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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.

Survey finds 23,068 birds of 54 species in Indawgyi Lake

THERE are 23,068 birds of 54 bird species including wintering birds and local birds at Indawgyi Lake, the largest freshwater lake in Myanmar, and other wetlands in Mohnyin Township of Mohnyin District of Kachin State, a bird survey has shown.

The various wintering birds and local water birds flock to the Indawgyi Lake every winter season. According to the survey conducted in December 2022, 16,378 birds of 34 migratory bird species and 6,690 birds of 20 water bird species, totalling 23,068 birds were seen on the site.

The bird population in December is lesser than over 3,400 birds including one migratory bird species compared to the previous year. The officials also



The Indawgyi Lake is the largest and most beautiful freshwater lake in Myanmar and the third largest lake in Southeast Asia. **PHOTOS: SHWE MOHNYIN**



face hardships in collecting bird data at Indaw creek, where most of the birds inhabit, as the algae and duckweed block the creek and which causes difficulties in watching the real numbers of birds. Therefore, the numbers of birds are lower than the previous year.

Most of the migratory birds at the lake are Common Coot, Tufted Duck, Bar-headed goose, Glossy Ibis, Common Crane, Brown-headed Gull, Black-headed Gull, Common White-eye,

Eurasian teal, Ruddy Sherlock (Brahminy Duck) and Common Pochard. The data on water bird species are collected front side and west sides of the lake. Moreover, the ground study is also conducted at the wetlands along the Indaw creek this month and the survey shows 23,068 birds of 54 wintering and local bird species.

The Indawgyi Lake is the largest and most beautiful freshwater lake in Myanmar and the third largest lake in Southeast Asia. It is home to 47 mammal

species, 91 amphibians and crawling animal species, 94 fish species, 105 water bird species and 400 forest bird species, according to the administrative office of Indawgyi Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Indawgyi Lake was recognized as a Wetland of International Importance on 15 December 2014, as an ASEAN Heritage Park in 2003, World Ramsar site in 2016, Biosphere Reserve in 2017 and as Wetland Link Asia – WLI Asia in 2019. — Shwe Mohnyin/KTZH

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Congratulatory message from foreign head of state on 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day

Mr Bashar al-Assad, President of Syrian Arab Republic sends Congratulatory Message to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, State Administration Council Chairman and Prime Minister of Republic of the Union of Myanmar

ON the occasion of the celebration of the National Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I am pleased to extend to you my warmest congratulations and best wishes for good health and prosperity, and to your friendly country more progress and prosperity.

I also renew to you our keenness to exert joint efforts for strengthening and developing the existing relations of cooperation between our two countries in order to serve the interests of our two friendly peoples.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Statement 1/2023

IN commemoration of the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day that occurs on 4 January 2023 on humanitarian and compassionate grounds as well as on the goodwill of the government, the Chairman of the State Administration Council issued Order No 1/2023 of 4 January 2023, a total of 7012 prisoners serving sentences in respective prisons, jails and camps, under any existing law, have been pardoned. The Chairman also issued Order No 2/2023 on 4 January 2023 that prisoners from their respective prisons, jails and camps, under any existing law, get one-sixth of their sentences reduced except for those convicted of murders and rapes or jailed for charges under the Explosives Act, the Unlawful Association Act, the 1878 Arms Act Section 19 (f), the 1949 Arms (Emergency Penalty held) Act (Temporary), the 1951 Arms (Temporary Amendment) Act, the 1924 Shan State Arms Order, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, the Natural Disaster Management Law, the Counter-Terrorism Law and the Anti-Corruption Law before 4 January 2023.

These humanitarian actions of the Chairman are appropriate steps in the right direction. Those who have been granted pardons will surely be delighted to be reunited with their respective family members.

The Commission is confident that those who have been granted pardons and remitting prison sentences, appreciating the goodwill of the government, will peacefully take part in whatever way they can in building national unity and a democratic State.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
7 January 2023

White elephant “Rattha Nandaka” lives happily and healthily with mother mammal



The White elephant "Rattha Nandaka".

A 33-year-old female elephant called Zar Nan Hla kept by the Myanma Timber Enterprise in Taungup Township of Rakhine State has given birth to one white male elephant at 6:30 am on 23 July 2022. The baby elephant is two feet and five inches in height, three feet and one inch in girth, two feet in back length and has one foot and six inches long tail with its

birth weight of 180 pounds.

The newly born white elephant name “Rattha Nandaka” has pearl-coloured eyes, a plantain branch-shaped back, white hair, a distinctive tail, auspicious plot signs on the skin, reddish-brown or pinkish skin, five claws on the front legs and big ears. Therefore, these features conform with seven out of eight characteristics.

At five and half months old, the baby white elephant is three feet and one inch in height, four feet and nine inches in girth and weighs about 345 pounds. He stays healthy and happy under the human-friendly training system with his mother elephant, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. — MNA/KZW

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.

4 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 7 January, total figure rises to 633,713

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,713** after **four** new cases were reported on 7 January 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **608,346**, including **five** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to **19,490** on 7-1-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. —MNA

Management must be systematically implemented

THE government adopted future tasks, visions, national goals and political goals. The government is mainly responsible for achieving the goals with the participation of political parties and citizens. Such tasks should not burden the nation while management must be systematically implemented. We all are to move forward and all of the officials concerned are to successfully carry out departmental tasks.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 6/2022 of the Union government on 22 August 2022.)

SPTT continues 3rd-day meeting with UWSP, NDAA and SSPP delegations

THE third-day meeting of the State Peace Talks Team and delegations of the United Wa State party-UWSP, the National Democratic Alliance Army-NDAA and the Shan State Progress Party- SSPP continued at the National Solidarity and Peace-making Centre in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

State Administration Council member Union Minister at the Government Office National Solidarity and Peace-making Negotiation Committee-NSPNC Chairman State Peace Talks Team Leader Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and members – SAC Member Lt-Gen Moe



The State Peace Talks Team concludes its third-day meeting with delegations from three EAOs.

Myint Tun, NSPNC Secretary NC members Lt-Gen Min Naing, Lt-Gen Win Bo Shein and Lt-Gen Aye Win, and UWSP Vice-Chairman U Lau Yaku,

NDAA Vice-Chairman U San Pae and SSPP Vice-Chairman-2 Sao Khun Seng attended the meeting.

In the meeting, according to the three-day negotiations, the two sides discussed their views again, and the final agreements were signed and exchanged. After that, on behalf of the ethnic armed groups present, U Lau Yaku, the Vice-Chairman of the Wa people's Unity Party UWSP and Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, the leader of the Peace Talks Team, gave closing remarks and then exchanged gifts. — MNA

SAC Chairman, wife honour children born on Diamond Jubilee Independence Day



Honoraria and nutritious food are awarded to the mothers of the babies born on Diamond Jubilee Independence Day.

ON the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day, 4 January 2023, 26 ma-

ternity patients and 14 family members of military personnel were given birth at military

hospitals in various military commands areas. A total of 40 children were successfully

delivered.

The children who were born in Tatmadaw hospitals



and their mothers were honoured by SAC Chairman Defence Services C-in-C Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla at the rate of K100,000 per child as a gesture of honouring the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day.

Officers and officials from relevant regional military commands visited and awarded the honorarium and nutritional food on behalf of the SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. — MNA

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

Moeyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary hosts big numbers of visitors in open season

THE Moeyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary in Bago Region is crowded with bird watchers and visitors in the 2023 open season.

During the winter, there are about 100 to 150 visitors to the Moeyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary resort while about 300 visitors are on weekends. There were over 600 visitors on New Year's Day and Independence Day and the site was packed with visitors and bird watchers at dawn and early morning when the birds look for food.

"It is the migration period of wintering birds and also open season. Therefore, the visitors come to the Moeyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary. We arrange boats for the visitors to watch the birds in the lake. We also provide Guides for local/foreign travellers to be able to watch the birds properly. They can pay homage to the pagoda by watching the birds in the lake. We also grow lotus and green plants and we make other arrangements to get a feeling of living in nature rather than in the bungalow. As the visitor arrival was high on the new year and independence days, we expect higher numbers of visitors on Union Day," said an official of Moeyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary.

