

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.

Message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of Republic of Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing to ceremony to mark 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) of Kachin State Day

10 January 2023

Esteemed ethnic national brethren of the Kachin State,
Today, 10th January is the auspicious 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) of Kachin State Day for ethnic national brethren residing in the Kachin State.
On this significant day, I would like to extend my warmest greetings as well as the best wishes for the auspiciousness and physical and mental well-being of all ethnic national people born in the Union together with all Kachin ethnicities residing in the Kachin State.
All ethnic national people have been residing together in Myanmar since yore and standing tall among other countries across the world by sharing the future through thick and thin.

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Minbu solar-power plant completes 97% of Phase II groundwork



The general view of the Minbu solar power plant project under construction.

ABOUT 97 per cent of the groundwork for the second phase (40 MW) of the solar power project near Zeeaing village in Minbu district, Mgway Region, was completed, according to the in charge of the project.
The project was constructed on 2 February 2018 with an area of 836 acres at Gotegyi Field No 1273. On 2 June 2019, it started to generate 40 MW of power and 25 MW has already fed to the substation of An in Rakhine State and 15 MW to the Mann substation in Minbu.
From the beginning of the project, it was planned to implement the project in four phases – 40 MW each for Phase I,II and III and 50 MW for Phase IV.
The implementation of the second phase was delayed due to Covid-19, and the groundwork commenced on 7 December 2021, and it is 97 per cent completed. When the transformer and necessary electrical equipment used in the project arrived there and if the weather is fine, the installation work can be completed within one year, said U Nyunt Aung, plant manager of GEP (Myanmar) Co Ltd. — Zeyar Htet (Minbu)/KZW

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Well-educated human resources needed to materialize the genuine disciplined democratic system without fail

TO implement federalism compatible with geographical conditions, national characters and culture of the nation although many countries exercise democracy and federalism across the world. Necessities to turn out well-educated human resources in realizing the genuine disciplined democratic system without fail. Only when the number of educated persons is on the rise can nation-building tasks be accelerated for the promotion of the education sector.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the peace talk with the peace delegation led by General Yawd Serk, Chairman of the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) on 29 August 2022)

Judgements passed on 3 criminal special appeal cases; 9 civil special appeal cases heard

A special appeal tribunal consisting of Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo and Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union U Khin Maung Gyi, U Tin Hone, U Thein Ko Ko and Daw Thin Thin Nwet, was convened yesterday morning at the Supreme Court and passed the judgement on three criminal special appeal cases, No 83/2022 (Mon), 9/2022 (Bago) and 10/2022 (Bago).

In addition, a total of nine civil special appeal cases – No 48/2020 (Sagaing), 49/2020 (Sagaing), 9/2022 (Mandalay), 10/2022 (Mandalay), 11/2022 (Mandalay), 12/2022 (Mandalay), 13/2022 (Mandalay), 14/2022 (Mandalay) and 15/2022 (Mandalay) – were heard in accordance with the COVID-19 prevention and control guidelines. — MNA

Report to Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

1. Myanmar National Human Rights Commission receives complaint letters on violations of the human rights of citizens and also urges the departments concerned to resolve the cases by reviewing, inspecting and negotiating regarding the complaints.
2. If a citizen faces a violation of a citizen's fundamental rights mentioned in the Constitution, universal declaration of human rights and agreements on international human rights that the government ratified, he or she can report to the Chairman of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission at No 27, 6.5th-Mile, Pyay Road, Hline Township Yangon, with letters or in person or via Fax 01-654678 and website: www.mnhrc.org.mm for individuals, others or groups.
3. Human rights violation includes violations of child rights, women's rights and rights of persons with disabilities and if there are such violations of the rights of child, disabled and women across the nation, the people can report to the commission by themselves or an accountable person can report on behalf of them.
4. Complaint letters must be attached to the following document;
 - (a) Complainants' name, address and contact number (phone, Fax and e-mail if they have one)
 - (b) Fully documents covering what kind of violation of fundamental rights they face including pieces of evidence
 - (c) They must sign on pact proving the complaint is correct
 - (d) Copy of ID card
5. Currently, it is found out that the copy of ID cards is not included in complaint letters to the commission and so it is here urged the people to attach a copy of ID cards in their complaint letters to the commission without fail.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
27 December 2022

Honorary ceremony of doyen literati held in Bahan Township



The event to honour the literati who received honorary titles is in progress yesterday in Bahan Township.

A ceremony to honour those who received honorary titles awarded by the State Administration Council and religious titles awarded by Young Men's Buddhist Association (Central) was held in Gyatawya street, Bahan Township yesterday.

Myanmar Writers Association Chair Myanmar Press Council Chair National Literary Lifetime Award recipient Alinka Kyawswa U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe), the Myitta Pyaewa Buddhist Missionary leader, Pro-rector (academic/admin) of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University U Sein Maw and Bahan township administrator U Aung Ko Latt delivered opening speeches.

Biographies of the doyen literati were then read out by Bahan Township Writers Association Treasurer Daw Ni Ni Tin (Ni Ni – Myanmarsar). Alinka Kyawswa U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe) gave honorary gifts to doyen literati.

U Aye San (retired Maj-Gen Aye San of Thayawady/Thonze) and Bahan Township Writers Association Chair U Ko Ko Lay (Yankin Ko Ko Lay) spoke words of appreciation and thanks to conclude the event. — Bahan IPRD/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.

7 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 9 January, total figure rises to 633,724

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,724** after **seven** new cases were reported on 9 January 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **608,364**, including **10** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to **19,490** on 9-1-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. —MNA

Message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of Republic of Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing to ceremony to mark 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) of Kachin State Day

10 January 2023

FROM PAGE-1

The country had been prosperous during the period to safeguard the sovereignty and independence for ensuring the development of the socioeconomic life of the State and the people whenever all ethnic national people were in unison. At a time when their unity disintegrated with weakness in all aspects, the country fell under the colonial rule of tremendously powerful British colonialists, losing its sovereignty and independence.

Nonetheless, those from various areas of Myanmar including ethnic people who did not wish to accept the colonial rule could grasp the sovereignty with the sacrifice of life upholding the patriotic spirit in fighting against the colonialists. The 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day recently celebrated on a grand scale showed the result of unity among all ethnic national people. Hence, I would like to urge all ethnic national people to continue safeguarding their independence and sovereignty.

On 10 January 1948 when Myanmar regained independence, the first session of the Kachin State Council Congress designated the 10th January as “the Kachin State Day” as a gesture of honouring the formation of the Kachin State government. From then on, the commemorative day of the Kachin State has been held every year, and today’s celebration turns 75 years as well as the Diamond Jubilee. The Kachin State is home to more than 1.7 million population comprising Kachin ethnics such as Kachin, Htarom, Dalaung, Jingphaw, Gawri, Khakhu, Dulan, Lawwaw, Rawang, Larcheid, Zaiwah and Lisu together with Shan ethnics namely Tailay, Tailai, Tailon, Taisa and Taikhamti and Bamar ethnic and other ethnics amicably.

The Kachin State is the origin of Myanmar’s main artery Ayeyawady River through the combination of the Maykha and Malikha rivers, endowed with precious gems and minerals such as gold, jade and amber as well as the beautiful and pleasant natural environment. The scenic beauties of the whole year snow-capped mountains and the pleasant scene of the Myitsone (confluence of rivers) are invaluable and panoramically picturesque scenes of the state.

Dressing styles, traditional dances and literary cultural customs of Kachin ethnics are pleasant and these heritages of ethnics catches the attention of for-

eigners. The Manaw dance in which participants in traditional costumes present dancing in harmony is an impressive culture of Kachin ethnics.

All our ethnic people adore the traditional culture and national characteristics. Preservation and enhancement of national characteristics and national culture make the State and the nationals ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, bringing a lot of benefit to all. As our country is being built to have peace and tranquillity and development and build a Union based on democracy and federalism, now is a very important time for all to foster the national spirit.

The Kachin State endowed with pleasant scenes and plentiful natural resources has not been enjoying the natural beauties and not effectively utilize national resources in the development tasks of the state till today because of armed conflicts. Only when the area is peaceful and stable with the prevalence of law and order will it successfully implement the development projects.

The government is striving for building the Union based on democracy and federalism in accord with the desire of the entire ethnic national people. Strengthening the genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system and development of the nation primarily need peace and tranquillity, the prevalence of law and order, stability of the State and restoration of perpetual peace. Hence, an emphasis is being placed on restoring perpetual and durable peace and harmonious development across the nation for all ethnic national brethren.

