THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, shall be implemented in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken with added momentum to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Actions will be taken to ensure the speedy recovery of businesses from the impact of COVID-19.
4. Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

52 cargo ships scheduled to arrive at Yangon Port in Jan 2023

The Maersk Line container vessel is pictured in the Yangon River.

A TOTAL of 52 cargo ships carrying many containers are slated to enter Yangon Port in January 2023, according to Myanma Port Authority.

This month, nine cargo ships, which are run by Sealand Maersk Asia, eight by New Golden Sea (Cosco), six by Samudera Shipping Line, four each by MSC Line, SITC Line and RCL, three each by TI2 Container Line and PIL, two by CMA CGM Line, Ever Green Line and X-Press Feeder and one by Bay Line, IAL, BLPL Shipping Line, Land & Sea and CSL and will enter Yangon Port.

Yangon Port handled a total of 620 cargo ships last year, according to Myanmar Port Authority.

The number of cargo ships entering Yangon Port stands at 49 in January 2022, 48 in February, 50 in March, 52 in April, 54 in May, 53 in June, 49 in July, 55 each in August and September, 50 in October, 51 in November and 54 in December respectively.

From May 2021, the arrival of ships at terminals in Yangon has increased again. To fulfil the seaborne trade requirements, three new cargo ships by Maersk Line Myanmar (Sealand Maersk) started to run in 2021.

Myanma Port Authorities and Yangon inner terminals are providing services to ensure the fast and reliable cargo handling and withdrawal of the containers. Earlier, the larger ships had draft problems preventing their sailing on the Yangon River. The draft extension is up to 10 metres with the new navigation channel accessing the inner Yangon River and the international ocean liners can access the inner port for now.

— NN/EMM

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Cherry Blossom Festival 2023 to be held in Loimwe of Kengtung tsp

THE second Cherry Blossom Festival 2023 will be held in the rows of cherry trees at the Loimwe hill resort in Kengtung township, eastern Shan State for five days from 19 to 23 January.

The purpose of the festival was to accelerate tourism development in the Loimwe area and preserve cherry trees, it is learnt.

At the festival, Shan, Lahu, "Wa" and Akha ethnic cultural troupes will perform traditional dances and regional products and traditional foods and drinks will be displayed and sold. — TWA/MKKS

The 1st Cherry Blossom Festival was held in Loimwe of Kengtung Township in 2022.

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions

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

Yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, and relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 147 people from twenty-six townships in Ayeyawady Region, and 11,570 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region, respectively.

Similarly, on that day healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 1412 from twenty-six townships in Ayeyawady Region, and 327 students from seven districts in Mandalay Region, it is learnt. — MNA

A student from Danubyu Township in Ayeyawady Region gets jabbed against COVID-19 on 17 January 2023.

10 cases of COVID-19 reported on 17 January, total figure reaches at 633,763

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases reach at **633,763** after **10** new cases were reported on 17 January 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,222**, including **one** new recovery.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to **19,490** on 17-1-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.—**Ministry of Health**

Covid-19 vaccines, syringes delivered to regions, states

PREVENTION and control of Covid-19 being a key part of treatment activities, military doctors, health workers and social groups are actively working in cooperation for nationwide vaccination. Military aeroplanes, helicopters and cold chain delivery logistic vehicles are delivering Covid-19 vaccines and syringes to various regions and states.

Altogether 6,441 Sinopharm vaccines, 6,190 Myancopharm vaccines and 63,155 syringes have been delivered to Myitkyina in Kachin State, and 1,409 Sinopharm vaccines, 596 Myancopharm vaccines and 13,025 syringes to Myeik city in Taninthayi Region by military aeroplanes.

These vaccines and syringes have been accepted by the officials and will continue to be distributed to the relevant areas. — MNA/KZW

Public Notice for elimination of violence

1. SO called "CRPH", "NUG" and "PDF" terrorist groups are unlawfully committing killings of monks, teachers, civil servants and general people and looting under the pretext of saying "for the people".

2. Not rendering of encouragement, support and assistance to the "CRPH", "NUG" and "PDF" terrorists that are committing intimidations, killings and destructive activities could be construed as protecting lives and property of general public.

3. Giving information secretly relating to bearing of their arms, ammunition and terrorists to authorities could be tantamount to protecting lives and property of innocent people.

Rice and rice products prioritized to promote export volume

RICE and rice products are prioritized in the national export strategy being implemented for promoting the export volume. The vision for the promotion of the rice export strategy is to produce and export rice which will be high quality for rural development and increased income as well as sustainable development suitable for the natural environment.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the opening ceremony of Myanmar Rice Conference-2022 on 6 October 2022.)

Opening ceremony of basic education student sports festival 2022-2023AY held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE opening ceremony of the basic education student sports festival for the 2022-2023 Academic Year (AY) was held at Wunna Theikdi Stadium B in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The event was attended by Union Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe, Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs U Min Thein Zan, deputy ministers, permanent secretaries, directors-general, deputy permanent secretaries, deputy directors-general, Region/State education officers, sports leaders, coaches and students.

First, Union Minister Dr Nyunt Pe said the sports festival will comprise men's and women's events for football, volleyball, athletics, and sepak takraw. Sports is not about only wins and losses, it is about perseverance, patience, skills, strength, unit, respect for regulations and politeness. Achievements in international competitions are expressing unity, dignity and patriotism. Therefore, the athletes of the current events should try hard to become national athletes to uplift the dignity of the country.