Moeyungyi Sanctuary is 25,600 acres wide and was recognized as a Ramsar Site in Myanmar in 2005. East Asia- Australasian Flyway Partnership recognized it as a Flyway Network Site in 2014. It is a wildlife sanctuary to conserve endangered water birds. The visitors can get there after the six-furlong drive from Pyinpongyi village about 69 miles from Yangon-Mandalay Road in Waw Township of Bago Region.

The visitors can get there after the six-furlong drive from Pyinpongyi village about 69 miles from Yangon-Mandalay Road in Waw Township of Bago Region. **PHOTO: KANU**

The travellers were flocking to the site for its natural beauty and migratory birds in winter. Moreover, it is also packed with visitors and bird watchers in January 2023. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH

Illegal foodstuffs, industrial materials and vehicles confiscated



Confiscated illegal commodities in Kayin State.

A combined team led by the Kachin State Department of Mines under the supervision of the Kachin State Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force conducted inspections on 5 January, according to information.

Officials found an illegal gold mining site and captured K26 million worth of related materials of illegal gold mining at Naungtalaw inn in Ayeyawady river in Waingmaw township. The action was taken under the Myanmar Mines Law.

Similarly, on 6 January, a combined team confiscated K7,765,000 worth of duty-free house paint jerricans and energy drinks from three vehicles (approximately K37 million) in Myawady township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, an unregistered Toyota Mark II (estimated value of K7 million) was seized at the combined checkpoint on Monywa-Mandalay Road in Sagaing township and the action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

Therefore, eight arrests (approximately K77,765,000) were made on 5 and 6 January, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

DRUGS were seized in Mayangon, Hmawby and Monghkat townships, according to Myanmar Police Force.

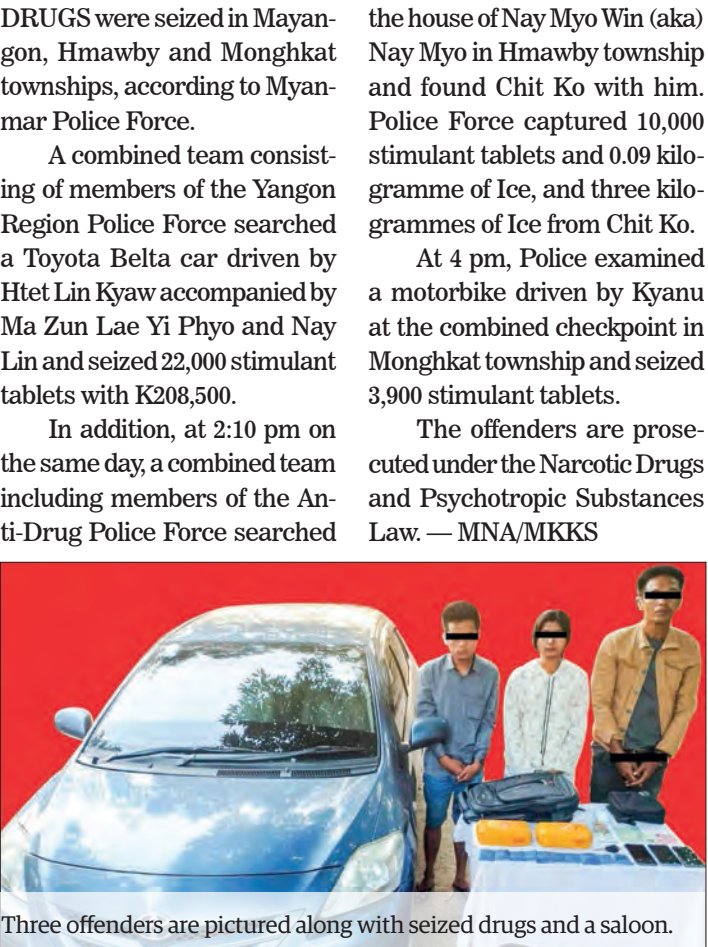
A combined team consisting of members of the Yangon Region Police Force searched a Toyota Belta car driven by Htet Lin Kyaw accompanied by Ma Zun Lae Yi Phyo and Nay Lin and seized 22,000 stimulant tablets with K208,500.

In addition, at 2:10 pm on the same day, a combined team including members of the Anti-Drug Police Force searched the house of Nay Myo Win (aka) Nay Myo in Hmawby township and found Chit Ko with him. Police Force captured 10,000 stimulant tablets and 0.09 kilogramme of Ice, and three kilogrammes of Ice from Chit Ko.

At 4 pm, Police examined a motorbike driven by Kyanu at the combined checkpoint in Monghkat township and seized 3,900 stimulant tablets.

The offenders are prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA/MKKS

Drugs seized in Mayangon, Hmawby and Monghkat townships



Three offenders are pictured along with seized drugs and a saloon.

75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day commemorative booths, traditional food booths, decorated floats continue attracting high public interest

THE fourth-day display of 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day commemorative booths, traditional food booths and decorated floats continued at Taboung Ground near Nay Pyi Taw Uppatasanti Pagoda yesterday and was crowded with a large number of students, youths and people.

The ethnic cultural troupes welcomed participants and the officials of decorated floats from ministries, regions/states including Nay Pyi Taw Council explained the displayed cultural culture, regional knowledge, the statues of well-known leaders and activities for socioeconomic development.

Moreover, the booths featuring photos showing customs and traditions, wearing styles, local commodities, famous recreational sites, local products, natural resources, development programmes, public services and records for human resources development were also packed with visitors.

The ethnic traditional choral dance troupes sang and performed in front of their decorated floats and the people joined the dance happily and took commemorative photos with the dance groups.

The 40 booths of local products of ministries and 15 booths of traditional food booths, totalling 55 booths were also crowded with people. The traditional food booths earned over 50 million while the souvenir and local products were over 10 million daily and the products were out



of stock for good transactions.

Moreover, the fund-raising shops of the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Industry, Myanmar Economic Corporation and Ottara District Red Cross Brigade of Myanmar Red Cross Society sold the foodstuff and commodities at fairer prices at the event.

The students, youths and public participated in drawing lots, quizzes, games and hand-painting programmes.

In the evening, the artistes of MRTV and the Department of Fine Arts and the ethnic traditional choral dance troupes entertained the public with songs and dances.

The regions/states and self-administered regions/zones flags were erected along the roads and roundabouts in Nay Pyi Taw marking the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day and were decorated with colourful lights at night.

Myanmar Police Force also provided security measures by

cooperating with Tatmadaw members and Fire Brigade members and the clinics were also opened in case of emergency cases.

The Traffic Police Force conducted road safety measures

during the event.

The exhibition comprises 25 booths of ministries, 15 booths of Nay Pyi Taw, regions and states and 15 booths of traditional foods, totalling 55, showing 26 decorated floats from ministries, 15 decorated floats from Nay Pyi

Taw and regions and states, a decorated float marking the Independence Day, a Union decorated float and five decorated floats for Tatmadaw, totalling 48, Admission is free for the people and they can visit between 4 and 8 January. — MNA/KTZH



The booths and decorated floats receive more public enthusiasm as people are seen thronging at the event yesterday.



A general view of the ice-capped mountains in PutaO. PHOTO: PHONE KAN (PUTAO)

Scenery of ice caps strikes mountains to north and west of PutaO

SPLENDID white ice caps were able to be seen in the northern and western mountains of the northernmost city of Myanmar, PutaO, starting on 6 January.

These gigantic mountains fill their majority with snowy white ice between December and April. Ice caps turn into liquid in rainy seasons, creating an excavation site for residents to seek natural medicinal herbs — Cordyceps, Fritillaria cirrhosa and Coptis teeta.

