air attacks, no casualties

THE Ukrainian capital came under air attacks carried out by the Russian forces overnight Sunday, with explosions being reported in several districts of the city, local authorities said.

The Kyiv City Military Administration said in a statement that the air defence shot down all 32 air targets launched against the capital.

Wreckage from aerial intercepts damaged a private car in

the central Shevchenkivskiy district and fell onto subway tracks in the eastern Dniproviskiy district, disrupting the operation of the local subway.

In the Kyiv region, an infrastructure facility was damaged in a drone attack, Oleksii Kuleba, head of the Kyiv Regional Military Administration said on Telegram. He didn't specify whether the facility was struck by a drone or by its wreckage.

There were no reports of casualties in the Ukrainian capital and the Kyiv region.

In total, Russia has launched 45 combat drones, including 32 on Sunday after midnight and 13 late on Saturday, against Ukraine overnight Sunday and all of them were shot down by the air defence, according to the Air Force Command of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. —Xinhua



Bystanders look at a crater next to an educational building in Kyiv on 1 January 2023, which was damaged by a missile strike on the previous day, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. **PHOTO: AFP**

S Korea, US discussing joint nuclear exercises

SEOUL and Washington are discussing joint planning and exercises involving US nuclear assets to counter growing threats from the nuclear-armed North, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has said.

In an interview with the Chosun Ilbo newspaper published Monday, Yoon said the United States' existing "nuclear umbrella" and "extended deterrence" were no longer enough to reassure South Koreans.

"The nuclear weapons belong to the United States, but the planning, information sharing, exercises and training must be done jointly by South Korea and

the United States," Yoon said, adding that the US was "quite positive" about the idea.

His comments came a day after the North's state media reported that leader Kim Jong Un had called for an "exponential" increase in his country's nuclear arsenal and new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) to counter what it termed US and South Korean hostility.

In 2022, the North conducted sanctions-busting weapons tests nearly every month, including firing its most advanced ICBM ever.

It capped the record-breaking year of launches by firing

three short range ballistic missiles early Saturday, and conducting another rare early morning launch on Sunday.

Under the hawkish Yoon, South Korea has beefed up joint military drills with the United States, which had been scaled back during the pandemic or paused for a bout of ill-fated diplomacy with the North under his predecessor.

Since talks collapsed in 2019, Kim has doubled down on his banned weapons programmes, and Seoul and Washington have warned for months that Pyongyang is preparing to conduct its seventh nuclear test.—AFP



This handout photo taken on 29 December 2022 and provided by the South Korean Defence Ministry shows South Korean soldiers operating a 20mm Vulcan rotary cannon during an anti-drone drill in Yangju. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / SOUTH KOREAN DEFENCE MINISTRY / AFP**

Kim seeks "exponential increase" in N Korea's nuclear arsenal



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attends the 12th meeting of the Political Bureau of the 8th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea in Pyongyang on 30 December 2022. **PHOTO: KCNA/KYODO**

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un has called for an "exponential increase" in the country's nuclear arsenal, highlighting the need to mass-produce tactical nuclear weapons, as well as development of a new intercontinental ballistic missile

system, the official Korean Central News Agency said Sunday.

During a six-day meeting of North Korea's ruling party through Saturday, Kim unveiled a nuclear strategy to counter South Korea, which he called an "undoubted enemy" that is

"hell-bent on imprudent and dangerous arms buildup while busying itself with hostile military moves to pose a confrontational challenge", KCNA said.

With regard to the new ICBM system, whose "main mission is quick nuclear counterstrike," it is believed Pyongyang is aiming to develop one equipped with a solid-fuel engine that could launch missiles with a shorter preparation time compared with liquid-fuelled missiles.

In a report to an enlarged plenary meeting of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee, Kim said the first mission of the North's nuclear force is to deter war and safeguard peace and stability. However, if deterrence fails, it will carry out its second mission, which will "not be for defence," the news agency said. —Kyodo

Viet Nam rescuers battle to save boy from 35-metre hole

HUNDREDS of rescuers in Viet Nam battled Monday to free a 10-year-old boy who fell into a 35-metre-deep hole at a construction site two days ago.

The boy, named Thai Ly Hao Nam, fell into the shaft of a hollow concrete pillar just 25 centimetres wide, sunk as part of a new bridge in southern Dong Thap province, apparently while looking for scrap metal, a rescuer told AFP by phone.

"We are trying our best. We cannot tell the boy's condition yet," the rescuer said, identifying himself only as Sau.

According to media reports, rescuers have tried drilling and softening the surrounding soil to try to pull the pillar up to save Nam.

Authorities "are not sure about the current condition of the boy. He has stopped interacting with the outside though oxygen had always been pumped into the" hole, the Vietnamese Tuoi Tre newspaper reported.