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs led the athletes to compete in ASEAN Student Sports Festival previously. But now, the Ministry of Education will lead for 12th ASEAN Student Sports Festival to be held in the Philippines in 2023 for the first time and so the basic education student sports festivals are being held without fail. The qualified students will be selected to compete in ASEAN Student Sports Festival representing the country.

After the procedures of the ceremony, the Union Minster and party cordially met with the region/state basic education sports groups.

The Basic Education Student Sports Festival for the 2022-2023 Academic Year is inaugurated in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The 2022-2023 basic education student sports festival will be held at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw from 18 to 27 January, and a total of 1,680 sports team leaders, secretaries, coaches and athletes from regions and states will participate in the event. — MNA/KTZH

Deputy Information Minister inspects information activities in eastern Shan State

Deputy Minister U Ye Tint meets students and teachers from BEHS No 4 and No 5 in Kengtung yesterday.

DEPUTY Minister U Ye Tint of the Ministry of Information inspected the Mongpan and Mongton Retransmission Stations of the Myanmar Radio and Television on 15 January and met employees at the office of the Information and Public Relations Department.

Similarly, the deputy minister also met staff from township IPRDs after observing retransmission stations at Tachilek, Tarlay and Mongphyat districts on 16 January. He continued the inspection of the district IPRDs and retransmission stations and met district heads and staff.

In the afternoon, the deputy minister reached No 4 and 5 Basic Education High Schools of Kengtung and instructed teachers to train students so that they would become citizens the country can rely on. Sports equipment provided by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and books for school libraries were given to officials by the deputy minister afterwards.

In the evening, he met officials in charge of the eastern Shan State IPRD and retransmission stations, and the responsible person of the Newspaper Sub-Printing House in Kengtung at the eastern Shan State IPRD office and left the necessary instructions.

The deputy minister encouraged the staff to serve as faithful and responsible civil servants, and do what they have to do accordingly for the good of the public.

Then, he had the discussion based on the presentations of employees and fulfilled the requirements. — MNA/CT

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SAC-conferred honorary titles, medals presented

Wife Daw Aye Aye May receives the Alinka Kyawswa title on behalf of vocalist Thu Maung (deceased) at her home.

Son U Soe Lwin Oo receives the Thiri Pyanchi title on behalf of Islamic Scholars Society Chair U Soe Than.

Nephew U Hein Htut Naung receives the Wunna Kyaw Htin title on behalf of ambassador U Thurein Thant Zin.

Representative U Khin Maung Cho receives the Alinka Kyawswa title on behalf of writer/film director Lt-Col Maung Maung Oo (Retd.) (aka) Tin Than Oo.

THE SAC Chairman Prime Minister conferred honorary titles on recipients individually on 1 and 2 January in marking the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day.

For those who were unable to attend the offering ceremony in person or on their behalf, the chief ministers of respective regions and states, including Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, the military command commanders and officials visited and handed over awards to family members.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe and officials handed over the Alinka Kyawswa title to wife Daw Aye Aye May on behalf of vocalist Thu Maung (deceased) at her home in Thingangyun township.

They also presented the Thiri Pyanchi titles to representative U Kyawswa Soe on behalf of peace coordinator Dr Timothy; on behalf of Alhaj Maulana Hafiz Muhammed Sualeh (a) U Soe Than, to son U Soe Lwin Oo; on behalf of former minister U Ohn, to son U Win Soe Aung; on behalf of former minister Thakin Kyaw Tun, to son U Kyaw Tun Win; the Zeya Kyaw Htin title was presented to son U Than Soe on behalf of former military appointment-general Brig-Gen Soe Myint (Retd); Wunna Kyaw Htin titles were presented to niece Daw Lwin Lwin Aye on behalf of former deputy education minister U Thaung Htut; on behalf of former deputy education minister Dr Maung Maung Aye, to daughter-in-law Daw Aye Aye Myat; on behalf of former deputy minister for planning and finance Dr Maung Shein, to nephew U Lin Aung; on behalf of former deputy cooperative minister U San Tin, to niece Daw Thazin Shwe; on behalf of former police general Tun Hla Aung, to granddaughter Nun Daw Dhamma Kusala, and on behalf of former ambassador U Thurein Thant Zin, to nephew U Hein Htut Naung, respectively. The Alinka Kyawswa title was offered to representative U Khin Maung Cho on behalf of writer/film director Lt-Col Maung Maung Oo (Retd.) (aka) Tin Than Oo.

The presentation ceremony of these honorary titles and medals was held at the Yangon City Hall in Kyauktada Township of the Yangon Region. — MNA/TS

Korean Woojung Education and Culture Foundation to choose two Myanmar scholarship students for 1st Semester, 2023

THE Myanmar Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, announced that the Woojung Education and Culture Foundation will choose two Myanmar scholarship students, who are facing financial and living cost difficulties and currently studying in the regular course including the master and doctoral courses in Korea.

The eligible students have to fill up the attached files and send them back to Hannam-aero 28-Gil 12, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, 04418, or via post office on time or to scholarinseoul@gmail.com of the embassy no later than 4 pm of 25 January, it said.

The former scholarship students have not quailed for the scholarship.

The Myanmar Embassy will send the applications to Woojung Education and Culture Foundation no later than 30 January and urge the applicants to apply for the scholarships and send back the applications no later than 25 January. — TWA/KTZH

Two scholarship students of Woojung Education and Culture Foundation for the first semester of 2022.