Enormous mountains serve as a lush green forest in the rainy season and evolve into a milky white range of hills in the winter and summer seasons, benefiting the PutaO regional tourism. — Phone Kan (Putao)/CT

CURRENT AFFAIRS

57 killed in 169 car accidents on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway in 2022

ALTOGETHER 169 traffic accidents occurred on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway in 2022 leaving 57 people dead, according to the Nay Pyi Taw Expressway Traffic Police Force.

There were 280 injuries, and 159 opened criminal cases in 169 traffic accidents from 1 January to 31 December 2022, according to the police data.

Fifty-seven – 51 males and six females were killed with 280 – 175 males and 105 females – being wounded in all accidents.

In addition, there were 84 casualties and 394 injuries in 240 accidents in 2021, and 84 were killed and 446 wounded in 412 accidents in 2020, respectively. — TWA/MKKS



An overturned bowser was seen in the accident on the PyinOoLwin-Lashio Road on 22 December 2022.

Hundreds line up for passport renewal at Myanmar Embassy in Thailand



Myanmar migrant workers are seen queuing for passport renewal at the Myanmar Embassy in Thailand on 7 January 2023.

HUNDREDS of Myanmar migrant workers waited in a long queue in front of the Myanmar Embassy to Thailand on 7 January to receive tokens to get an appointment for passport renewals, said Myanmar workers in Bangkok.

“Some have queued since yesterday. When we arrived at the embassy in the morning, the number reached 2,000. As the embassy gives a token between 9 am and 12 pm, thousands of people could not get one,” said Ko Ye Lin Aung from

Pakokku, who is working at a restaurant in Bangkok.

“The embassy is fully booked until mid-February for now. Myanmar Embassy to Thailand notified the citizens working in Thailand of the token system on 7 January to renew a passport from 7 January. The tokens can be requested between 9 am and 12 pm on Saturdays.

The embassy gives priority to those workers whose passport validity has already expired. Those expired passport

holders can renew the passports in proper sequence, as per the statement. The representatives are not allowed and it can be done only in person. Those passports with certain validity cannot be renewed.

At present, all the passport offices in Myanmar have been temporarily suspended since early January 2023, posing the citizens’ difficulty to renew their passports. Halting passport service raised the concerns of those willing to go abroad. — TWA/EMM

Myanmar Travel Fair-2023 to be held at Secretariat Office for three days

THE Myanmar Travel Fair-2023 will be held at the Secretariat Office in Yangon between 27 and 29 January.

The three-day event will be from 9 am to 6 pm and admission is free for the people.

Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association organizes the event aiming to develop the tourism industry of the country, link with the tourism businesses in revising the industry and introduce the travel companies providing reliable information for inbound/outbound trips.

The event will include about 50 booths of travel companies, airlines, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, insurance companies, local products and travel agencies.

The theme of Myanmar Travel Fair-2023 is “making trips with reliable, licenced travel agents”, said an official of the event.

The visitors can participate in the Lucky Draw section for inbound/outbound air tickets and trips.

Those who want to open booths at the event can contact 09-5135657 and 09-2005648 of the Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA). — TWA/KTZH

Commodity prices inflate in early 2023

YANGON markets saw a bumpy ride in prices of Shan garlic, onion, potato and palm oil on 6 January 2023.

The prices of garlic from Shan State (Aungban area) are set for new peaks on 6 January at K4,000-5,200 per viss, while the Kyukok garlic variety fetched K3,375-3,400 per viss.

The low inventory pushed up the price of Shan garlic, said a seller. The new garlic is likely to enter the market earlier than usual. Those are usually sundried in front of the warehouses in Yangon if there is moisture content.

About 180,000 visses of onions flowed into mar-

kets on 5 and 6 January yet the price is up by K100-200 per viss. Moreover, 100,000 visses of onions each from Myingyan and Myittha areas were supplied to the market that day. The onions stood at K1,800-2,400 per viss from the Myingyan area and K2,350-2,700 from the Myittha area on 6 January. The prices moved in the range between K1,700-2,600 per viss on 3 January. The price hit a high of K2,400 per viss at a Pakokku commodity depot with the supply of 60,000 visses of onions on 6 January. The onions were priced at K1,950-2,100 only with a bulk supply of 77,000 visses of onions on 3 January. Similarly, the highest



A retail shop is seen with kitchen groceries.

price of onions was only K2,000 per viss with 94,440 visses of onions entering the Myingyan commodity depot on 3 January. The price increased slightly to

K2,150 per viss on 4 January with a low supply of 30,000 visses of onions. Likewise, Myittha onions were valued at K2,350 per viss on 3 January and then

rose to K2,500 per viss on 6 January.

The price of potatoes also climbed to low supply. Yangon market saw an entry of 18,000 visses on 3

January, 24,000 on 5 January and 36,000 on 6 January. The prices of potatoes from Shan State remained stable at K1,650-2,050 per viss and increased a bit on 6 January. New Chinese potatoes also increased to K2,100 per viss on 6 January from K1,650-1,700 per viss, while old Chinese potatoes were priced at K2,400 per viss.

Moreover, the palm oil prices moved up to K5,600-5,620 per viss on 5 January. The wholesale price continued to rise at K6,100 per viss on 6 January, KO Aung, a seller at Nyaungpinlay market said. The figures showed an increase of K800 per viss in recent days. — TWA/EMM

LOCAL BUSINESS

YSX annual report: stock-market chart up in 2022

THE stock trading by seven listed companies on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) in 2022 accumulated K7.424 billion from 1,667,434 shares which soared from 887,969 shares worth K4.63 billion in 2021, according to the annual report released by the exchange.

In 2020, K12.6 billion worth of 1.87 million shares by six listed companies were traded on the YSX, whereas over 2.4 million shares from five listed companies, valued at K13.39 billion, were traded on the exchange in 2019.

Both continuous trading and block trading charts on YSX climbed in 2021 compared with that of 2021.

At present, shares of seven listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co Ltd (TMH), the Ever Flow River Group Public Co Ltd



The panel is seen displaying stock-market indexes at the Yangon bourse.

(EFR) and Amata Holding Public Co Ltd (AMATA) were traded in the equity market. The share prices per unit were closed at K8,900 for FMI, K3,300 for MTSH, K7,700 for MCB, K19,000 for FPB, K2,600 for TMH, K2,700 for EFR and K5,000 for AMATA respectively in December 2022.

Trading of 61,435 shares valued at K282 million were recorded on the exchange in January 2022 and the trading vol-

ume rose to 80,291 shares in February, with an estimated value of K414.9 million. A total of 52,408 shares with an estimated value of K233.634 million were traded on the exchange in March. The trading value slightly rose to K276 million with 53,059 shares traded on the exchange in April. The equity market saw K314 million with 55,024 shares traded in May, K200.63 million with 40,062 shares in June,

K246.9 million with 72,843 shares and K370 million with 109,809 shares in August. The highest trading with 347,597 shares worth K1.624 billion was recorded in September. Then, the market witnessed a downturn in trading with 143,034 shares worth K687.12 million in October. The YSX was in a bear market with a trading value of over K558 million from 103,292 shares in November and K402 million from 59,241

shares in December, according to the monthly report of the YSX.

The stock markets worldwide have reported their largest declines since the 2008 financial crisis. Similarly, the local equities market was also scared by the COVID-19 crash in previous years, a market observer points out.

People would keep emergency savings and purchase the safe haven asset gold, rather than make investments amid the COVID-19 crisis and political changes, he added.

Nonetheless, Myanmar's securities market has been able to continue operating without stopping trading.

Additionally, YSX launched a pre-listing board (PLB) on 28 September 2020 to provide unlisted public companies with fund-raising opportunities and build a bridge toward listing on YSX.

Moreover, YSX stock investment virtual series

2022 launched in December through the YSX YouTube channel and other social media platforms every weekend of December 2022, including three sessions; Insights talk with listed companies, Investment presentations by securities companies and Panel discussion with market experts.

Furthermore, block trading of YSX can be done with the minimum order quantity (10,000 stocks) or with the stocks of trading value of K30 million starting from 1 September 2022.

Next, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) has allowed foreigners to invest in the local equity market since 20 March 2020.