To achieve success in peace processes, stakeholders and relevant organizations need to uphold the correct attitudes and the common desire for the sake of the State. The government on its part manages control of all measures without harming the peace processes. Everybody knows if the country cannot restore peace and stability, it will be far from the future tasks to build the Union based on the democratic system and federalism and development undertakings of the State. As such, I would like to notify all of reducing and stopping current terror acts and armed struggling lines.

The State Administration Council is focusing on the continuous implementation of the peace process in accord with the objective “Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nation-

wide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA” so as to build the Union based on genuine, discipline-flourishing democracy and federalism. Tatmadaw on its part has issued statements on ceasefire 21 times during more than four years period from 21 December 2018 to 31 December 2022 to suspend its military operations except for the time when defending the State and administrative mechanisms were harmed. Currently, the military operations and campaigns were further suspended for one more year from 1 January to 31 December 2023 except the time when State defence and administrative mechanisms would be harmed to continuously implement the peace talk processes in a practical manner and to restore perpetual peace the entire people aspire to.

I would like to urge all stakeholders in the Kachin State and the entire ethnic national people to harmoniously strive for serving the interests of the nation with a united strength based on the national spirit but anybody or any organization individually cannot achieve success.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren of the Kachin State,

Currently, the State Administration Council is assuming the responsibilities of the government in accord with the Constitution while implementing the five-point road map and nine political, economic and social objectives to ensure peace and stability of the State, undertake development tasks and improve socioeconomic lives of ethnic national people as much as it can.

Moreover, the government adopted the plans on transport, electrification, agriculture, livestock, education, health and human resource development for uplifting all sectors so as to improve the socioeconomy to have overall development of the nation including the Kachin State.

Democracy is an administrative system in that the people themselves elect their representatives to be authorized. The federal system is a concept to organize ethnics and tribes from different regions and states and divides the powers among them. Actually, the federal system is living in integration and sharing benefits. With regard to the Union based on a democratic system and federalism, entire ethnic national people are living in the Union together through thick and thin under the administrative system the ethnic national

people of the Union choose, and they all shall have the right of self-administration under the relevant constitutions of regions and states. If so, a genuine discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system will come out. For the time being, our State Administration Council is implementing the objectives and work plans with momentum in accord with the desire of ethnic national people.

Consideration and rationality, a highly intelligent quotient and genuine goodwill of all ethnic national people residing across the nation are very crucial in building a new peaceful, prosperous, modernized and developed democratic nation. They all should take everything into consideration for the sake of the whole nation as well as the entire people. They all have to objectively review their standing whether or not right or wrong. Likewise, I would like to urge all to nurture the youths who will shape the future of their State to have a widened scope of knowledge, forge a patriotic spirit and possess development of human resources.

As such, I firmly believe that all ethnic people would have the capability to overcome any difficulties, crises and challenges through patriotic spirit and solidarity based on the Union spirit of all ethnic national people in implementing the future plans of the State and the nation. Today is the time to initiate the restoration of perpetual peace across the nation which needs compulsorily to build the Union based on democracy and federalism the entire people aspire to. On the significant occasion of the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) of Kachin State Day, I disperse loving-kindness that may the entire ethnic people from the Kachin State have the essence of justice, liberty and equal rights.

That is why I send the message with a wish for all ethnic national people residing in the Kachin State to have the capability to initiate the emergence of peace and stability in the region and development undertakings and to serve the interests of the country, the state and the citizens from the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) of Kachin State Day which takes place today.

Senior General Thadoe Maha
Thray Sithu
Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma
Min Aung Hlaing
Prime Minister
Chairman, State Administration
Council

SAC members, Union ministers inaugurate Diamond Jubilee Kachin State Day ceremony, attend Myanmar Traditional Boxing Challenges

THE opening ceremony of the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Kachin State Day which falls on 10 January 2023 was held with the traditional Manaw dance revealing the unity of the indigenous peoples, on the lawn in front of the Kachin Government Office at 8 am yesterday.

State Administration Council members Jeng Phang Naw Taung, U MOUNG HAR, U Sai Lon Seng and U Shwe Kyein, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, U Maung Maung Ohn, U Hla Moe, U Thaung Han, U Aung Naing Oo, Dr Nyunt Pe, U Min Thein Zan, U Myo Thant and U Saw Tun Aung Myint, Deputy Ministers Maj-Gen Phyo Thant and U Zaw Aye Maung were present at the ceremony. Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan and members, Advocate-General



The inauguration ceremony of the Diamond Jubilee Kachin State Day is in progress in Kachin State yesterday (above and below).



SAC members, Union ministers and officials view the exhibits at the event .



The traditional boxing challenge is in action.

of Kachin State and ethnic traditional cultural troupes welcomed them with a traditional dance.

The ceremonies were opened by Union ministers and deputy ministers by cutting the ribbon.

Next, SAC members and officials, six Kachin tribes in Kachin State, five Shan clans and Bamar ethnic cultural troupes, trainees from the education degree college and the nursing school, and students from the Border Youth Development School happily enjoyed the traditional Manaw dance with the lead of Nau Shawng (leaders of Manaw dance).

Then, SAC members and officials viewed round the exhibition booths of respective departments.

Later, SAC members and the party cut the ribbon to open the Myanmar Traditional Boxing Challenges, co-hosted by the Sports and Physical Education Department and the Myanmar Traditional Boxing Federation (Upper Myanmar) to mark the Diamond Jubilee Kachin State Day, and then they watched the boxing matches.—Kachin State IPRD/CT

MoI Union Minister meets departmental staff in Myitkyina

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn met the staff of departments under the ministry at the Community Centre of Myitkyina Township in Kachin State yesterday.

Also present were Kachin State Social Affairs Minister U Win Ye Tun, township authorities, Kachin State Libraries Foundation Chairman writer Akyee Ko Ko (Katha) and writers.

During the meeting, the Union minister stressed the need to serve duties free from party politics, make efforts in services that bring benefits to the country and the public, the emergence of youths who love the country, plans to provide true and re-

al-time information and to be reliable media for the public and creative ways to draw interests of the people and young persons to the centre.

Then, Kachin State IPRD head U Hla Htay reported on activities of the department and public awareness programmes conducted by cooperating with writers and town elders in 2022, and the Union minister concluded the meeting.

Afterwards, the Union minister provided cash assistance to the staff. The Union minister and party also visited the Sub-Printing House (Myitkyina) and provided cash awards to the staff. — State IPRD/KTZH



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn holds a meeting with the departmental staff of the ministry yesterday in Kachin State.

MoH Union Minister receives Bangladeshi Ambassador



UNION Health Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win received the delegation headed by Bangladeshi Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

They discussed issues of promoting cooperation in the health sector of the two countries, the appointing of the director of

the World Health Organization Southeast Asian Regional Office, and the enabling of registering and distributing medicines and medical products manufactured by Bangladesh in Myanmar.

They also frankly exchanged views on sending health representatives to each country, and measures of prevention, control and treatment of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The deputy minister, the directors-general, the deputy permanent secretary and officials attended the meeting. — MNA/TS

The ambassador of Bangladesh to Myanmar calls on Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Award ceremony for article competition commemorating Diamond Jubilee Independence Day held

THE Ministry of Information organized an award-giving ceremony for Diamond Jubilee Independence Day commemorative article competition yesterday.

The competition intends to spread knowledge among the public, especially youths regarding the efforts to regain independence, the essence of independence during 75 years and protect independence with its great history.

A total of 96 literati and amateurs participated in the competition and experts of the Myanmar Writers' Association selected the winners.

The award ceremony was attended by Deputy Ministers U Ye



The award presentation event for the article competition in marking Diamond Jubilee Independence Day is in progress.

Tint, U Zaw Win, Dr Aye Tun and Dr Soe Win, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Myint Soe, Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung, departmental officials, winners and invitees.

After the remark by Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, officials gave away the first, second and third prizes including 15 special prizes to relevant winners.

Then, Captain Nyunt Win (retired) who won the first prize in the “Maintain the Union heritage for its sustainability” article expressed thanks on behalf of the winners, and the deputy ministers, officials and winners took commemorative photos. — MNA/KTZH

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Denmark to contribute K2 billion for Myanmar SMEs

DENMARK has pledged to contribute K2 billion for Myanmar's small and medium enterprises and the Responsible Business Fund (RBF) announced its sixth call for proposals by 9 January 2023.