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Myanmar ships $5 mln worth of exports in Q4 2022

Trucks are seen inside the Maungtaw border trade zone.

THE value of Myanmar's export through Myanmar-Bangladesh border posts in Q4 (October-December) 2022 is estimated at US$5.58 million, according to statistics provided by the Rakhine State Chamber of Commerce.

The cross-border trade with Bangladesh is conducted through Sittway and Maungtaw border posts. Trade value via Sittway totalled $4.08 million whereas Maungtaw trade witnessed a trade value of $1.4 million. Meanwhile, the import was less than a million (0.12 million). Myanmar primarily shipped fishery products (freshwater rohu, hilsa and anchovy), agricultural produce and consumer goods.

Additionally, from January 2023, Myanmar has directly sent 2,500 tonnes of Aemahta rice to Bangladesh via Sittway Port, Rakhine State Chamber of Commerce stated. — TWA/EMM

Publication of Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027), Year One Action Plan (2023) made

THE five-year Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027) drawn with the theme of "Providing Justice by All" and the Year One Action Plan (2023) in Myanmar-English bilingual were released by the Supreme Court of the Union on 15 January.

As a judicial reform process, the first judicial strategic project was implemented as a three-year strategic plan in 2015 and the second judicial strategic plan was implemented for five years from 2018 to 2022.

The Judicial Strategic Plan 2023-2027, which has been released by Myanmar Judiciary, is the third project, and it was the result of the coordination meeting between the planning team of the Supreme Court of the Union and the officials of the region/state high courts.

In addition, the evaluation and review of the previous five-year plan and the first-year strategic action plan for 2023, which is the initial year of the project, have been included in the five-year judicial strategic plan. — TWA/CT

The Supreme Court of the Union.

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, foodstuffs, consumer goods and vehicles confiscated

A combined team consisting of the Myanmar Police Force and the Maungtaw Customs Department under the supervision of the Rakhine Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force conducted inspections on 14 January.

Officials nabbed 350 boxes of duty-free ESSE cigarettes worth K2.45 million at the edge of the Kanyin creek in Maungtaw township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 15 January, an on-duty team at the 16th-milepost Kyaukchaw checkpoint in Mandalay region captured seven goods, including 900 Backpacks worth K22,436,000, without official documents from a Nissan diesel tractor head and a trailer (approximately K70 million) heading from Muse to Mandalay. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, on 15 and 16 January, a combined team seized a total of 395.8476 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K55,358,816 in the Bago, Toungoo and Thayawady districts. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

On 16 January, at the Yangon International Airport, officials confiscated 13 pairs of Swiss Time couple watches that were hidden in the passenger luggage without official import documents. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

An inspection team led by the head of the Kengtung Customs Department confiscated 1,300 boxes of Sponsor energy drink worth K19.5 million from a 12-wheel truck (approximately K55 million) and the action was taken under Customs procedures.

Therefore, 11 arrests (estimated value of K228,644,816) were made on three consecutive days from 14 to 16 January, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Sandawshin Myat Mawtinsun pagoda festival to be held for 15 days

THE Buddha Pujaniya Festival of the Mawtinsun Pagoda in Ngaputaw township, Pathein district, Ayeyawady region, will be held for 15 days according to the Board of Trustees.

As the festival is usually held from 19 February (1st Waxing day of Taboung) to 5 March (full moon day of Taboung), the relevant officials are now making preparations.

The Buddha Pujaniya Festival of Myat Mawtinsun pagoda has been held every year for more than 100 years, and it is also the famous seaside pagoda festival of the Ayeyawady Region. In the past, the festival was a long-term festival that was held for a month.

In the past, stalls were sold through an auction system during the Pagoda Festival, but the Pagoda Board of Trustees will be responsible for the convenience of vendors during this year's pagoda festival.

As the pagoda festival is approaching, the cleaning is being done on the hill on which the pagoda is situated, the pagoda mountain, in the wells and ponds, on the main pagoda and its surrounding stupas.—TWA/KZW

The photo shows the Myat Mawtinsun pagoda festival in 2015.

Myanmar girls are seen making stage 6 of gold foils at a workshop.

Shwedagon Pagoda Trustees Board calls for bid to purchase over 2.4 mln gold foils

TENDERS will be invited for over 2,400,000 gold foils to be used in gold foil offering to Shwedagon Pagoda, according to the statement released by Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees on 16 January.

The board stated that 1,000,000 gold foils made by machine and 1,400,000 traditional handmade gold foils will be purchased through bidding.

Rules for the competitive bidding system can be purchased at the board's office at K10,000 per tender application form and procurement guidelines between 23 and 27 January 2023 within office hours.

Additionally, open tendering for traditional gold foil suppliers will be held at 1 pm on 14 February at the ancient Buddha stupas shrine in the south of the pagoda platform. After that, tender evaluation for gold foil manufacturers will be continued at 3 pm on the same day.—TWA/EMM

New Yangon-Dala River Bridge construction expected to complete 100% in early 2024

THE 100 per cent of the new Myanmar-Korea Friendship Yangon-Dala River bridge is expected to be completed by early 2024, according to the Ministry of Construction.

For the main bridge PY2 on the Yangon side, the shaft piling work, which is the mid-water pillar work, has been completed from the bottom of the pillar to a height of eight metres. The construction work for the approach bridge along Phonegyi Road has also been completed. 48 per cent of the entire bridge has now been constructed due to the pouring of seven reinforced concrete floors according to the bridge construction site.