The YSX was launched four years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment webinars and training courses. — KK

Myanmar ships over 1.2 mln tonnes of various pulses worth \$900 mln to external markets in past 9 months

MYANMAR conveyed more than 1.2 million tonnes of various beans and pulses worth US\$900 million to foreign trade partners in the past nine months of the current financial year 2022-2023, the Ministry of Commerce's data indicated.

The country shipped over 1,075,537.894 tonnes of pulses and beans valued at \$854.738 million to foreign markets by sea, and over 163,571.529 tonnes valued at \$114.791 million were sent to the neighbouring countries through land borders, totalling 1,239,109.423 tonnes worth \$969.529 million.

Myanmar exported over 2 million tonnes of various pulses worth US\$1.57 billion to foreign trade partners last financial year 2020-2021. The country shipped 1.24 million tonnes of pulses and beans valued at \$966.4 million to foreign markets through the sea

route, and 786,920 tonnes worth \$604.3 million were sent to the neighbouring countries through land borders.

Myanmar primarily exports black gram, green gram and pigeon peas. Of them, black gram and pigeon peas are mainly sent to India while green grams are shipped to China and Europe.

India has growing demand and consumption requirements for black gram and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2022, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to

India under that annual quota.

The prevailing price of black gram is K1.64 million per tonne, while pigeon peas fetch K1.766 million per tonne, according to Yangon Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Bayintnaung Commodity Centre).

In late August, the dollar against Kyat appreciated to K4,500 in the black market. Following that, the black gram price reached a record high of K2.1 million per tonne.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes of black gram and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas. Myanmar is the top producer of the black gram that is primarily demanded by India, while pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are cultivated in Australia and African countries besides Myanmar. — NN/EMM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 7 January 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K1,950
Octane 95	K2,020
Diesel	K2,200
Premium Diesel	K2,280

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,196,000 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,745,000 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.

Set great aim to secure sports victories in the international arena

S PORT movements can help everybody strengthen both physical and mental health and fitness. Likewise, every country has the chance to enjoy higher prestige thanks to achieving victories in sports events.

Victories of sports events stimulate the patriotic spirit and national spirit of not only athletes but audience citizens. Movements of athletes representing the mother country can bring honour to the State and the citizens. Everybody vividly saw that the powerful stipulation of the sports events in the recent World Cup showed the national spirit of football fans of relevant countries.

Indeed, uplifting sports skills can be defined as safeguarding the prestige of the State and improving the mindset of youths. Moves of victorious national teams can change the mindsets of the people to make concerted efforts for serving the interests of the nation and the people. So, the entire people need to join hands with the government in revitalizing Myanmar’s sports activities so as to develop the sports sector within the coming decade.

Importantly, it is necessary to organize the internal sports competitions one after another under the sports calendar and send sports contingents abroad to compete in the international games with the vision to emerge qualified athletes. On the other hand, the authorities need to arrange to grant the victorious athletes who brought honour to the State for the daily life of the remaining part of their life span.

another under the sports calendar and send sports contingents abroad to compete in the international games with the vision to emerge qualified athletes. On the other hand, the authorities need to arrange to grant the victorious athletes who brought honour to the State for the daily life of the remaining part of their life span.

It can be said that sports victories can be dubbed as the achievements of the nation. Hence, it is necessary to accomplish the aims to secure victories in relevant sports events at the regional level, Asian level and international levels from the movements on the health and fitness of the entire national people.

If so, the prestige and integrity of the nation and the nation can be gilt in the future. To be able to do so, the authorities are implementing an objective: “to enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation” included in nine objectives of the State.

In reality, Myanmar’s sports sector requires development in all aspects. It is necessary to set short- and long-term plans to carry out improvement of the sports standard of Myanmar steadfastly. In so doing, an emphasis must be placed on turning out talented athletes in respective sports events, nurturing the qualified trainers and coaches, conducting training for the athletes with the use of modern sports equipment and techniques and raising investment in the sports sector for ensuring the betterment of administration and supply measures.

Importantly, it is necessary to organize the internal sports competitions one after

Nasal swab can provide early warning of emerging viruses: Research

AS THE Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated, potentially harmful novel viruses can spread across the population long before the system for monitoring global public health is able to catch them.

However, Yale researchers have discovered that examining nasal swabs for the presence of a particular immune system component can help identify stealthy viruses that are missed by conventional tests, they write in the journal Lancet Microbe on

3 January.

“Finding a dangerous new virus is like searching for a needle in a haystack,” said Ellen Foxman, associate professor of laboratory medicine and immunobiology and senior author of the study, adding, “We found a way to significantly reduce the size of the haystack.”

Public health officials typically look to a few sources for warning signs of emerging disease. They study emerging viruses in animals that may transmit the infection to humans. But deter-

mining which of the hundreds, or thousands, of new viral variants, represent a true danger is difficult. And they look for outbreaks of unexplained respiratory ailments, which was how SARS-Cov-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, was discovered in China late in 2019.

By the time an outbreak of a novel virus occurs, however, it may be too late to contain its spread.

An observation in her lab

For the new study, Foxman

and her team revisited an observation in her lab in 2017, which they thought may provide a new way to monitor for unexpected pathogens. Nasal swabs are commonly taken from patients with suspected respiratory infections and are tested to detect specific signatures of 10 to 15 known viruses. Most tests come back negative.

But as Foxman’s team observed in 2017, in a few cases the swabs of those who tested negative for the ‘usual suspect’

viruses still exhibited signs that antiviral defences were activated, indicating the presence of a virus. The telltale sign was a high level of a single antiviral protein made by the cells that line the nasal passages.

Based on that finding, the researchers applied comprehensive genetic sequencing methods to old samples containing the protein and, in one sample, found an unexpected influenza virus, called influenza C.

SOURCE: ANI



A nasopharyngeal swab, one type of nasal swab, is a test used to look for bacteria or viruses that cause respiratory infections. PHOTO: THOMAS KIENZLE/AFP



Book Title	- Poetry Talks
Writers	- Nyunt Wai Moe, Dr Soe Than
Publishing House	- City Discovery Publishing
Publication Date	- December 2022 (1 st Edition)
Price	- K6,500

Poetry Talks

By Nyunt Wai Moe-Dr Soe Than

THE title of the book under review is Poetry Talks. As its name suggests, this book discusses poetry or maybe, it means that the poems talk. The writer of the foreword said that as the original writers are poets, they know how to twist the title to make it a pun. Originally, they intended to hold a panel discussion under this title but this event had not happened, so they changed their mind and published this book instead.

In fact, they just compiled the poems they have composed and those they have translated into Myanmar. They have a sincere wish to share the poems they cherish. They merely want the readers to get the message and appreciate them. As you know, literary appreciation can inspire

readers to compose poems. Another point is that reading poems can relieve the readers of their stress and strain and the pain they are suffering from. Being engrossed in a poem enables the reader to read the mind of other people as to how they are feeling and what is making them stressed. It is said that the words in the poems have magical power, bearing profound meaning or connotation. Saya Nyunt Wai Moe said that reading between the lines can make the readers not only get the message but also have satisfaction.

The readers will have knowledge of how a poem is composed, the rhyme and rhythm of a poem, the poetic language, the syntax of a poem, the punctuation, the way

of reading a poem, the rationale behind the composition of a poem and why the poems are translated into another language. Additionally, the readers will learn why English poems are translated into Myanmar and vice versa, why should poems be composed, how they should be written and the tips for poem translation.

Furthermore, translation of the poems into another language is not merely a technical manipulation of grammar and syntax; this involves the art of transforming a composition into another in such a way that the underlying subtle meaning will not be lost. If the translator cannot carry the meaning into another language, the essence of the poem can evaporate and the poem can be spoiled

in toto, said Dr Soe Than.