RBF, the development assistance from Denmark, will provide funding for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to carry out renewable energy projects.

RBF aims to help support MSMEs that are grappling with power supply, high energy costs and a drop in production, and the families reliant on those businesses.



Denmark contributed K19.576 billion for 609 MSMEs across all regions and states in the past five years. This sixth call for proposals happened in November 2022, intending to cover at most K40 million (25 per cent of the total fund) for each project.

It encouraged the local MSMEs to implement innovative projects with the funds and increase the responsible behaviour of Myanmar enterprises.—TWA/EMM

A woman is pictured engaging in an SME relying on electricity.

112 persons without legal documents sentenced to jail in Bogale

THE Bogale township court sentenced 112 persons without legal documents to two to five years imprisonment on 6 January, according to Ayeyawady Region Police Force.

On 20 December 2022, a total of 112 Bengalis, including 12 children and 47 females without any official documents, entered by motorboat and were arrested near Kadonlay island in Bogale township. The action was taken against them under Section 6 (3) of the Myanmar Registration Act.

The court also sentenced five children aged under 13 to two years' imprisonment, seven children aged above 13 to three years' imprisonment and the rest – 53 males and 47 females – to five years' imprisonment each.

On 8 January, all the children were sent from the Pyapon prison to the Hnget-Aw-San Youth Training School in Kawhmu township of Yangon region. —TWA/MKKS



Bengalis are pictured being arrested in Bogale Township.

Emergency repairs of compressors of Yadana offshore natural gas pipeline cause reduced supply of gas

THE Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC) announced that a temporary power outage in some areas of Yangon was the consequence of emergency repairs of compressors in the natural gas pipeline of the Yadana offshore block.

The natural gas pipeline of Yadana offshore was totally shut down at 3 am on 9 January and it caused less power supply into the



Officials are seen overseeing emergency repairs.

National Grid, according to YESC.

The YESC also declared that emergency load shedding must be carried out part-time during emergency repairs for reduction of power pro-

duction. As such, arrangements are being made to ensure that there are no shortages in important places, though there will be temporary power failures in some places and townships.—TWA/MKKS

Myanmar bags US\$44 mln from export of over 12,000 MT of shrimps to foreign markets in 9 months

MORE than 12,355 metric tons of shrimp worth over US\$44 million were conveyed to foreign countries in the past nine months (April-December) of the current 2022-2023 Financial Year, according to the Fisheries Department.

The export volume this FY was up by 1,966 MTs compared to the 10,388 MTs registered in the corresponding period last FY.

The seaborne trade is the primary source for shrimp exports and shrimps are delivered to the neighbouring countries through the border posts. The fisheries export amounted to \$732.156 million in the 2018-

2019FY, \$858.96 million in the 2019-2020FY, \$785.021 million in the 2020-2021FY and \$481.657 million in the 2021-2022 mini-budget period.

Myanmar's fisheries products are yearly shipped to 45 countries. At present, live animals in the livestock sector are mainly exported to neighbouring countries via cross-border trade. To implement the commercial shrimp farming businesses, the shrimp larvae are imported from neighbouring countries. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation elaborated on the need for a pub-



The photo shows shrimps from the freshwater shrimp farms.

lic-private partnership to operate shrimp hatcheries in the country. Myanmar produced over

5,300 tonnes of freshwater and saltwater fish and shrimp in the 11 months of the 2019-2020FY,

with over 2,800 tonnes supplied by the saltwater fishing businesses. Between October and August of the 2019-2020FY, fisheries production stood at 1,055.66 tonnes by livestock businesses, 295.4 tonnes by fish farms, 1,120.74 tonnes by communal fishing enterprises and 2,844.83 tonnes by saltwater fishing businesses.

Myanmar's agriculture sector is the backbone of the economy, accounting for 30 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 68 per cent of the income of the rural communities, the ministry stated. — TWA/EMM

LOCAL BUSINESS

Watermelon, muskmelon prices set for highs



The prevailing prices stand at 3,500-4,400 Yuan per tonne for 855 watermelons, 3,800-4,800 Yuan for Taiwan watermelons and 5,000-6,000 Yuan for muskmelon depending on quality.

THE prices of watermelon and muskmelon that are exported to China via the Muse border are likely to remain on upward trends, said fruit traders engaged in the Muse border.

Sai Khin Maung from Khwanyo Fruit Centre remarked on 22 January that the market was seemingly active in the pre-Chinese New Year celebration.

The prevailing prices stand

at 3,500-4,400 Yuan per tonne for 855 watermelons, 3,800-4,800 Yuan for Taiwan watermelons and 5,000-6,000 Yuan for muskmelon depending on quality.

At the end of the last year 2022, the fruits did not fetch a good price due to low quality, Muse traders stressed.

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

Quality plays a crucial role in



the market so the traders called for the growers to supply watermelons and muskmelons of good quality.

Additionally, Sai Khin Maung added that they will face challenges to earn a strong market share in the post-coronavirus period.

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 re-

impacts. China has closed down the major border crossing Mang Wein from 30 March 2021 following the COVID-19 cases in Myanmar.

On 8 July 2021, the two-re-maining cross-border posts Ky-insankyawt and Panseng were suspended. As a result of this, the border trade between Myanmar and China was completely halted.

Among Sino-Myanmar border posts, the Kyinsankyawt border resumed operations on 26 November on a trial run.

On 8 January, some Si-no-Myanmar border crossings were declared to resume their operations, including Sinphyu, Nantaw and Mang Wein, which is a major border post between Myanmar and China. However, they are yet to be reopened.

At present, Myanmar daily delivers rice, broken rice, rubber, various beans and pulses, fish-ery products, chilli pepper and other food commodities to Chi-na through Kyinsankyawt by 100 trucks and building materials, electrical appliances, household goods and industrial raw materi-als are imported into the country by 40 trucks. — NN/EMM

Palm oil wholesale reference price on the rise

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil in the Yangon market continued to rise, 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. For the week ending 15 January, the price was set higher at K4,530 per viss. The figures showed an increase of K60 per viss.

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 transport costs, tariffs and banking services, and issuing the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil every week.

Regardless of 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 a reasonable price to 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 to offer palm oil at a subsidized rate. They sell palm oil at K4,750 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 import-ed through Malaysia and Indonesia. — NN/EMM



Edible oil is pouring into a bottle for a consumer at a shop.

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 9 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	K2,209,000 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,770,000 per tical

Dollar Price

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market	K2,825 to K2,845

The above prices may change from time to time.

OPINION

Try to be well-versed to grasp powerful might

INTERNATIONAL issues have been coming out one after another throughout the world. International problems emerge on a daily basis. So, regional countries as well as global countries are trying to solve these problems as much as they can.

For the time being, some powerful countries are making attempts to manipulate international affairs as they like by utilizing their political, manpower, money, material, and military might. In fact, everybody knows that all daily events of global countries are triggered by the manipulation and interference of a handful of powerhouse countries.

If so, all global countries are striving for possessing the powers to be able to influence or protect their citizens against possible interference from those powerful countries. On another step, they try hard to influence other countries by making concerted efforts to secure the aforesaid might.

Actually, they should understand these powers are not perpetual. From the point of view of religious orders, everything cannot stand forever. They can try to have economic might, political might, financial might, material might and military might as well as manpower. But these all do not exist perpetually. These items of might can be created by human beings. Practically, human beings can change or create these powers easily.

Hence, all people need to have a wider range of scope for knowledge to take all issues into consideration to possess capabilities for making the proper conclusions in conformity with current affairs. Moreover, they all have the skills of applying technologies to keep abreast of those from other countries. If so, the country as well as its citizens will have to thumb up in the global society.

tall among the global people, and their power will automatically grow up. Consequently, the country of those citizens will have power in all aspects of global affairs and the respect and trust of other countries.

Hence, all people need to have a wider range of scope for knowledge to take all issues into consideration to possess capabilities for making the proper conclusions in conformity with current affairs. Moreover, they all have the skills of applying technologies to keep abreast of those from other countries. If so, the country as well as its citizens will have to thumb up in the global society.