As the construction of the bridge nears completion, residents of Lanmadaw Township said that the scenery of the bridge project area — along Phonegyi Road in Lanmadaw Township and the port near the shore — has also changed.

U Ye Aung, a resident of Phonegyi Road, told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) that the erection of bored piles for the main approach two-lane bridge along Phonegyi Road was seen in the last months of 2020. Around two years later, in early 2023, it has been seen that rows of beams have been placed between the main pillars and that reinforced concrete slabs have been laid.

Similarly, it is only necessary to lay the RC slabs for the two pedestrian overpasses under construction at the night market on Strand Road between Latha and Lanmadaw Township.

The construction of the Dala Suspension Bridge over the Yangon River started in May 2019 and will be completed in early 2024. Therefore, in the next year or so, we will see a change in the scene of traffic using not only the surface road but also the approach bridges in front of Strand Road and Phonegyi Road.

Along with the changes in the scenes, transport will become convenient and the development of the region will be improved. Especially, a new scene with various vehicles passing by on the concrete road where cargo vehicles travel, and above the bridge road, will become a new image of Yangon, the commercial city, Daw Win Ma, a resident of Lanmadaw Township, told the GNLM. — TWA/CT

The photo shows a partial completion of the bridge construction.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Corn prices stay high in domestic market

THE price of corn stays elevated at over K1,200 per viss, according to the corn market.

On 17 December 2022, the price dipped to K1,130 per viss. Then, the price was on a gradual rise and touched a high of K1,210 per viss.

The price rebound is attributed to the strong demand by exporters. At present, Myanmar ships corn to Viet Nam and the Philippines by sea, according to Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

A total of 112 companies have been given the go-ahead for maize export and some companies commence exporting.

Thailand gives green light to corn imports under zero tariff (with Form-D), between 1 February and 31 August. However, Thailand imposed a maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on corn imports to protect the rights of their growers if the corn is imported during the corn season of Thailand.

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

Therefore, the export earnings of the corn have to be exchanged for US dollars according to the reference rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar (K2,100). Nonetheless, there is a large gap between the regulated rate and the unauthorized rate of the US dollar (over K2,860), making the traders tough financially.

According to a meeting (66/2022) of Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee, export earnings of some items can be made in Chinese Yuan and Thai Baht in addition to the US dollar.

The CBM's notice dated 18 November takes effect on those export items; various pulses (green gram, black gram, chickpea, pigeon pea), edible oil crops (peanut, sesame seeds), corn, rubber, fishery products (fish, shrimp, crab, eel) and livestock products (live cattle, hides, frozen meat, dried meat).

The traders need to apply for a licence to make Yuan or Baht payments. According to the US dollar policy, 65 per cent of earnings must be exchanged for local currency at the CBM's reference rate for foreign exchange, while exporters can use 35 per cent of export earnings or transfer or sell them to Authorized Dealers or others with an over-the-counter rate within 30 days.

Farmers unload corn from a vehicle. **PHOTO: KO HTEIN**

Myanmar exported 2.3 million tonnes of corn to foreign trade in the 2020-2021 financial year. The majority of them were sent to Thailand and the remaining went to China, India and VietNam.

At present, corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons—winter, summer and monsoon. The country produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn every year. — NN/EMM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 17 January 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,170
Octane 95	K2,230
Diesel	K2,425
Premium Diesel	K2,505

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,250,000 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,775,000 per tical

Dollar Price

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market	K2,835 to K2,855

The above prices may change from time to time.

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Weekly update prices of Bayintnaung commodities

SINCE 16 January, the onion price has been surfing in the market and the palm oil price has risen but the potato price has gone down.

Onion

120,000 visses of onions arrived in Yangon, but the price rose by around K 200/300 per viss on 16 January. On 17 January, 200,000 visses of local onions entered the market, and the price dropped by around K 200 per viss.

On 16 January, the price of onion in Seikphyu was K 1,900-K2,100 per viss. Myingyan onion was K 1,800-K2,000 per viss and Myittha onion was K 2,200-2,400-2,300 respectively. On 17 January, Myingyan onion was K 1,600-K1,800 per viss and Myittha K 2,000-K2,200.

On 17 January, at the Pakkoku market, a viss of onions (without island onion) entered the market, and the highest wholesale price per viss was K 1,850 in wholesale and the retail rate is K 1,650. On 17 January in Mandalay market, the highest price of a viss of Myittha onion was K 2,300. On 16 January, the price of onions entered 25,840 visses into the Myingyan market, and the highest price was two thousand Kyats per viss.

Garlic

Shan Aungpan's garlic price rose but the Kyukok garlic price was down. Shan Aungpan garlic's price was between K 4,600-K5,200-K5,600-K5,900 per viss and Kyukok garlic's wholesale price was around K 3,700 per viss.

Potato

The price of Chinese potatoes has fallen. The old Chinese potato, which was up to K 2,400 per viss, was only K 2,100 on 17 January. New Chinese potatoes have a wholesale rate of K 2,000 per viss. The wholesale price of Shan Aungpan potatoes is K K1,750-K1,850-K2,100 per viss.

Chilli

On 17 January, chilli prices rose again, the wholesale price of the new long red arrow chilli (from Hinthada) was K14,500 per viss. Panye chilli was K 13,000-K14,000 per viss. Moe Htaung chilli was K 12,000-K13,000 per viss. The wholesale price of new chilli on white elephant island was K18,000 -K18,500. Zee pepper was K 15,000 per viss and Shan Saga pepper was K 13,500-K14,000.