In this regard, Saya Zeya Lin, who composes the poems and also translates them, quoted Robert, a great poet, saying that poems are lost in translation. What he meant is that poems should not be translated at all because the very essence of the poems will be lost upon translation. Nonetheless, Joseph, another great poet, said that poems can be obtained only through translation. He reasons that if the poems are not translated we will not even know that they exist. To avoid this, he said, translation is essential to enable people speaking another language to enjoy the poems. The necessity cannot be denied but if the translator is not well-versed in both languages—the source language and the target language and if he lacks knowledge of art and literature, his translations can be incorrect. Comprehension skill only is not enough for the translation of the poems. As long as he lacks the art of translation, he should not translate the poems. The difficulty encountered in translation has already been shared on social networks ages.

Reading this book under review will enable the readers to have some knowledge of the nature of poems and the art of translation as well as to appreciate the poems.



Book Title	- Anthology of Modern Japanese Poetry
Translator	- Zeya Lin
Publishing House	- Hnitkalamyar
Publication Date	- December 2022 (2 nd Edition)
Price	- K2,500

Anthology of Modern Japanese Poetry

By Edith Mascombe Shiffert And Yuki Sawa

THIS is the second book published by Hnitkalamyar Publishing House for poets and those studying the Poem Curriculum. The original book was written by two writers with the first one being Edith Mascombe Shiffert, a lady poet who is interested in poems from East Asia whereas the other being Yuki Sawa, a Japanese writer who is a professor of English at Kyoto Seika University in Kyoto in Japan. The seventh edition of the original book was published in 1993. This book was translated into English by Saya Zeya Lin, who is a poet. He is noted for his introduction of linguistics-based contemporary poems to the poets and poem readers in Myanmar.

This book includes poems composed by 12 Japanese poets. In his foreword carried in the first edition, the translator said, “I just want the Myanmar readers to taste the Japanese poems, to have some knowledge on how the Japanese poets were involved in the western poem movement and how they launched the Japanese modern poem movement. My objective is to enable the Myanmar readers to compare their poem trends and movements with the trend of Myanmar poems and the movement of Myanmar modern poems.” Only after 21 years, this book was published again for the second time. In the foreword of this second edition, he said, “the relationship between the poem

and the time is rather complicated and deep. What remains after merely having a glimpse is the poems bubbling up to the ceiling.”

The publisher said that there are three, or four more poems in this second edition. The way the modern Japanese poems broke through the old trend is the same as in Myanmar. And what is more, they are both influenced by the western style. The Japanese poets have been loyal to the Haiku format of traditional composition for more than one thousand years until 1882 when they started to try their pen of translation of western poems. Since then, the western style composition of the poems has exerted influence over the Japanese way of poem composition.

sition. Toson Shimazaki in his composition of Wanakashu poems has imitated the western style. Later in 1905, a collection of poems composed by 29 international poets was published. The title of the book is, “Kaichoon” which means the sound of the tide. Indeed, this is the introduction of symbolism. Commencing from this book, the genre of Japanese poems is composed in a freestyle, not strictly following the principle of rhyme.

Regarding this change, Shiro Murano, a famous Japanese poet, said, “This revolution has not only resisted the traditional form of poem composition but also called for introduction of a new style of poem composition. Certain people said that this revolution originated from the democratic movement while others said that this is merely the symbol of naturalism. Maybe, they are right. Nonetheless, what is logical is that the modern style of composition reflects the best of the contemporary situation.” The attitude of the Japanese modern poems is handed down by the poets from the Meiji Age. This is in fact the cultural heritage. The poets of today have been merely brushing up on the language of their predecessors up to the second half of this century.

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

Once in 50,000-year comet may be visible to the naked eye

A newly discovered comet could be visible to the naked eye as it shoots past Earth and the Sun in the coming weeks for the first time in 50,000 years, astronomers have said.

The comet is called C/2022 E3 (ZTF) after the Zwicky Transient Facility, which first spotted it passing Jupiter in March last year. After travelling from the icy reaches of our Solar System it will come closest to the Sun on 12 January and pass nearest to Earth on 1 February.

It will be easy to spot with a good pair of binoculars and likely even with the naked eye, provided the sky is not too illuminated by city lights or the Moon.



Considering the comet is out in space, it makes sense that you can see it from above the Earth as well as from the planet's surface. This photo was taken from the International Space Station (ISS). The comet is travelling 64 million miles away from Earth. On 9 July 2020, astronaut Robert Behnken captured an image of comet NEOWISE from the International Space Station. **PHOTO: NASA**

The comet “will be brightest when it is closest to the Earth”, Thomas Prince, a physics professor at the California Institute of Technology who works at the Zwicky Transient Facility, told AFP. Made of ice and dust and emitting a greenish aura, the comet is estimated to have a diameter of around a kilometre, said Nicolas Biver, an astrophysicist at the Paris Observatory.

That makes it significantly smaller than NEOWISE, the last comet visible with an unaided eye, which passed Earth in March 2020, and Hale-Bopp, which swept by in 1997 with a potentially life-ending diameter of around 60 kilometres.—AFP

International fusion energy project faces delays, says chief

AN international project in nuclear fusion may face “years” of delays, its boss has told AFP, weeks after scientists in the United States announced a breakthrough in their own quest for the coveted goal.

The International Thermo-

nuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project seeks to prove the feasibility of fusion as a large-scale and carbon-free source of energy. Installed at a site in southern France, the decades-old initiative has a long history of technical challenges and cost overruns.

Fusion entails forcing together the nuclei of light atomic elements in a super-heated plasma, held by powerful magnetic forces in a doughnut-shaped chamber called a tokamak.

The idea is that fusing the particles together from isotopes of hydrogen -- which can be extracted from seawater -- will create a safer and almost inexhaustible form of energy compared with splitting atoms from uranium or plutonium. ITER'S previously-stated goal was to create the plasma by 2025. But that deadline will have to be postponed, Pietro Barabaschi -- who in September became the project's director-general -- told AFP during a visit to the facility.

The date “wasn't realistic in the first place,” even before two major problems surfaced, Barabaschi said.—AFP



A man looks at a module being assembled at the International Thermo-nuclear Experimental Reactor project in Saint-Paul-les-Durance, France. **PHOTO: NICOLAS TUCAT/AFP**

Brazilian Amazon deforestation up 150% in Bolsonaro's last month

DEFORESTATION in the Brazilian Amazon rose 150 per cent in December from the previous year, according to government figures released Friday, a final bleak report for far-right ex-president Jair Bolsonaro in his last month in office.

Satellite monitoring detected 218.4 square kilometres (84.3

square miles) of forest cover destroyed in Brazil's share of the world's biggest rainforest last month, according to the national space agency's DETER surveillance programme. The area — nearly four times the size of Manhattan — was up more than 150 per cent from the 87.2 square kilometres destroyed in Decem-

ber 2021, according to the agency, INPE.

Bolsonaro, who was replaced on 1 January by leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, triggered an international outcry during his four years in office for a surge of fires and clear-cutting in the Amazon, a key resource in the race to curb climate change.—AFP

Green tech fights for limelight at CES gadget fest

AT the CES tech megashow in Las Vegas, it is unusual to see an entrepreneur hold up a plant and present it as the latest breakthrough in consumer technology.

But for NeoPlants co-founder Patrick Torbey, the gathering held annually just after the new year should not be thought of as “only about machine technology and electronics”.

“It's also about natural technology that we can leverage using these really cool engineering techniques,” Torbey told AFP. NeoPlants, a Paris-based startup, was showing off a bioengineered plant capable of purifying indoor air of toxic pollutants “by doing the work of 30 regular houseplants,”

according to its website.

Technology geared towards helping the environment has steadily increased in number at CES since the Sin City expo began fifty years ago.

But observers often doubt the seriousness of the consumer tech industry's commitment to protect the environment, with all the real excitement focused on smart TVs and robots instead of the more complicated and less profitable project of saving the planet.

“Until it really, really matters for consumers, it's just going to kind of be this trend that's over here on the side,” said Ben Arnold, research firm NPD's consumer electronics analyst.—AFP



Paris-based startup ACWA Robotics won plaudits at CES for a robot dedicated to the detection and prevention of water leaks in underground pipes. **PHOTO: AFP**

HEALTH/PANDEMIC
WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

US state's top court overturns six-week abortion ban

IN the first reversal of its kind, South Carolina's Supreme Court overturned a law banning abortion after six weeks on Thursday – inflicting a major setback for abortion opponents in the conservative, southern state.