Introduction

1. In this article, I would like to quote “an extract from the editorial article of the Global New Light of Myanmar dated 9 December 2022 as follows:
 - “Save the global people from corruption”
 - International Anti-corruption Day (IACD) which falls on 9 December 2022 seeks to highlight the crucial link between anti-corruption and peace security and development. At its core is the notion that tackling this crime is the right and, the responsibility of everyone, and that only through cooperation and the involvement of each and every person and institution can we overcome the negative impact of this crime.
2. Well, bribery and corruption are, in my view, two sides of the same coin. Bribery and corruption, these two facts or ideas that are very much correlative, that are to say, they are closely

ly related to or depend on each other fact or idea. For example, a bribe-giver, as an accomplice, aids and abets a corrupt official to commit corruption and the corrupt official expects or demands and takes a bribe from a person, in return for favouritism, the act of unfairly treating him better than others.

3. And now, the question is, what does it tend to corrupt? On this point, I believe, I can’t do any better, than to quote what the scholars have said. They are reproduced and kindly see below:
“Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” “Lord Acton- Historical essays.

“The greater the power, the greater dangerous the abuse.” “Edmund Burke” in a speech delivered to the House of Commons,” U.K
“Corruption is a global shame and a sin against good manners and character. Mr Ban Ki-moon — former United Nations Secretary, General.

So, in support of all these scholarly views, I, as a layman, would like to say that, corruption is, without a shadow of a doubt, a crime, a shame and a sin. In a much better definition, Professor Syed Hussein Alatas has pointed out that the association between corruption and crime is a well-known phenomenon”

4. Corruption; does it mean only bribe-taking? Well, I don’t think so, I am afraid. From the legal point of view, corruption also means maladministration of justice, mismanagement of affairs, prejudice, bias, wrongdoing etc. And mismanagement, in a sense, means, failure to do something that ought to be done and committing an act, which ought not to be done. Well now, before tackling, what factors

Bribery and Corruption

By U Khin Maung (A retired diplomat)

bring about prejudice and bias, I think, we should see their meanings. Prejudice means an unreasonable dislike of or preference for a person, group or custom etc. And, bias means a strong feeling in favour of or against one group of people or one side in an argument. In our culture, there are four kinds of prejudice and bias. Prejudice and bias, first, arising from an emotional issue, or wish, second, arising from anger, third, arising from fear, and fourth, arising from ignorance.

5. May I quote relevant writings of a well-known scholar Mr Syed Hussein Alatas from his famous book “Corruption and the Destiny of Asia” as follows: “The association of corruption and crime” is a well-known phenomenon. But the forms of this association vary according to the

degree of corruption. As conception develops in intensity, these forms multiply.

6. In this article, may I also present to you the significance of the rule of law. In this phrase, the rule of law means equality before the laws, fair play, and uniformity of laws for all private citizens and public officials alike. In connection with the rule of law, the first Prime Minister of our independent and sovereign union, U Nu said in the address to the Parliament (The Pyithu Hlut-taw): “is to base all our activities firmly on the rule of law.” And the chairman and Prime Minister of the State Administration Council, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing also expresses the significance of the rule of law on every occasion,

magistrates explained to all of us that the other client or the other party might misunderstand us. We were taught and guided that a magistrate or a judge should bear in mind that “it is not enough that justice is done but justice must be seen to have been done,” And to win the hearts and minds of the people we were serving as a judge or a magistrate we should always go on learning, so as to be entitled to be addressed as “the learned Judge, “the learned magistrate. Learning, in this context, means laws, the supreme court’s instructions, and the supreme court’s rulings must be read and studied in earnest and also learning anything that is worth it for the improvement and expansion of legal education. After all, no educative process, legal or whatsoever, is ever the end: it is always the beginning of more education, more learning, more living”.

8. I think, we have already had a law, entitled “suppression

of bribery and corruption act, and our successive governments have suppressed and treated it as a shame, sin, crime and evil. And, as living laws are necessary in this living world, I am sure, our authorities concerned have already taken necessary actions to review and revise or if necessary, to amend the “suppression of bribery and corruption act” so as to be in line with the changing world.

Reference

(1) Corruption and the destiny of Asia, SYED HUSSEIN ALATAS.

(2) Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary.

(3) Law and custom in Burma and the Burmese family, Dr Maung Maung

(4) Book of essential quotations.

(5) Word power made easy. Norman Lewis

Optimized COVID response speeds up recovery of China’s industrial economy

WITH production lines humming and machines running in full swing, factories across China have resumed busy operations

after the country’s latest optimization of COVID-19 response and a series of measures to accelerate production resumption. To better coordinate anti-virus efforts and economic development, China has been optimizing its COVID-19 response policies dynamically. On 7 December 2022, China adjusted

its virus prevention and control policies with 10 new measures, shifting the policy focus from infection prevention to severe cases prevention.

In its latest move, the country announced it will downgrade the management of COVID-19 from Class A to Class B starting from 8 January this year.

Targeted and efficient policy adjustments have pressed the fast-forward button for the resumption of industrial production, with factories nationwide racing against the clock to make up for COVID-induced disruptions.

Facing rising demand for key medicines and medical supplies, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) and relevant departments have established emergency collaboration mechanisms with local authorities and rolled out medicine-specific plans to help pharmaceutical enterprises expand their capacity.

“Relevant companies and key supporting firms have all

As China strives to expand its anti-COVID medical supply, the country’s daily production capacity of ibuprofen and paracetamol has exceeded 200 million tablets, with the daily output reaching 190 million tablets.

The daily output of the two medicines had increased by more than four times in late December compared with early December, Wang Jiangping, vice minister of the ministry, said at a press conference last week.

The daily production capacity of COVID-19 antigen test kits had expanded from about 60 million in early December to some 110 million, and that of finger-clip pulse oximeters has more than doubled since early December, reaching over 250,000 units in late December.

On Tuesday, a State Council executive meeting underscored that supplies of medical and anti-epidemic goods should be scaled up with all efforts possible, urging efforts to address difficulties in the supply of raw and auxiliary materials, labor and funds to ensure uninterrupted production and supply of businesses.

ACCELERATED PRODUCTION

To restore bustling activities in factories, local govern-

ments have rolled out various measures to support industrial production.

For instance, Beijing established a “white list” for personnel at key posts of enterprises to ensure their timely attendance at work. Southwest China’s Chongqing Municipality introduced 16 measures to boost financial support for key industries, including encouraging banks and financial institutions to increase credit loan issuance for enterprises to support their full-capacity production.

Northwest China’s Gansu Province is also on the move to get rid of supply-chain bottlenecks in order to help enterprises resume operations at full capacity.

Gong Hongquan, manager of a chemical enterprise in Gansu, said positive changes have taken place in the company’s operation since the release of the 10 new measures in December. “The efficiency of logistics has enhanced, and marked improvements were seen in the company’s production and sales,” he said.

Surging logistics and transportation demand also mirror the rapid recovery of China’s industrial sector. Data from the on-demand delivery service provider Lalamove, also known as Huolala, showed that from 7 to

25 December, orders for freight transportation in two of Beijing’s wholesale markets surged 50 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, compared with the same period last month.

Over the past year, the country’s industrial sector has continued to serve as the “ballast stone” of its economy. In the first 11 months of 2022, the total output of major industrial enterprises rose 3.8 per cent, with that of high-tech manufacturing climbing eight per cent from a year ago.

Despite the current difficulties with operations, China’s industrial economy’s advantages of a complete industrial system and strong domestic demand are still prominent, Jin Zhuanglong, minister of the MIIT, said in an interview with Xinhua.

He said the optimized COVID-19 response, combined with existing and incremental policies, will boost market confidence, with the vitality of market entities, consumption potential, and the driving force of industrial upgrading effectively released.

“We have the confidence, conditions and capability to promote a stable recovery of the industrial economy,” Jin said.

Source: Xinhua



The carbon fibre production line of a factory in the Economic and Technological Development Zone of Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province. PHOTO: GENG YUHE/FOR CHINA DAILY

SCI/TECH/ENVIRON WORLD



The Deer & Co John Deere See & Spray technology is shown in a display beneath a spraying arm connected to a John Deere 412R self-propelled sprayer at the company's booth at the company's booth during the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada on 5 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Tech at CES shows how farmers can save time, money and the environment

ARMED with a smartphone in today's ever more connected world, farmers can remotely monitor the health of their fields, the level of feed in their silos or even the aging of wine in barrels.

Both start-ups and agro-industry giants are exhibiting such cutting-edge tools — tools to help farmers collect and analyze data and improve decision-making — at the huge CES electronics show in Las Vegas, which closes Sunday.