Cooking Oil

From 16 to 22 January, the basic wholesale reference price of palm oil was K 4,440 per viss, down K 90 per viss from the previous week.

During this week, the price of palm oil in the foreign market fluctuated. When foreign prices were falling, when the exchange rate was low, there was palm oil coming in from abroad, but those who had instant oil in the market raised the price.

On 10 January, the paper price was K5,950-K6,000 per viss. K 5,600-K5,700 per viss on the 11th and it was K5,450/ K5,500 per viss on the 12th, respectively and on 16 January, it became K6,000/ K6,050. On 17 January, it was sold at a retail price of K 6,100 per viss at Nyaung Pin Lay market.

Rice

In the Yangon market, the broken rice was K40,600 per bag, Sinthukha new was K44,000 per bag, The price of double cropping new rice was K45,000/K46,000 per bag, 90 days new rice was K49,000 per bag, Paw Kywe new rice was K52,000 per bag. Paw San rice of Phapon was K60,000-K62,000, Myaungmya-Pathein K62,000-K65,000, and Shwebo rice was K74,000-K80,000 per bag respectively. Old Paw San rice was priced for Phapon at K70,000-K72,000, for Pathein/Myaungmya at K72,000-K74,000 and for Shwebo at K93,000-K105,000 per bag respectively.

Beans

On 17 January 2023, in the Yangon bean market, one tonne of black gram FAQ/RC was K1,678,500, K1,908,500 per tonne of SQ/RC, K1,819,000 per tonne of red pigeon bean Red/RC, green gram (purple saffron top) was K2,800-K2,920 per viss and a viss of chickpeas is priced at K4,250/ K4,440.— TWA/KZW

Harmonize all concepts and outlooks for motherland Myanmar

EVERYBODY wishes to see society blessed with peace, pleasure and prosperity. If so, society will be convenient for all. If all citizens, all officials and all authorities happily and harmoniously serve their relevant duties, such a society can be dubbed heaven.

As a Myanmar proverb goes: "He that cannot make sport should mar none", some people always have negative views and attitudes, turning a blind eye to the actual situations which may be good or bad as well as right or wrong. At an opportune time, those negative view bearers take advantage for destroying or disturbing something whether such a thing may be useful or not for society. As their primary aims, they would like to thumb up for their acts against anything which is not conformity with their attitudes.

Hence, everybody as well as every Myanmar citizen needs to join hands with each other in nation-building endeavours. For example, a music band plays a song with activities of all musicians who play relevant segments of melody for the song under the directives of the conductor. If they present their segments of the melody at the same time, it will not be charming music but noise. Only when they play the music in their relevant segments will it be the best song for all audiences.

Practically, those negative view bearers grasp a concept that only when they do something will these be the best. In fact, their concept is not in line with the current era. Everybody who keeps relevant concepts in their minds has to harmonize their minds with others whenever they experience whether their concepts are not conformity with others'. In the secular world, no concept is right forever except the four universal truths preached by the Lord Buddha. Depending on the time and place, situations of concepts as well as attitudes are changing. So, everybody should understand that a concept which is the most appropriate for all may not be useful tomorrow.

Hence, everybody as well as every Myanmar citizen needs to join hands with each other in nation-building endeavours. For example, a music band plays a song with activities of all musicians who play relevant segments of melody for the song under the directives of the conductor. If they present their segments of the melody at the same time, it will not be charming music but noise. Only when they play the music in their relevant segments will it be the best song for all audiences.

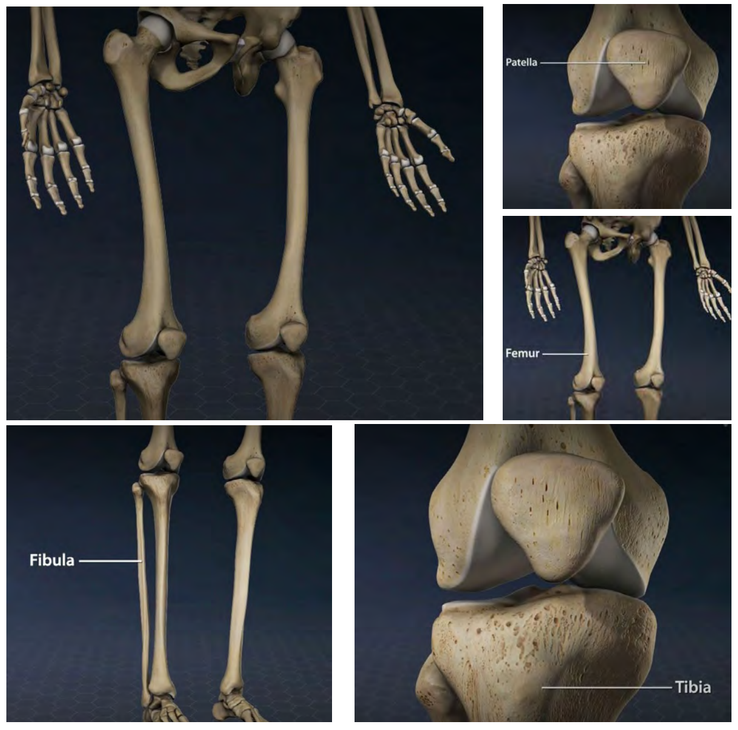
As everybody possesses capabilities different from each other, they should harmoniously utilize their capabilities in relevant sectors based on their different concepts which can bring new and miracle ideas. If so, all their activities will bring excellent and wonderful results to the motherland.