The decision marked the first time a state top court has struck down such a law since the US Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to an abortion in June. "We hold that our state constitutional right to privacy extends to a woman's decision to have an abortion," the state court ruled.—AFP

Netherlands, Portugal require Covid tests for China arrivals

THE Dutch and Portuguese governments on Friday joined a growing number of nations requiring air passengers arriving from China to show a negative Covid-19 test upon entry.

More than a dozen countries have slapped fresh travel regulations on travellers from the world's most populous nation, which is struggling with a surge in Covid cases following its decision to relax strict virus restrictions.

The Dutch measures, which will come into force on Tuesday, are in line with European Union recommendations, the health ministry said.—AFP

Paris museum numbers recover but still hit by pandemic

WITH Asian visitors still largely absent, major Paris museums struggled to regain pre-pandemic numbers in 2022, despite a huge recovery from the previous year, official figures showed on Thursday.

The Louvre, the world's most visited museum, welcomed 7.8 million people last year — a 170-per-cent increase on 2021, but still down 19 per cent on 2019.

Louvre president Laurence des Cars said the numbers were "a great encouragement" — especially given that 60 per cent were seeing the museum for the first time and 45 per cent were below 25-years-old. Almost a fifth came from the United States, and visitors from western Europe were also up, despite continued travel restrictions in the first part of the year. —AFP



With Asian visitors still largely absent, major Paris museums struggled to regain pre-pandemic numbers in 2022, despite a huge recovery from the previous year. PHOTO:FRANCOIS GUILLLOT/AFP

China expects 2.1 billion trips during New Year holiday season



People queue for a taxi in front of Beijing Railway Station on 6 January 2023. PHOTO:KYODO

THE Chinese government said Friday it expects about 2.1 billion domestic journeys to be made in the country over a 40-day travel season that includes the weeklong Lunar New Year holidays beginning 21 January, amid fears the large-scale human migration could further spread COVID-19.

Starting Saturday, the num-

ber of journeys forecast to be made during the Spring Festival travel rush almost doubled compared to the same season the previous year as the Chinese government significantly relaxed its "zero-COVID" policy last month, removing stringent restrictions on people's movements.

However, the projected

number of journeys is only about 70 per cent of the pre-pandemic 2019 travel season, known as "Chunyun" in Chinese, according to the transport ministry.

Under strict antiviral measures maintained until last month in China, people were required to present negative COVID-19 certificates on a smartphone app, with travel records on a different app often needed to use public transport, enter shopping malls and access office buildings.

From Sunday, China will no longer require foreign arrivals to quarantine at designated facilities, making it easier for Chinese nationals to travel abroad.

Chinese online travel agency Trip.com Group said Thursday it has seen the number of overseas travel reservations for the upcoming seven-day Lunar New Year holidays jump 6.4 times compared with a year earlier, with the average price rising 32 per cent.—Kyodo

Germany's BioNTech plans UK trial of mRNA cancer therapy



Employees in cleanroom suits test the procedures for the manufacturing of the messenger RNA (mRNA) for the COVID-19 vaccine at the new manufacturing site of German company BioNTech on 27 March 2021 in Marburg, central Germany. PHOTO:AFP

GERMAN pharmaceutical company BioNTech, which developed a trailblazing Covid-19 vaccine, will trial a cancer treatment in Britain using the same mRNA technology, the company said on Friday.

Up to 10,000 people will receive the immunotherapy tailored to individual tumours by the end of 2030, either in trials or as an approved treatment, BioNTech said in a statement.

The project is part of a new agreement with the British government focused on "cancer immunotherapies, infectious disease vaccines, and expansion of BioNTech's footprint in the UK", the company said.

BioNTech will also open a new research and development centre with around 70 staff in Cambridge, as well as setting up a regional headquarters in London.

"Our goal is to accelerate the development of immunotherapies and vaccines using technologies we have been researching for over 20 years," said Ugur Sahin, CEO and co-founder of BioNTech.

The UK "successfully delivered Covid-19 vaccines so quickly", he said, demonstrating "that drug development can be accelerated without cutting corners if everyone works seamlessly together towards the same goal".

The messenger RNA method made its debut with the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine, which was the first jab against Covid to be approved in the West in late 2020.

Scientists believe mRNA vaccines, which provoke an immune response by delivering genetic molecules containing the code for key parts of a pathogen into human cells, could be a game-changer against many diseases.—AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

‘More the merrier’: Asia tourist hubs ready for China influx



The slump in Chinese visitors during the pandemic has hit South Korea’s tourism industry hard, a culture official ministry said. Tourists visit the Gyeongbokgung Palace in snow in Seoul, South Korea, 3 December 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA/WANG YILIANG**

IN Tokyo’s Asakusa tourist district, caricaturist Masashi Higashitani is dusting off his Chinese as he prepares for an influx of travellers after Beijing ends inbound quarantine rules.

“We used to say ‘ni hao’ all the time,” he said with a laugh as he whipped up a portrait in minutes.

Nearly 9.6 million Chinese visited Japan in 2019, the biggest group of foreign tourists by far and a massive leap from the 450,000 who came in 2003.

Higashitani estimates around 20 per cent of his customers were from China before the pandemic, and he and his employees picked up Chinese phrases from those visitors and each

other. He had to downsize and let staff go during the pandemic, so he is thrilled about the expected wave of arrivals, even though he admits some apprehension too.

“I wonder if an influx of too many of them might overwhelm our capacity. I’m also worried that we need to be more careful about anti-virus measures,” he told AFP.

Travellers arriving back in China will no longer need to quarantine from Sunday, removing one of the main barriers to travel for the country’s population.

The move, announced in late December, sparked a frenzy of trip planning, with searches spiking for Macau, Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand and South Korea.—AFP

Pakistan imports threatened as forex reserves hit eight-year low

PAKISTAN’S central bank forex reserves have plunged to an eight-year low of \$5.6 billion, posing a serious challenge for the country in financing imports.

Coupled with another \$5.8 billion held by commercial banks, the nation has \$11.4 billion in reserves -- enough to pay for just three weeks of imports, traders and economists say.

“This is a very grave situation. If things get worse, Pakistan will need to have its loans restructured,” said Mohammad Sohail, the head of economic watchdog Topline Securities in Karachi, alluding to a possible default.

Pakistan’s economy has crumbled alongside a simmering political crisis, with the rupee plummeting and inflation at decades-high levels, but devastating floods and a global energy crisis have piled on further



Shoppers are seen inside a shopping mall in Islamabad, Pakistan. **PHOTO: AAMIR QURESHI/AFP/FILE**

pressure.

The latest data from the central bank released overnight — for the week ending 30 December — show the country has half the foreign exchange reserves it held a year ago.

Servicing foreign debt and

paying for crucial commodities such as medicine, food and energy are among the chief concerns.

Thousands of shipping containers are held up at a Karachi port because banks have been unable to guarantee foreign exchange payments.—AFP

UK unveils anti-strike bill as trains halted again

THE UK government said Thursday it will introduce legislation requiring a minimum level of key public services during strike action, with the country once again crippled by transport walkouts. The UK has been hit by strikes across multiple sectors, including nurses and ambulance workers, raising fears that lives could be put at risk. In a written submission to parliament on Thursday, the government said it will consult to find the adequate level of coverage for emergency workers while hoping that voluntary agreements can be reached in non-emergency sectors.

Business Secretary Grant

Shapps said in the written statement that “as well as protecting the freedom to strike, the government must also protect life and livelihoods.

“While we hope that voluntary agreements can continue to be made in most cases, introducing minimum safety levels... will restore the balance between those seeking to strike and protecting the public from disproportionate disruption.”

The bill will encompass the health, education, fire and rescue, transport, border security and nuclear sectors.