On Monday, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh asked federal-level rescuers to join efforts by local authorities to save the boy.—AFP



Rescuers look down into the site of where a 10-year-old boy is thought to be trapped in a 35-metre deep shaft at a bridge construction area in Vietnam's Dong Thap province on 2 January 2023. **PHOTO: STR / AFP**

Death toll from Philippine floods, landslides rises to 51

THE death toll from recent floods and landslides across the disaster-prone Philippines has risen to 51, officials said Monday, as authorities distribute food packs to the hardest hit communities.

The number of fatalities could rise further as rescuers search for 19 people still missing more than a week after heavy

rain pounded central and southern regions over the Christmas weekend, according to the national disaster agency.

Bad weather struck as the Catholic-majority nation of 110 million people prepared for a long Christmas holiday.

More than 270,000 people had to seek emergency shelter

as downpours inundated rural villages, left more than 4,500 houses damaged or destroyed, and wiped out over 7,000 hectares (17,300 acres) of crops.

Instead of celebrating with loved ones, thousands of families found themselves cleaning up their dwellings and shops after the floodwaters subsided.—AFP



Myanmar to play against Viet Nam today in AFF Cup 2022 group match



Myanmar team striker Aung Kaung Marn (left) and Myanmar team head coach Antoine Hey (right) are seen at the pre-match press conference of the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022. PHOTO: MFF

MYANMAR national football team and Viet Nam team head coaches and players attended the pre-match press conference between Viet Nam and Myanmar, which will play as the final match of Group B of the 2022 AFF Cup tournament in Viet Nam today.

Myanmar head coach Antoine Hey said, "Within the group, the teams have their own strengths and weaknesses, and there are no major differences. Viet Nam is a good team and they have strengths and weaknesses. In the last three games, both our team and ourselves have had a lot of possession and created opportunities".

"There are many good points. In the same way, we did not get the goal needed to win

and there are weaknesses where we conceded a goal. Sadly, we can't qualify for the group stage. Our team is still in the stage of construction.

"There are many international matches to compete including SEA Games, Olympics and Asian Cup Qualifiers. We have potential youth players. The team has to be changed later."

Myanmar striker Aung Kaung Marn said, "We were able to dominate every match with possession advantage. We were also able to create opportunities to score goals. Unfortunately, we didn't score as many goals as we should have and the team's result was bad."

"We have reviewed. All the new generation younger brothers

and teammates in our team tried their best to achieve good results. If you want to blame, blame me. You should not put pressure on the younger generation as much as possible. They still have bright futures to work on," he said.

The match will be played at 7 pm Myanmar Standard Time at My Dinh Stadium in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

The Malaysian team will play against the Singaporean team at Bukit Jalil Stadium in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Myanmar team has said goodbye to the group and will have to play only for honour, but Viet Nam, Singapore and Malaysia have a chance to qualify for the semi-finals. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Ronaldo set for grand unveiling after shock Saudi move



A fan holds the jersey of Saudi football club al-Nassr's new Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (#7) at a sports shop carrying the club's paraphernalia in the capital Riyadh on 2 January 2023. PHOTO: AFP

PORTUGUESE superstar Cristiano Ronaldo will be unveiled before thousands of fans at Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr club on Tuesday,

a spokesman said, after sealing a shock move estimated at more than 200 million euros.

The 37-year-old great, a five-

time winner of the Ballon d'Or, will arrive late on Monday with his family together with media and technical staff, club spokesman Al-Walid Al-Muhaidib told AFP.

Ronaldo, who left Manchester United under a cloud after slamming the club in a TV interview, will appear at Al Nassr's 25,000-capacity Mrsool Park stadium in Riyadh at 7:00 pm (1600 GMT) on Tuesday, officials said. The latest, and possibly final, chapter in an illustrious career comes weeks after Portugal's quarter-final exit from the World Cup in neighbouring Qatar, where his great rival Lionel Messi lifted the trophy with Argentina. — AFP

SPORT

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.

Final farewell for Pele, Brazil's football 'King'

BRAZILIANS bid a final farewell this week to football giant Pele, starting Monday with a 24-hour public wake at the stadium of his long-time team, Santos.



A picture of Brazil's football legend Edson Arantes do Nascimento 'Pele', exhibited at the Pele Museum, in Santos, Brazil, on 27 December 2022. PHOTO: AFP

The ocean-side home of the team nicknamed "Peixe" — "fish" in Portuguese — is expecting a huge influx of fans looking to honour the "King" of football, who died aged 82 on Thursday after a long battle with cancer.

Stadium doors will open at 10:00 am local time (1300 GMT). The coffin bearing the remains of the only player to

have won three World Cups will be displayed in the centre of the field.

Known as Vila Belmiro after the neighbourhood where it is located, the black-and-white stadium has a capacity of 16,000 people.

In the stands, three giant flags could be seen Sunday, one with an image of Pele displaying the famous number 10 on his jersey.

Another bore the message "Long live the king"; the third said simply, "Pele 82 years".

Entry to the stadium will be allowed until 10:00 am Tuesday, officials said.—AFP