Currently, Myanmar, the motherland of all ethnic nationalities, are hoping for harmonious endeavours based on the creative ideas and concepts of its citizens at the start line so as to march to the finishing line.

■

Take Good Care of The Knees

By Yin Nwe Ko



KNEE pain is a common complaint among adults and is most often associated with general wear and tear from daily activities like walking, bending, standing, and lifting. Athletes who run or play sports that involve jumping or quick pivoting are also more likely to experience knee pain and problems. But whether an individual's knee pain is caused by ageing or injury, it can be a nuisance and even debilitating in some circumstances.

The knee is a vulnerable joint that bears great stress from everyday activities, such as lifting and kneeling, and from high-impact activities, such as jogging and aerobics.

The knee is formed by the following parts:

Tibia: This is the shin bone or larger bone of the lower leg.

Femur: This is the thighbone or upper leg bone.

Patella: This is the kneecap.

Each bone end is covered with a layer of cartilage that absorbs shock and protects the knee. The knee is 2 long leg bones held together by muscles, ligaments, and tendons. There are 2 groups of muscles involved in the knee, including the quadriceps muscles (located on the front of the thighs), which straighten the legs, and the hamstring muscles (located on the back of the thighs), which bend the leg at the knee. tendons are tough cords of tissue that connect muscles to bones. Ligaments are elastic bands of tissue that connect bone to bone. Some ligaments on the knee provide stability and protection of the joints, while other ligaments limit forward and backward movement of the tibia (shin bone). Many knee problems are a result of the ageing process and continual wear and stress on the knee joint (such as arthritis). Other knee problems are a result of an injury or a sudden movement that strains the knee. Common knee problems include the following:

Sprained or strained knee ligaments and/or muscles

A sprained or strained knee ligament or muscle is usually caused by a blow to the knee or a sudden twist of the knee. Symptoms often include pain, swelling, and difficulty in walking.

Torn cartilage

Trauma to the knee can tear the menisci (pads of connective tissue that act as shock absorbers and also enhance stability). Cartilage tears can often occur with sprains. Treatment may involve wearing a brace during an activity to protect the knee from further injury. Surgery may be needed to repair the tear.

Tendonitis

Inflammation of the tendons may result from overuse of a tendon during certain activities such as running, jumping, or cycling. Tendonitis of the patellar tendon is called jumper's knee. This often occurs with sports, such as basketball, where the force of hitting the ground after a jump strains the tendon.

Arthritis

Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis that affects the knee. Osteoarthritis is a degenerative process where the cartilage in the joint gradually wears away. It often affects middle-aged and older people. Osteoarthritis may be caused by excess stress on the joint such as repeated injury or being overweight. Rheumatoid arthritis can also affect the knees by causing the joint to become inflamed and by destroying the knee cartilage. Rheumatoid arthritis often affects persons at an earlier age than osteoarthritis.

In addition to a complete medical history and physical exam, other tests for knee problems may include:

X-ray

This test uses invisible electromagnetic energy beams to make images of internal tissues, bones, and organs onto film.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

This test uses large magnets, radiofrequency, and a computer to make detailed images of organs and structures within the body; can often determine damage or disease in a surrounding ligament or muscle.

Computed Tomography Scan (CT Scan)

This test uses X-rays and computer technology to make horizontal, or axial, images (often called slices) of the body. A CT scan shows detailed images of any part of the body, including the bones, muscles, fat, and organs. CT scans are more detailed than general X-rays.

Arthroscopy

A minimally-invasive diagnostic and treatment procedure used for conditions of a joint. This procedure uses a small, lighted, optic tube (arthroscope), which is inserted into the joint through a small incision in the joint. Images of the inside of the joint are projected onto a screen; used to evaluate any degenerative or arthritic changes in the joint; detect bone diseases and tumours; to determine the cause of bone pain and inflammation.

Radionuclide bone scan

A nuclear imaging technique uses a very small amount of radioactive material, injected into the patient's bloodstream to be detected by a scanner. This test shows blood flow to the bone and cell activity within the bone.

When you walk on level ground, the force on your knees is equivalent to about 1.5 times your body weight. It's no wonder they play up.

What can go wrong?

The knee is a complex joint and we give it a lot of grief over our lifetime by walking, lifting, kneeling, and high-impact activities, such as running, jumping, and sports. Blows to the knee and sports where you are often twisting it are a common cause of injury, including sprained ligaments and muscles, torn cartilage, tendonitis (sometimes caused by excessive running, jumping, or cycling), bursitis (from excessive kneeling), and, as you get older, osteoarthritis.

What if it's arthritis?

In osteoarthritis, the cartilage in the joint wears away. The main symptoms are pain, stiffness, and difficulty moving the joint. Having arthritis in your knee also makes you more prone to ligament injuries, as the muscles around the joint can become weak. It's important to exercise to combat pain, improve leg strength and balance, and maintain flexibility. Acupuncture may help with osteoarthritis pain.

How do you treat a knee injury?

First off, you'll need RICE. This means Resting your knee for a day or two, applying Ice—such as a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel— for up to 20 minutes every two or three hours to bring down the swelling, compressing with a bandage, and elevating your injury above the level of your heart. Don't play sports if you're in pain, but if you're itching to get going, try swimming or another low-impact activity, such as tai chi or pilates, once things have settled down.

And if it doesn't get better?