Shapps said the measures were similar to those in place in other countries such as France and Spain.—AFP



The UK has been hit by strikes across multiple sectors, including nurses and ambulance workers, raising fears that lives could be put at risk. An ambulance drives past the Waterloo ambulance station in London on 21 December. **PHOTO: NIKLAS HALLE'N / AFP**

Shell says European windfall taxes to cost \$2 billion

BRITISH energy giant Shell on Friday said windfall taxes imposed by the European Union and UK following a surge in profits would cost the group about \$2 billion.

Shell said the exceptional tax bill, imposed after oil and

gas prices surged last year, would be included in its 2022 fourth quarter earnings to be confirmed next month.

Energy prices soared following the invasion of Ukraine by key oil and gas producer Russia, contributing heavily to

decades-high inflation worldwide.

That has led to governments subsidising rocketing energy bills for consumers, with help from the sector’s companies via additional taxing of profits.—AFP

Jack Ma to cede control of China’s Ant Group

JACK Ma will cede control of Chinese fintech giant Ant Group, the company announced Saturday, following a Communist Party crackdown on the nation’s tech sector that targeted the charismatic billionaire.

One of China’s most recognizable entrepreneurs, Ma once exemplified a generation of Chinese technology moguls with his rags-to-riches personal tale and penchant for public showmanship.

But the former English teacher has retreated from public view since Beijing torched Ant’s planned initial public offering in Hong Kong in 2020 following his barbed comments about government regulators. His company said in a statement on Saturday

it was adjusting its ownership structure so that “no shareholder, alone or jointly with other parties, will have control over Ant Group”.

Laying out the firm’s previous complex structure, the announcement showed Ma indirectly controlled 53.46 per cent of Ant’s shares and deemed him the company’s “control person”.

He will hold just 6.2 per cent of the voting rights following the adjustment, based on information in the statement. “The adjustment is being implemented to further enhance the stability of our corporate structure and sustainability of our long-term development,” the Ant statement said.—AFP



Jack Ma will cede control of Chinese fintech giant Ant Group, the company announced Saturday, following a Communist Party crackdown on the nation’s tech sector that targeted the charismatic billionaire. **PHOTO: ANT GROUP**

BMW unveils car that can change colour



BMW unveils car that can change colour. **PHOTO: BMW**

BMW unveiled Wednesday the prototype of a car that can change colour and showcases digital features like projecting driving data across the inside of the windshield.

This car, called i Vision Dee, was presented at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas at an event attended by “Terminator” actor and former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. BMW unveiled last year at this same show a car that could change hue but only from white to black and gray in be-

tween. But the body of the new car can change in a rainbow of colors, in one solid hue or in stripes or checks. BMW i Vision Dee is just an idea for now but it is supposed to shape the design of future cars from the luxury manufacturer.—AFP

Samsung Electronics says quarterly profits to plunge to eight-year low

SAMSUNG Electronics said Friday it expected its fourth-quarter operating profits to plunge 69 per cent to an eight-year low as the global downturn hammers demand for memory chips and smartphones.

The South Korean tech giant said operating profits for the October-December period had likely slumped to 4.3 trillion won (\$3.4 billion), a stinging year-on-year drop from 13.87 trillion won. It would be the company’s worst decline in quarterly profits since the third quarter of 2014. In a statement, Samsung said fourth-quarter profits were “well below current market expectations”, blaming the performance on macroeconomic issues, spurred by central banks around the world

raising interest rates.

Weak demand for memory chips was “greater than expected as customers adjusted inventories... to further tighten finances,” it said.

It added that this was “spurred by concerns over deteriorating consumer sentiment caused [by]

continued high global interest rates and weak economic outlooks”. Against that backdrop, the Galaxy smartphone maker also “saw a significant drop in the memory business results due to lackluster demand and also weaker sales of smartphones,” it added.—AFP



A woman walks past an advertisement for the Samsung Galaxy S21 smartphone at a Samsung Electronics store in Seoul. **PHOTO: AFP**

Canada’s exports drop 2.3% in November

CANADA’S merchandise exports decreased 2.3 per cent in November, in large part because of a decline in exports of energy products, Statistics Canada said Thursday. Meanwhile, imports were down 2.1 per cent, partly on lower imports of consumer goods. As a result, Canada’s merchandise trade balance with the world went from a surplus of 130 million Canadian dollars (104 million US dollars) in October to a deficit of 41 million Canadian dollars (32.8 million US dollars) in November, the national statistical agency said.

According to the agency, exports of energy products fell 4.7 per cent in November, a fifth consecutive monthly decline. Notable decreases were observed in several subcategories. Coal led the way, down 24.3 per cent with lower exports to Asian countries.—Xinhua

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MITRA BHUM VOY.NO. (135W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MITRA BHUM VOY.NO. (135W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **8-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINE

GLOBAL
AFFAIRS

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

World food prices hit record high in 2022



The Black Sea Grain Initiative, brokered by the United Nations and Türkiye, was set up to reintroduce vital food and fertilizer exports from Ukraine to the rest of the world. PHOTO: XINHUA

WORLD food prices fell for a ninth month in a row in December but hit their highest level on record for the full year in 2022, UN data showed Friday.

Food prices soared to a monthly record high in March after Russia invaded agricultural powerhouse Ukraine, a major supplier of wheat and cooking

oil to the world.

But prices have dropped since then, with more relief brought by a deal brokered by Türkiye and the United Nations in July that lifted a Russian naval blockade on Ukrainian grain exports.

The Food and Agriculture Organization said Friday its

price index, which tracks the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities, fell to 132.4 points in December, a 1.9 per cent drop from November.

It was also one per cent lower than in December 2021.

But the index was 14.3 per cent higher overall in 2022 compared to the previous year as it reached an all-time high of 143.7 points.

“Calmer food commodity prices are welcome after two very volatile years,” FAO chief economist Maximo Torero said in a statement.

“It is important to remain vigilant and keep a strong focus on mitigating global food insecurity given that world food prices remain at elevated levels,” he said. Torero said many staples are near record highs, with prices of rice rising and “still many risks associated with future supplies”.—AFP

Putin’s unilateral ceasefire due to have started in Ukraine

A brief ceasefire declared by Russian President Vladimir Putin but dismissed by Ukraine as an empty gesture was due to have taken effect on Friday in what would be the first full pause since Moscow’s invasion in February 2022.

Putin’s order to stop fighting for 36 hours during the Orthodox Christmas came after Moscow suffered its worst

reported loss of life of the war and as Ukraine’s allies pledged to send armoured vehicles and a second Patriot air defence battery to aid Kyiv. A senior Ukraine official said shortly after the supposed start of Russia’s pause in fighting that Moscow’s forces had struck the southern city of Kherson in an attack that left several people dead or wounded.—AFP

Russian ex-prisoners released after fighting in Ukraine

THE first group of Russian prisoners offered an amnesty in return for fighting in Ukraine has been released, the head of a mercenary group that employed them said in a video published on Thursday.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner group, was seen in

the video speaking to a group of men — some of them injured — whose faces were blurred.

“You’ve worked through your contract. You worked honourably, with dignity,” Prigozhin said in the video published by Russia’s Ria Novosti news agency.—AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Iran arrests journalist who interviewed inmates’ families: media

IRANIAN authorities have arrested a journalist who published interviews with families of death row inmates sentenced in connection with nationwide protests, the reformist daily Etemad said Friday.

Fourteen Iranians have

been sentenced to death in connection with the unrest triggered by Mahsa Amini’s death in custody on 16 September.

The 22-year-old Iranian Kurd had been arrested by morality police in Tehran for an alleged breach of the Islamic

republic’s dress code for women.

“Mehdi Beikoghli, head of the political service at Etemad daily, was arrested last night,” the newspaper said on its website.

In recent weeks the journalist, the latest news worker to be arrested in Iran, interviewed several families of people sentenced to death over the protests.

Two men, both aged 23, were executed last month in connection with the demonstrations which Iranian authorities call “riots”. Twelve others have been sentenced to hang, according to an AFP tally based on official statements. Half are awaiting retrial.