Thus, Olivier Lepine, who heads the French start-up Brad, has developed a sensor that can provide real-time information on temperature, moisture and light falling in a farm field.

With such data in hand, farmers can make more accurate decisions on when to irrigate, how to reduce pesticide use, and how to treat their soil — while saving time normally spent travelling from field to field.

Farmers, and especially

younger ones, “want to have an impact, but they also want to have a quality of life,” Lepine said.

South Korean start-up AimbeLab meantime is offering a way to monitor the contents of the huge silos where grains and feed are stored.

Farmers often “simply use a hammer to bang onto the silos to check the sound — which is still very inaccurate — to see how much they have left,” said Sein Kwon.—AFP

Study reveals grasslands biodiversity help control plant diseases

CHINESE researchers have newly confirmed the significance of spatial scale-dependent dilution effects of biodiversity on plant diseases in grasslands, according to the Lanzhou University.

The new study suggested that spatial scale plays an important role in predicting infectious diseases of plants, said Liu Xiang, a researcher from the College of Ecology of the Lanzhou University and the leader of the study.

Under the background of rapid biodiversity losses, it is of both theoretical and practical significance to better understand the relationship between biodiversity and plant infectious

diseases. The study team tested how spatial scale affects the direction and magnitude of the biodiversity-disease relationship.

The researchers utilized a long-term nitrogen addition experiment conducted in an alpine meadow in northwest China's Gansu Province, and tested how the sample area was affected by the relationship between plant species richness and foliar fungal disease severity.

The findings indicated that the dilution effect was more easily observed in a small area. The study could help explain the observed variation in the biodiversity-disease relationship in grasslands, said Liu. —Xinhua

China's commercial rocket CERES-1 Y5 launches 5 satellites

CHINA on Monday launched the CERES-1 Y5 carrier rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.

The commercial rocket blasted off at 1:04 pm (Beijing Time) from the launch site, sending five satellites into the planned orbit.

The five satellites include the Tianqi-13 satellite belonging to the Tianqi constellation, two satellites belonging to the Tianmu-1 meteorological constellation, and the other two for Earth observation and space science popularization, respectively.

Developed by the Beijing-based high-tech company Galactic Energy, the CERES-1

is a small-scale solid-propellant carrier rocket capable of sending micro-satellites into orbit.

The launch was the fifth flight mission of the CERES-1 rocket series.—Xinhua



A CERES-1 Y5 carrier rocket is launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China, 9 January 2023. The commercial rocket blasted off at 1:04 pm (Beijing Time) from the launch site, sending five satellites into the planned orbit. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Historic UK rocket mission set for liftoff

FINAL preparations were under way Monday for the first rocket launch from UK soil, catapulting it into the “exclusive” club of nine nations able to send crafts into Earth's orbit.

A repurposed Boeing 747 carrying the 70-foot (21-metre) rocket containing nine satellites will take off from a spaceport in Cornwall, southwest England, at 2216 GMT.

The rocket will detach from the aircraft at a height of 35,000 feet over the Atlantic Ocean to the south of Ireland before later discharging the satellites.

The aircraft will then re-

turn to Spaceport Cornwall, a consortium that includes Virgin Orbit and the UK Space Agency, at Cornwall Airport Newquay.

The launch will be the first from UK soil. UK-produced satellites have previously had to be sent into orbit via foreign spaceports. “Joining that really exclusive club of launch nations is so important because it gives us our own access to space... that we've never had before here in the UK,” Spaceport Cornwall chief Melissa Thorpe told BBC television on Monday.

Over 2,000 people are expected to watch the launch

named “Start Me Up” after the Rolling Stones song.

“There's two stages to it... two bits of excitement, really, the takeoff and then the deployment of the rocket,” Thorpe added. The satellites have a variety of civil and defence functions from sea monitoring that will help countries detect people smugglers trafficking migrants to space weather observation.

Although scheduled for Monday evening, adverse weather conditions could see the launch delayed or postponed to back-up dates later in January.—AFP

Air pollution recorded at “very unhealthy” levels in Viet Nam

THE overall air quality in Viet Nam's capital Hanoi reached “very unhealthy” levels on Monday, which means the entire population is likely to be affected.

Most air monitoring stations in Hanoi reported an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 201-300 as purple showing health warnings of emergency conditions as of Monday morning.

The index recorded in some stations in Hanoi and the northern Thai Nguyen and Hung Yen provinces even surpassed 300, which means that everyone may experience more serious health

effects, according to the Viet Nam News Agency on Monday.

The Viet Nam Environment Administration under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment suggested people frequently update the air quality information, the news agency said. Experts said the air pollution recently is mainly due to weather factors, as Hanoi and other localities in the northern region have experienced cold and dry weather, which causes pollutants to be concentrated in the area near the ground and leads to serious pollution.—Xinhua

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

90% of people in China province infected with Covid: official

ALMOST 90 per cent of people in China's third most populous province have now been infected with Covid-19, a top official said Monday, as the country battles an unprecedented surge in cases.

Kan Quancheng, director of the health commission for central Henan province, told a press conference that "as of 6 January 2023, the province's Covid infection rate is 89.0 per cent."

With a population of 99.4 million, the figures suggest about 88.5 million people in Henan may now have been infected.

Visits to fever clinics peaked

on 19 December, Kan said, "after which it showed a continuous downward trend".

China is battling a surge in cases following its decision last month to lift years of lockdowns, quarantines and mass testing that had hammered its economy and sparked rare nationwide protests.

And Beijing is determined to press on with its reopening, on Sunday lifting mandatory quarantine for all international arrivals and opening its border with the semi-autonomous southern city of Hong Kong.

But infections are expect-



A woman wearing a face shield and mask amid the Covid-19 pandemic walks on a street in the Jing'an district in Shanghai on 9 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

ed to soar as the country celebrates Lunar New Year later this month, with millions expected to travel from big cities to visit vulnerable older relatives in the countryside.

In the first wave of pre-holiday travel, official data showed 34.7 million people travelled domestically on Saturday -- up by more than a third compared to last year, according to state media.

Official data showed last week that just 120,000 people have been infected and 30 died since China relaxed Covid curbs in early December.—AFP

Viet Nam strengthens COVID-19 measures as Lunar New Year approaches

VIETNAMESE Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh has ordered strengthening COVID-19 preven-

tion and control in the country as the Lunar New Year is approaching with several festivals expect-

ed to be held, Viet Nam News Agency reported on Monday.

Though the pandemic has been basically brought under control, it still develops in a complicated way with new variants emerging including XBB, he said in a dispatch issued on Sunday.

The prime minister ordered the Ministry of Health continue to closely monitor the pandemic situation, coordinate with relevant authorities to proactively respond to developments of the pandemic.

The ministry should also cooperate with local and international experts and organizations to adjust the COVID-19 prevention and control measures when needed, he said.—Xinhua



Medical staff administer doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 coronavirus vaccine to youths between the age of 12 and 17 in Hanoi on 23 November 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

Record 10 mln birds culled in Japan as avian flu spreads

JAPAN has culled nearly 10 million birds at poultry farms this season, hitting a record high, as cases of avian influenza surge across the country, the farm ministry said Monday.

The number culled soared to 9.98 million as Ibaraki Prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, said the same day that it had begun culling approximately 930,000 chickens at a farm in the town of Shirosato after genetic testing confirmed the presence of avian influenza.

The previous record cull stood at 9.87 million conducted between November 2020 to March 2021, according to

the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

As of Monday, a record 56 infections had been verified across 23 of the country's 47 prefectures this season.

The season's first case of bird flu was confirmed on a poultry farm in Okayama Prefecture, western Japan, in October.

The cases since then include one in Fukuoka Prefecture earlier in the month, where about 430 emus were culled.

It is believed that the latest round of bird flu in Japan was caused by migratory birds.—Kyodo

COVID-19 deaths in Japan top 60,000 since start of pandemic

JAPAN'S cumulative total of COVID-19 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic exceeded 60,000 on Sunday, a tally showed, in the midst of the eighth wave of coronavirus infections.

Compared with the total topping 50,000 on 1 December, Sunday's figure highlights the increased pace of deaths at 10,000 in just around a month.

After the number since Japan confirmed its first domestic case of COVID-19 in January 2020 eclipsed the 20,000

mark last February, 10,000 deaths were reported every three months until December, according to the Kyodo News tally.