See your GP and set about getting a proper diagnosis. They might refer you to a physiotherapist—or you can opt to go privately—who can give you exercises to strengthen the muscles around your knee. Some injuries, such as torn ligaments, might need surgery.

What are the best ways to care for my knees?

Prevention is better than cure. Warm up properly before you exercise and consider sports that are easier on your knees. These include swimming, water aerobics, cycling (on the road or a static bike), pilates, brisk walking, or stepping up. A rule of thumb: never do an exercise where your knees stick out beyond your toes when you bend them. You might want to avoid deep squats and running. Wear shoes with good tread, whether you're exercising or simply out and about.

How do I make my knees stronger?

Focus on exercises that work your hamstrings, quadriceps, glutes, and hip muscles. These will also help to strengthen your knees. There are plenty of exercises to improve knee strength online.

What difference does body weight make?

Being overweight puts extra strain on your knees, raising the risk of injuries and osteoarthritis. Even modest weight loss will help. Combine losing a few kilos with exercises that tone the muscles around the joint, and your knees will look better too.

Reference: www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions

Daiichi Sankyo seeks approval for Japan's 1st home-grown mRNA vaccine

With Japan's current eighth wave of infections driven largely by the highly contagious Omicron variant, the company plans to start clinical trials targeting the variant sometime during the new fiscal year from April, using the same vaccine.

JAPANESE drugmaker Daiichi Sankyo Co has applied with the health ministry for approval of a new coronavirus vaccine, aiming to be the first in the nation to put a domestically developed messenger RNA vaccine into use.

The same type of vaccine developed by Pfizer Inc and Moderna Inc, both of the United States, has already been in use in Japan. Daiichi Sankyo's is tailored for previously dominant variants and intended for third jabs.

Daiichi Sankyo announced its application for its mRNA vaccine's manufacture and sale on Friday, with plans to put it into use by the end of this year.

With Japan's current eighth wave of infections driven largely by the highly contagious Omicron variant, the company plans to start clinical trials targeting the variant sometime during the new fiscal year from April, using the same vaccine.

One of its rivals, Shionogi & Co, applied with the ministry last November for approval of its recombinant protein-based preventive vaccine, the same type as the vaccine developed by Novavax Inc., which differs from vaccines using messenger RNA technology.

SOURCE: Kyodo

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 17 January 2023)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 18 January 2023: Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Kachin and Eastern Shan states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3 - 5) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperatures in Sagaing Region and Kachin and Northern Shan states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 January 2023: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 January 2023: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 January 2023: Generally fair weather.

SCI/TECH/ENVIRON
WORLD

Chinese, European Mars probes help examine atmosphere near sun

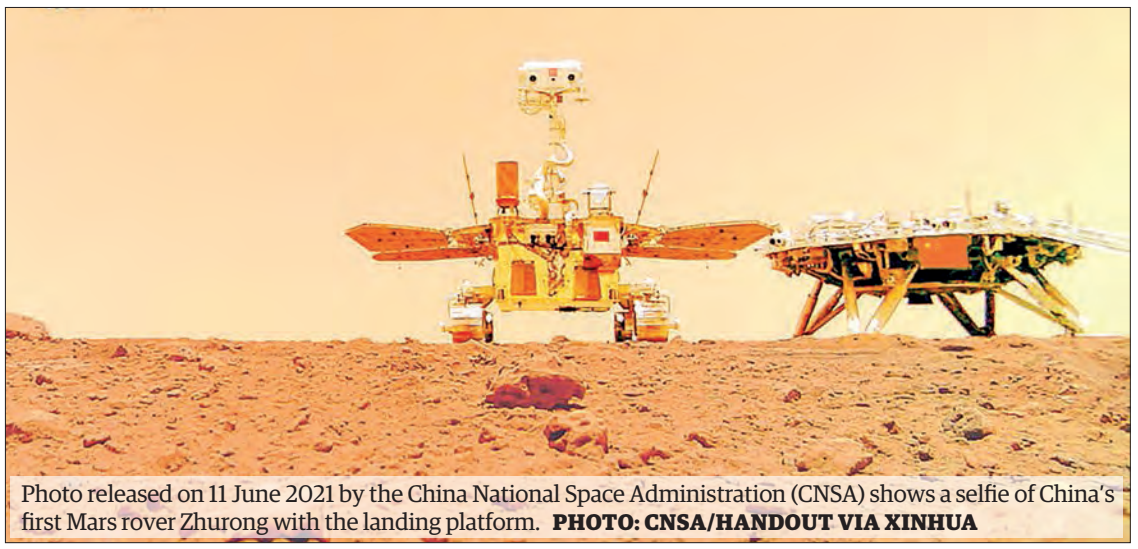


Photo released on 11 June 2021 by the China National Space Administration (CNSA) shows a selfie of China's first Mars rover Zhurong with the landing platform. **PHOTO: CNSA/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

IN an "almost-out-of-service" period in 2021, China's Tianwen-1 orbiter, along with Mars Express of the European Space Agency, helped solar scientists know more about what happens near the sun.

During the late September to mid-October stretch in 2021, China's Mars orbiter experienced its first sun transit, when its communication with Earth was significantly disturbed by solar radiation.

The Mars Sun Transit is a phenomenon in which Earth and Mars move to opposite sides of the sun, and the three are almost in a straight line.

During the transit, Tianwen-1 and Mars Express sent out frequent signals, allowing radio telescopes on Earth to examine how those signals were affected.