Foreign-based rights groups and campaigners say dozens more protesters face charges punishable by death.—AFP



A man reads the Iranian newspaper Etemad. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ ATTA KENARE/AFP

France has ‘debt of justice’ to slain Kurds: relative



The unsolved 2013 murder of three Kurdish women activists in Paris has been an open wound for their community. PHOTO: AFP

“IT’S here in Paris where my sister and her friends were killed,” said Metin Cansiz, the brother of Kurdish activist Sakine Cansiz, who was gunned down in January 2013.

“France has a debt of justice towards us.”

His eyes are red and his hands tremble as he looks back on the fate of his sister,

killed in the French capital on the night of 9 January 2013.

Cansiz, a white-haired 61-year-old, was speaking to AFP days before the 10th anniversary of the still-unsolved slayings. His family, he said, had lost a loved one “sacrificed” on the altar of Franco-Turkish relations.—AFP



US Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy talks to reporters in Statuary Hall after being elected Speaker in the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol Building on 7 January 2023 in Washington, DC.
PHOTO: AFP

After bitter Republican dispute, McCarthy named US House speaker

REPUBLICAN favourite Kevin McCarthy was named speaker of the US House of Representatives on Saturday as he finally quelled a fierce rebellion among his party's ranks that had paralyzed the lower chamber of Congress for days.

McCarthy was always the frontrunner to lead the Republican-led House, but his victory in the small hours of the morning was almost derailed by a right-wing revolt in his party

that extended the contest to a historic 15 rounds of voting.

The speaker wields huge influence in Washington by presiding over House business and is second in line to the presidency, after the vice-president.

McCarthy had been hoping to secure the gavel in the 14th round before midnight Friday but suffered a shock defeat amid astonishing scenes of Republican infighting as he

came up short by just one vote out of more than 400 cast.

As Matt Gaetz voted "present" to deny McCarthy the gavel, the disappointed Republican leader went over to talk to the Florida lawmaker-elect face-to-face.

Gaetz pointed a finger at McCarthy, who began retreating as Alabama's Mike Rogers lunged at Gaetz and had to be held back with a restraining arm across his face.— AFP

WORLD: TOP STORIES

Wikimedia disputes activist claims of Saudi 'infiltration'

THE Wikimedia Foundation, which hosts online encyclopedia Wikipedia, has disputed a report by activists claiming it found evidence the Saudi Arabian government "infiltrated" its team in the region. The claim was made by Beirut-based digital rights group SMEX and Washington-based Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN) founded by Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was murdered in 2018 inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

In a joint statement on Thursday, the two groups alleged a Wikimedia investigation "revealed that the Saudi government had infiltrated the highest ranks in Wikipedia's team in the region".—AFP

China's big-data tech industry improves greatly: white paper

A white paper on big data released by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT) showed that the overall level of China's big-data technology industry improved significantly, Thursday's edition of Science and Technology Daily reported. According to the white paper, China's big-data development environment continues to improve, innovation capacity continues to be enhanced, and the market outlook is widely recognized. The white paper pointed out that in 2021, the number of published papers in the field of big data in China accounted for 31 per cent of the world, and the total number of accepted patents related to big data accounted for over 50 per cent of the world, ranking first.—Xinhua

Widely decried, in Colombia 'blackface' celebrates diversity

THE practice of blackface is denounced as racist in the United States and many other countries. In Colombia, it is a key element of a festival to celebrate diversity.

The Carnaval de Negros y Blancos (Carnival of Blacks and Whites) gathers thousands of revelers from 28 December to 6 January each year in Pasto in southwest Colombia.

Billing itself as a celebration of equality, it has been held for more than a century in a region home to many Afro-Colombians and Indigenous communities heavily marked by racial and economic inequality.

"Welcome to the only party where painting one's face is World Heritage!" the festival website proclaims.

The carnival, one of Colombia's biggest, is inscribed on UNESCO's "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity." Every year, celebrations kick off with giant wa-



The festival is billed as a celebration of diversity. **PHOTO: AFP**

ter battles followed by bonfires on 31 December; the burning of wooden or straw puppets, and a costume parade.—AFP



Margaret Atwood, pictured in 2019, was reportedly a target of an alleged scam to steal unpublished manuscripts. **PHOTO: ANGELA WEISS / AFP**

Italian pleads guilty to manuscript scam that shook literary world

AN Italian man admitted Friday to stealing more than 1,000 unpublished manuscripts, including from distinguished authors, solving a mystery that had rocked the literary world for years.

Filippo Bernardini, 30, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud, federal prosecutors

in New York announced in a statement.

Bernardini, who worked in London for publisher Simon & Schuster, impersonated agents and publishers over email to obtain novels and other works from writers and their representatives.

The scam had been known

in literary circles for several years with Margaret Atwood, Ian McEwan and Sally Rooney among the novelists reportedly targeted.

It became public knowledge in January last year when Bernardini was arrested by FBI agents at New York's JFK Airport.—AFP



Myanmar star player Kyaw Ko Ko (left) hold the Shan United jersey as he has joined the football club for the 2023 Myanmar National League season. PHOTO: SUFC

Defending Champion Shan United start preparing for new season

MYANMAR National League club Shan United has started preparations for the new season and has signed striker Kyaw Ko Ko as the first player signing.

The Shan United team hopes to win the MNL scoring championship for four consecutive seasons in the next season, as they will also have to compete in international club competitions, so they will make a lot of preparations. Kyaw Ko Ko is Myanmar's top striker and is playing in My-

anmar clubs after playing in Thai clubs for a long time.

After playing in Thai clubs for a long time, he is playing in Myanmar clubs. Kyaw Ko Ko played for Myanmar clubs Zeyar Shwe Myay and Yangon United from 2009 to 2018, before moving to Thai clubs in 2018.

Kyaw Ko Ko joined Thai clubs: Chiang Rai United, Samut Prakan, Sukhothai, Chiang Mai United, Phrae United and Rayong from 2018 to 2022.

However, Kyaw Ko Ko suffered a serious knee injury and had to undergo surgery in the first match at Chiang Rai United, so he had to rest for a long time.

Shan United is the current champion of the Myanmar National League Championship and has been the champion for the last three consecutive seasons.

Shan United team will recruit many new local and foreign players for the new season. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Didier Deschamps to remain France coach until 2026 World Cup

DIDIER Deschamps said on Saturday he will remain France coach until the 2026 World Cup after leading the team to the final of the last two editions.

Deschamps' contract expired after the World Cup in Qatar where defending champions France lost to Argentina in a penalty shootout after a thrilling final on 18 December.

It had been reported that French Football Federation (FFF) president Noel Le Graet only wanted to give Deschamps a two-year extension until the 2024 European Championship but the 54-year-old coach had insisted on staying in charge until the next World Cup in the United States, Canada and

Mexico.

"I am going to announce something which for me is an immense pleasure, and that is

that the president has decided to extend (my contract) until 2026," Deschamps said at the FFF general assembly.—AFP



Didier Deschamps walks past the World Cup trophy after France lost the final to Argentina. PHOTO: 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.

Beckham's son Romeo joins Brentford reserves on loan

ROMEO Beckham, the 20-year-old son of former England captain David Beckham, has joined Premier League Brentford's reserve team on loan from Inter Miami II for the rest of the season. The midfielder, who had a spell with Arsenal's academy as a child, has spent the past couple of months training with his new side to maintain fitness during the off-season in America. "I'm very proud and very happy to be here," he said. "It was a fun season (in the USA) and there were a lot of ups and downs but I'm excited to come here and see what I can do."

"I came here at the start to keep fit during the off-season. The chance then came to come on loan here and I've never been so excited." Beckham joined Fort Lauderdale CF in 2021 before the reserve side were renamed Inter Miami II last year. He briefly featured in



Romeo Beckham has joined Premier League club Brentford's reserve team. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

a friendly against Barcelona in July for the first team at Inter Miami, who are co-owned by his father. Neil MacFarlane, manager of Brentford's B team, said: "We've been absolutely delighted with Romeo since he arrived with us.—AFP