Japan posted a record of 498 daily COVID-19 deaths on Thursday.

By age group and sex, men in their 80s accounted for most of the deaths, followed by those in their 70s and those over 90, according to health ministry data. As for women, those aged in their 80s and those over 90 are notably high.—Kyodo

2 dead following cholera outbreak in Burundi's Bujumbura province: health official

TWO persons have died of cholera following an outbreak of the epidemic in Mutimbuzi district in the province of Bujumbura, western Burundi, precisely at the Kajaga beach on Lake Tanganyika, a provincial health official told Xinhua on the phone on Sunday.

"After hearing the statement from the health minister on the cholera outbreak in some parts of the commercial capital Bujumbura, I held a coordination meeting with heads of health districts

and heads of hospitals as it is done routinely. We were told about a diarrheic syndrome observed at the beach of Kajaga on Lake Tanganyika," said Joel Nibigira, health director in Bujumbura province.

According to him, health officials then made an urgent field visit to the Kajaga beach and discussed with fishermen who confirmed the presence of the diarrheic syndrome there.

"They (those fishermen) confirmed the presence the

diarrheic syndrome and added that seven cases have already caught the disease. Two of them died," said Nibigira.

He indicated that among the survivors, three were admitted to the Kajaga medical hospital while two others were referred to Prince Regent Hospital in Bujumbura.

"Samples were taken on them and sent to the National Public Health Institute (INSP) which confirmed the presence of cholera in those samples," he said.—Xinhua

ECONOMY WORLD

Suez Canal traffic 'normal' after stuck vessel refloated



A handout picture released by the Suez Canal Authority on 9 January 2023 shows tugboats pulling the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier M/V Glory in the Suez Canal near al-Qantarah between Port Said and Ismailia. **PHOTO: SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY / AFP**

SUEZ Canal maritime traffic was "normal" Monday after a cargo vessel carrying Ukrainian grain ran aground but was then refloated and towed away, said the Egyptian authority running the vital waterway.

The incident involving the 225-metre-long Marshall Islands-registered M/V Glory had briefly sparked fears of a repeat of a major 2021 blockage when the giant container ship Ever Given became diagonally wedged in the canal.

That week-long closure of the man-made waterway linking Asia and Europe cost billions of

dollars through shipping delays, and the life of an employee of the Suez Canal Authority in the operation to free the mega-ship.

SCA chief Osama Rabie gave the all-clear Monday when he said "traffic is moving normally on the Suez Canal" after the authority had "mobilized four tugboats to tow the ship" allowing it to resume its passage through the canal.

"The canal is on track to register 51 vessels passing in both directions Monday," he said in a statement.

Smooth traffic through the Suez Canal is vitally important

for Egypt, the Arab world's most populous country, which is currently battered by an economic crisis that has seen the currency lose 75 per cent in value in less than a year.

The waterway, used for about 10 per cent of the world's maritime trade, is one of Egypt's main sources of foreign currency revenue, bringing in more than \$7 billion a year.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi approved a project last year to widen and deepen the southern section of the canal where the Ever Given got stuck.—AFP

Malaysia, Indonesia eye expansion of trade

MALAYSIA aims to boost bilateral trade with neighbouring Indonesia including cross-border investments in a number of key sectors, a Malaysian official said on Sunday.

Among areas of interest are pharmaceuticals, aerospace, palm-oil processing, consumer goods, as well as defence and security, International Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz said in a statement.

These were reflected in nine Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between Malaysian and Indonesian com-

panies, with a total potential investment value of more than 1.6 billion ringgit (363 million US dollars), he said.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim is currently on a two-day official visit to Indonesia from Sunday to Monday, his first tour abroad since assuming office last November, with trade being high on the agenda.

Within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Indonesia is Malaysia's second-largest partner in trade and the third-largest source of foreign direct investment.—Xinhua

German industrial output ticks up in November

GERMAN industrial production recovered slightly in November, official figures published Monday showed, as fears of an energy crisis eased although prospects for Europe's top economy still looked gloomy.

Output rose 0.2 per cent on the previous month, according to preliminary data from federal statistics agency Destatis.

Updated figures showed that production dropped 0.4 per cent in October, a steeper fall than initially reported.

"Business sentiment has brightened recently, and in the coming months, easing material bottlenecks could provide further support for the industrial



A general view taken on 1 November 2022 shows the BASF chemical industry company in Schwarzheide, eastern Germany. **PHOTO: AFP**

economy," the economy ministry said in a statement.

"Nevertheless, the pros-

pects for industrial activity in the first quarter remain subdued."—AFP

Australian businesses call for migrant intake boost

AUSTRALIAN businesses have called for the federal government to increase the permanent migration cap.

In its submission to the government's review of the immigration system recently, the Business Council of Australia (BCA) called for a post-pandemic migration "reset".

It urged the government to increase the annual migrant intake for the next two financial years to 220,000, with 70 per cent of places reserved for skilled workers.

In 2022, the new government announced it would increase the cap from 160,000 to 195,000

places in a bid to address workforce shortages, particularly in the technology and healthcare sectors.

Arguing for an even bigger increase, the BCA said more migrants would be a significant economic and social boon to fill skills' gaps and offset Australia's aging population. "Australia should aim for a reset on migration that not only attracts migrants back to our shores and tackles workforce shortages, but also helps set the country up as a high productivity, high-skill and high-wage frontier economy," according to the submission.

"To give certainty for long-

term planning, the government should consider setting Australia's permanent migration intake at a percentage of the total population over the long term," the submission added.

Additionally, the peak body said employers should be allowed to bring in any skilled worker from overseas for jobs with a salary above the national average.

The wide-ranging immigration review, which was established by Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil in November 2022, is expected to hand down its reports and recommendations for change ahead of May's federal budget.—Xinhua

Foreign visitors in Israel surge in 2022 amid post-COVID tourism recovery

THE number of foreign tourists visiting Israel in 2022 reached 2.7 million, according to an annual report issued by the country's Central Bureau of Statistics on Sunday.

The figure represents a 6.8-fold increase, compared to 396,500 foreign tourists who visited Israel in 2021, when the country imposed entry restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vaccinated and recovered tourists were allowed to enter Israel in January of last year. Two months later, Israel opened its borders to all tourists.

Despite the surge in the

number of foreign tourists last year, the figure is still 41.3 per cent lower than the pre-pandemic level of 2019, when 4.6 million tourists travelled to Israel.

Israel's revenues from incoming tourism, excluding flight costs, stood at about 13.5 billion shekels (3.85 billion US dollars) in 2022, compared to about 23 billion shekels in 2019, according to the country's Tourism Ministry.

Out of 2.7 million foreign tourists visiting Israel last year, 810,500 were from the United States, 235,500 from France, and 177,900 from Britain, according to the report. —Xinhua

Asian markets extend new year rally on China, Fed hopes

ASIAN markets resumed their strong start to the year Monday, tracking a surge on Wall Street fuelled by optimism over China’s reopening and hopes the Federal Reserve will slow its pace of interest rate hikes.

All three main indexes in New York soared more than two per cent Friday after a closely watched report showed a forecast-busting rise in new jobs but a slowdown in wages growth.

That came as separate figures showed a shock contraction in the crucial services sector — the first since spring 2020 at the height of the pandemic.

The readings, while suggesting the world’s top economy was showing signs of weakness, were seized on by traders hopeful that the Fed will begin



Passengers travel to the Lok Ma Chau checkpoint at the Shenzhen border crossing with mainland China in Hong Kong on 8 January 2023. PHOTO: AFP

to temper its monetary tightening campaign.

Investors are now betting officials will lift borrowing costs about 25 basis points at their next meeting at the end of the month.

However, policymakers have warned that rates will continue to go up as they aim to bring decades-high inflation under control, with some saying they will not likely be cut until 2024.

In a further sign of hope, data Friday showed eurozone inflation slowed for a second month in a row in December, to 9.2 per cent — the first time in single digits since September.—AFP

Swiss central bank faces record loss

THE Swiss central bank said Monday it expects to have logged a record loss totalling 132 billion Swiss francs (\$143 billion) last year, preventing it from providing funds to the government.

The Swiss National Bank fell into the red after posting a profit of 26.9 billion Swiss francs in 2021.

Most of last year’s losses — 131 billion Swiss francs — were linked to a drop in the value of its holdings in foreign currencies, the Swiss National Bank said in a statement.

It lost another one billion Swiss francs due to a fall in the valuation of its positions in the national currency.

“This net loss precludes a distribution for the 2022 financial year,” the bank said. “This affects both dividend payments to the SNB shareholders and the profit distribution to the Confederation and the cantons,” it said, referring to the national and regional governments.—AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK VICTORIA VOY.NO. (251W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK VICTORIA VOY.NO. (251W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** 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 SEALAND MAERSK AISA PTE., LTD.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V TI2 APPLE VOY.NO. (008E/W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V TI2 APPLE VOY.NO. (008E/W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-1-2023** 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 TI2 LOGISTICS PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (049N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (049N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

Ministry of Energy

Invitation for Letter of Expression of Interest for renovation, construction of new facilities and long-term leasing and BOT of the new Petrochemical Complex (Thanbayakan)

1. The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar aims to increase the domestic supply of refined petroleum products and further expand the Petrochemical Complex (Thanbayakan) through major technological developments with additional investments, whilst incorporating necessary environmental management policies and plans. With the primary intention to meet the aforementioned strategic goal, The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is currently seeking a qualified investor organizations to renovate the existing complex, construct a new refinery and operate the Petrochemical Complex (Thanbayakan) project. The main objectives of the project are as follows:

- To satisfy the growing domestic demands of petroleum products by increasing the production of exceptional petroleum commodities.
- To expand the business with respect to economic feasibility and profitability, whilst considering competitive-advantages.
- To conduct environmentally friendly production of petroleum products by utilizing environmentally friendly and energy saving-means.

The investor Company will be expected to undertake crude oil refinery rehabilitation, construction of new facilities, trading and additionally, to work towards further expansion of refinery based petrochemical related industries, including the construction of a new refinery through competitive advantages.

The investor Company will be granted all required Permits and Necessary Licenses with regards to the Petrochemical Complex (Thanbayakan) Project, in accordance with the existing Myanmar laws and regulations and any modifications thereof.

2. The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar hereby announces an Invitation for Expression of Interest to both local and foreign investors for Petrochemical complex (Thanbayakan).

3. The interested parties are cordially invited to submit the Letter of Expression of Interest- LoEI, along with additional documents stating the Constitution of the Company, Certificate of Incorporation, Audited Financial Statement or Financial Report for the last three years (if Consortium, Audited Financial Statement or Financial Report of the leading member of the Consortium), Company’s Organizational Structure with consisting Experts and Professionals and other related documents. A single set of Original Hard Copy, (3) Sets of Hard Copies attached with the Soft Copy of the aforementioned documents are required to be submitted in person to the following address not later than (12:00) PM of 8-3-2023.

Director General
Oil and Gas Planning Department
Ministry of Energy
Office No.6, Nay Pyi Taw
Phone: 0673411046

4. With regards to the documents required for the preparation of the Letter of Expression of Interest, an explanation session will be arranged at the Oil and Gas Planning Department, Office No.6, Nay Pyi Taw on 9-2-2023 at (14:00) PM.

5. The potential bidders, who intend to compete for the operation of the Petrochemical refinery (Thanbayakan) are required to hold exceptional track records, in addition to possessing related and required technical knowledge and competency, financial capability, experience, and expertise on the operation of the refinery.

6. The potential bidders will be placed through a pre-qualification assessment round and will be evaluated as par the requirements listed in paragraph 5.

7. Once the names of the successful companies of the pre-qualification assessment are released, these parties will be expected to travel to the refinery and conduct a Feasibility Study and submit a Feasibility Study Report consisting of the following headings:

- Crude Oil Source
- Crude Oil transportation route
- Refinery capacity
- Revamping Plan for existing Refinery
- Set up plan for new refinery
- Other necessary matters in order to proceed the Request for Proposal

8. The interested parties can contact the following addresses for any inquiries.

- (1) Director General
Oil and Gas Planning Department
Ministry of Energy
Office No.6, Nay Pyi Taw
Phone: 067 3411046
- (2) Managing Director
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise
Ministry of Energy
Office No.44, Nay Pyi Taw
Phone: 067 3 411059

GLOBAL
AFFAIRS

Global piracy acts drop to 14-year low: report



Members of the Maritime Security and Enforcement Command of the Philippine Coast Guard take part in an anti-piracy drill off Bataan on 3 September 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

WORLDWIDE acts of piracy fell to their lowest level last year since statistics were first estab-

lished in 2008, a maritime security body said on Monday. The Maritime Information

Cooperation and Awareness Centre (MICA), the France-based branch of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) which is headquartered in Malaysia, said there had been 300 reported acts of piracy and robbery last year.

The IMB had already reported in its quarterly report in October that such acts were at their lowest level since 1992.

In the Gulf of Guinea, off the west coast of Africa and considered a piracy hotspot, just three ships were attacked in 2022 compared to 26 in 2019, the MICA said. In the same area, the number of kidnappings dropped to two last year, from 146 in 2019. —AFP

Sweden to join European Sky Shield Initiative: PM

SWEDEN will be part of the European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI) and participate in air policing over the Baltics, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on Sunday.

The Scandinavian country, which last year decided to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), is also prepared to participate in air policing above the Black Sea and Iceland, Swedish Television (SVT) quoted Kristersson as saying at an annual defence and security policy conference in Salen, some 430 kilometres northwest of Stockholm.

Spearheaded by Germany,

the ESSI, launched at a NATO defence ministers' meeting in October 2022, aims to create a European air and missile defence system through the common acquisition of air defence equipment and missiles by European nations, and to strengthen NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence, according to NATO.

Sweden and Finland simultaneously submitted their formal requests to join NATO in May 2022. But so far, two NATO allies, Hungary and Türkiye, have yet to ratify their accession protocols. —Xinhua

UNICEF urges aiding 4 mln Pakistani children still living near contaminated floodwater

THE United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Monday urged the international community to help up to four million children in Pakistan still living near stagnant and contaminated floodwater.

These children are suffering from skyrocketing acute respiratory infections, a leading cause of child mortality worldwide, UNICEF said in a press release.

Meanwhile, the number of children facing severe acute malnutrition in flood-affected areas between July and December last

year "nearly doubled" as compared to 2021, it said, adding that some 1.5 million children are still in need of lifesaving nutrition interventions.

"Children living in Pakistan's flood-affected areas have been pushed to the brink," Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF representative in Pakistan, said in a statement.

"The rains may have ended, but the crisis for children has not. Nearly 10 million girls and boys are still in need of immediate, lifesaving support and are heading into a bitter winter without

adequate shelter. Severe acute malnutrition, respiratory and water-borne diseases coupled with the cold are putting millions of young lives at risk," he said.

"We know the climate crisis played a central role in supercharging the cascading calamities evident in Pakistan. We must do everything within our power to ensure girls and boys in Pakistan are able to fully recover from the current disaster, and to protect and safeguard them from the next one," he added.

Pakistani official statistics



In this picture taken on 27 September 2022, internally displaced flood-affected people wade through a flooded area in Dadu district of Sindh province. **PHOTO: AFP**

showed that as of Thursday, more than 1,700 people in the country had been killed in the

monsoon rain and floods starting from mid-June last year. —Xinhua

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Russia captured east Ukraine village near Bakhmut: separatists

RUSSIAN-BACKED separatist forces in the eastern Donetsk region of Ukraine said Monday they had seized a village near the key city of Bakhmut that Moscow has been trying to capture for months.

The village of Bakhmut'ske in "the territory of the Donetsk People's Republic was liberated by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation," on Monday, read a statement from separatist authorities on Telegram.

AFP could not independently verify the claim.

The village lies northeast of Bakhmut, a wine-making



A local resident pushes his bicycle past "hedgehog" tank traps and rubble, down a street in Bakhmut, Donetsk region, on 6 January 2023, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. **PHOTO: AFP**

and salt-mining city that used to have a population of 70,000 people and is now an epicentre of fighting.

In a statement on social media, the Kremlin-linked mercenary group Wagner responded to the reports saying its forces had already "liberated" Bakhmut'ske last month.

The village is just outside the city of Soledar, also the scene of heavy fighting.

Separately, Wagner's founder Yevgeny Prigozhin said on social media that Soledar was being stormed "exclusively" by the group's units.

Observers of the conflict

have pointed to competing ambitions of the Russian defence ministry, pro-Russian separatist forces that have held parts of Donbas since 2014 and Wagner, including the rising public profile of Prigozhin.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his evening address Sunday that the area between Bakhmut and Soledar is "one of the bloodiest places on the front".

In September, Moscow claimed to have annexed Donetsk and three other Ukrainian regions following referendums not recognized by Kyiv and the West. —AFP

Flowers and face masks as Chinese tourists return to Thailand

CHINESE tourists bounded back into Thailand on Monday after Beijing eased travel rules, welcomed at Bangkok's main airport by officials with flowers and gift bags.

The Southeast Asian kingdom was heavily reliant on visitors from China pre-pandemic, with Chinese travellers accounting for roughly 30 per cent of its tourists.

Thailand's economy has been battered by Covid-19 and the current global downturn, with officials now hopeful Beijing's decision to reopen could help its recovery.

The 269 arrivals on a flight from the southeastern Chinese city of Xiamen on Monday were greeted with flowers and gift bags — containing hand sanitizer and face masks.

"I'm very excited and almost can't believe it," said university teacher Jiang Shanna, among the first arrivals.



Travellers from a Xiamen Airlines flight are greeted by Thai health and government officials as they arrive at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok on 9 January 2023, as China removed Covid-19 travel restrictions. **PHOTO: AFP**

The 36-year-old, visiting Thailand for a month to go diving, said it was "very familiar to

visit here, and the weather is good too".

Jiang, who booked her flight

two weeks ago, said she had a last-minute panic about possible travel restrictions.

"We worried the policies would be different from what we expected and we would be stopped from flying," she said, adding that none of the ground staff at Xiamen airport had known the latest Thai policy.

China is experiencing a surge in Covid infections, with one official admitting Monday that 90 per cent of people in Henan province, the country's third most populous, were infected.

Unlike many other countries — among them the United States, Canada, Japan and France — Thailand has decided against requiring pre-departure Covid tests for travellers from China.

However, confusion reigned over the weekend after mixed messaging from the health ministry and the Thai civil aviation authority appeared to imply that tourists would be required to present vaccination records. —AFP

Construction of Japan-aided, 1st subway in Manila begins



A worker looks down on a subway tunnel excavator in Manila on 9 January 2023. **PHOTO: KYODO**

CONSTRUCTION of the first-ever subway in the Philippines undertaken with Japanese aid began on Monday, in a move to pave the way for easing road congestion in overcrowded Manila.

Leading the start of underground drilling work for the subway, which could start operating in 2028, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr pushed the button of one of the two tunnel drilling machines brought in from Ja-

pan that were on display.

In a speech during a ceremony, Marcos thanked Japan for its support in key infrastructure projects of the Philippines.

"These tunnel drilling machines highlight Japan's expertise and technology and trailblazing contributions in the modern world," he said.

"And thus, I am confident that they will help us shape our railway infrastructure and keep them at par with the highest

international standards," said Marcos.

Although the project is being slowed down by land expropriation issues, the subway could begin operations by late 2028, according to Japanese and Filipino project contractors.

Marcos, whose term ends in June that year, has vowed to see the project through.

Dubbed by Manila as the "project of the century," the 33.1-kilometre underground railway will cut across eight cities with a line connecting the main airport in Pasay City. It is touted to benefit over 500,000 commuters daily.

The \$8.8 billion project is funded with a \$2.7 billion loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

In June, former President Rodrigo Duterte referred to the subway project as a "gift from the Japanese people to the people of the Philippines."

The Philippine transport department said the drilling machines could dig up millions of cubic metres of soil, with two more drilling machines expected to arrive this year.—Kyodo

Indians evacuated from 'sinking' holy town

AUTHORITIES in one of the holiest towns in the Indian Himalayas were evacuating panicked residents Sunday after hundreds of houses began developing yawning cracks and sinking, officials said.

The cause of the apparent subsidence in Joshimath in the northern state of Uttarakhand was unclear, but residents blamed the building of roads and tunnels for a nearby hydroelectric project.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called a high-level meeting for later Sunday to discuss the problem after the government formed an expert panel to carry out a "rapid study" into the cause.

Local official Himanshu Khurana told AFP that at least 60 families had been relocated into shelters and many more were likely to be shifted out from their sinking dwellings.

Residents said a much larger number had already fled their homes and that around 600 houses and hotels were sinking in the town of

around 20,000 people.

Another official said on condition of anonymity that several areas in the town had been "demarcated unsafe" and entry restricted.

"People are deeply worried. The fear is that the town is sinking," he said as helicopters surveyed the area.

Many locals have been forced to sleep out in the freezing cold and said they had been warning authorities for weeks and in some cases months about cracks in buildings and roads, some of which were oozing brown muddy water. One woman, Vineeta Devi, said that in October cracks began to appear in her walls which have now become so wide that her house is on the brink of collapse, like 25 other houses in her neighbourhood.

"What will happen to my children? How would they study now?" she said to AFP.

"We made this house with our life's earnings, but now it's gone," said Sunaina, another resident.—AFP



Yangon United sign with Yan Kyaw Htwe for two-year loan



Forward player Yan Kyaw Htwe holds the insignia of Yangon United after signing a two-year contract with the club. **PHOTO: YUFC**

YANGON United has confirmed the signing of a two-year contract with striker Yan Kyaw Htwe from Ayeyawady United, according to the team's statement.

"Yan Kyaw Htwe, known as Kayah Lay among his teammates, was born in Loikaw Township, Kayah State. The five feet and nine inches high striker showcased his stunning

performance the last season recording his name as a top scorer scoring 14 goals in total in Myanmar National League 2022," team officials said.

Yangon United Head Coach U Kyaw Dunn expressed his happiness over the arrival of Yan Kyaw Htwe.

"I am impressed with his contribution to his previous club Ayeyawady last season, and he will be a fantastic addition to fill the attacking."

"He made his professional career in 2012 by playing in the Nay Pyi Taw youth team and played for three years in the senior team. Then he moved to Manaw Myay in 2016, Zwegabin United in 2017-2018, Southern Myanmar in 2019-2020, and Ayeyawady United in 2022.

"It's beyond my pleasure when I received an offer from this great club, and I will give everything for the badge to help bring us more success in local and international tournaments as well," he added.—KZL

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.

French federation boss under fire for 'clumsy' Zidane comments

FRENCH Football Federation president Noel Le Graet came under fire on Monday as he was forced to apologize for what he dubbed his own "clumsy remarks" about Zinedine Zidane's potential interest in coaching the France national team.

Le Graet had quipped dismissively in an interview to French radio station RMC on Sunday that he "wouldn't even have taken his call on the phone" when asked whether Zidane had rung him to express an interest in taking over as coach from Didier Deschamps.

That drew criticism from France and Paris Saint-Germain star Kylian Mbappe, who said Le Graet had shown "a lack of respect" with his comments.

Real Madrid, where Zi-

dane enjoyed decorated spells as a player and a coach, also hit out at Le Graet, while French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera waded in too, demanding an apology.

The 81-year-old head of the FFF duly did apologize on Monday, Le Graet saying: "I would like to apologize for these remarks, which absolutely do not reflect my views, nor my consideration for the player he was and the coach he has become.

"I gave an interview to RMC that I should not have given because they were looking for controversy by opposing Didier and Zinedine Zidane, two greats of French football.

"I admit that I made some clumsy remarks which created a misunderstanding." —AFP

Djokovic, Kyrgios to play Australian Open practice match

NOVAK Djokovic and Nick Kyrgios will deepen their blooming bromance with a practice match in front of paying spectators on Friday at Rod Laver Arena, the Australian Open said.

The first Grand Slam of 2023 begins next Monday and sees nine-time Melbourne champion Djokovic return to the tournament following his ban a year ago.

The famously fiery Australian Kyrgios once labelled the Serbian "a tool" but publicly offered his support last year when Djokovic was deported over his Covid vaccination status.

"Get set for explosive action as tennis' most famous frenemies come together on RLA for an exciting practice match," the Australian Open tweeted on Monday.

Proceeds from the match will go to charity and is a re-run

of last year's Wimbledon final, when Djokovic beat Kyrgios in four sets.

It will give Kyrgios a badly needed run-out ahead of his home Grand Slam, having been sidelined so far this year with

an ankle injury.

Djokovic saved match point on Sunday before defeating Sebastian Korda to win the Adelaide International and reinforce his status as a heavy title favourite for Melbourne.—AFP

Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic hits a return during his semi-final match against Russian Daniil Medvedev at the ATP Adelaide International tournament in Adelaide on 7 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