A paper published recently in Astrophysical Journal Letters revealed that on 9 October 2021 — when the red planet's projection point near the sun was 2.6 times solar radius away from the sun's centre — a violent solar burst event called a coronal mass ejection (CME) caused noticeable disturbances for a period of 10 minutes. Also, coronal waves were detected near the projection point, a phenomenon reflecting how magnetic fields constrain solar winds, according to the study led by scientists from the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The scientists also identified the high-speed primary solar wind when the CME was winding down. The high-speed solar wind was detected much closer to the sun than expected, according to the study.China's Tianwen-1 Mars mission, comprising an orbiter, lander and rover, was launched on 23 July 2020.—Xinhua

Russia to evacuate astronauts from ISS amid emergency

RUSSIA will launch the unmanned Soyuz MS-23 spacecraft to bring home three astronauts from the International Space Station (ISS) as their Soyuz MS-22 spaceship has an emergency situation, Russian space authorities said Saturday.

Russian cosmonauts Sergei Prokopyev and Dmitry Petelin together with NASA astronaut Francisco Rubio will return to Earth aboard the Soyuz MS-23 in the next weeks, which is supposed to dock to the ISS on 22 February, Russia's space agency Roscosmos said in a statement.

Last month, astronauts found damage to the outer skin of the instrument-assembly compartment of the Soyuz MS-22 docked to the ISS, which caused a pressure drop in the cooling system.

The systems of the ISS and the Soyuz MS-22 are operating normally, but Roscosmos and its partner space agencies have taken measures to ensure the safe return of the crew to Earth in the event of an accident before the arrival of Soyuz MS-23, the statement said.—Xinhua

China releases report on remote sensing monitoring for global ecology

CHINA'S Ministry of Science and Technology issued a 2022 annual report on the remote sensing monitoring of the global ecological environment on Tuesday in Beijing.

The report contains two topics of "ice, snow, and vegetation change in the Arctic region" and "the production situation of global bulk grain and oil crops and the contribution of multiple cropping and irrigation."

The report aims to provide scientific data support for promoting sustainable development in the Arctic region and coping with climate change, as well as analyzing the impact of extreme weather and regional emergencies on food production and supply.

The topic of "ice, snow, and vegetation change in the Arctic region" applied multi-source remote sensing data to monitor the Arctic sea ice, the Greenland ice sheet, and the Arctic land vegetation.

And the topic "the production situation of global bulk grain and oil crops and the contribution of multiple cropping and irrigation" monitored the global agrometeorological conditions and the cultivation and stress of grain and oil crops in major grain-producing areas of the world from 2021 to 2022. It also forecasted the output, supply, import, and export situation of bulk grain and oil crops in 2022.

Since 2012, the National Remote Sensing Centre of China under the Ministry of Science and Technology has continuously released annual reports on remote sensing monitoring of the global ecological environment.—Xinhua

China's Tencent fires more than 100 for fraud, embezzlement

CHINESE tech giant Tencent said Monday it had fired more than a hundred employees for violating company policies, with some referred to police and later found guilty of bribery and embezzlement.

The Hong Kong-listed company is the world's top video game maker and the owner of popular super-app WeChat but has struggled under a broad regulatory crackdown on China's tech sector initiated in late 2020.

In a statement, the firm — which in November posted its second consecutive quarterly decline in revenue — said it had found more than 100 employees guilty of violating its anti-fraud policy.

More than 10 were transferred to China's public security organ, it added.

"In response to the problems of corruption and fraud within the company, Tencent's Anti-Fraud Investigation Department continued to strengthen its crackdown and investigated and dealt with a series of violations with common problems," the firm said.

"The number of cases and personnel investigated and dealt with throughout 2022 has increased compared with 2021," it added.

This photo taken on 10 July 2022, shows a man walking past the Tencent headquarters in Shenzhen, in China's southern Guangdong province. **PHOTO: AFP**

Those accused were found to have embezzled company funds and accepting bribes, it added, with a number referred to police and some found guilty in court.

A number of those fired and accused of corruption were part of the company's PCG arm, which oversees its mammoth content output from news to sports and movies.

But they also span Tencent's other businesses, including cloud computing and fintech.—AFP

Mental health issue remains challenge after last year's volcanic eruption: Tongan PM

MENTAL health issue remains a challenge in Tonga after last year's devastating Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption, which caused three deaths and extensive damage to the island nation, said a Tongan leader.

According to Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (FBC) on Monday, Tongan Prime Minister Hu'akavameiliku Siaosi Sovaleni confirmed to FBC News that the issue will take time as they continue to rebuild after a year.

"We were surprised because of the enormity of the eruption, and yet, you know, we lost only a few lives. But as I say, at the same time a lot of people are now physically ok but mentally, it's something that we try to address. We may be able to build houses now but addressing mental health issues will take a little bit longer than that," he said.

The prime minister said that they continue to rebuild slowly as they try to get their lives back on track.

This recent undated handout photo received from the Tonga Red Cross Society on 23 January 2022 shows Red Cross teams setting up temporary shelters in Kanokupolu, a village on the western part of Tonga's main island Tongatapu, after the nearby Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupted on 15 January. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / TONGA RED CROSS SOCIETY / AFP**

On Sunday, Tonga organized an exhibition and Thanksgiving service to mark the anniversary of the violent eruption, which took place on 15 January 2022 and also triggered a tsunami.

The Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano, about 65 kilometres north of Tongan capital Nuku'alofa, is part of the highly active Tonga-Kermadec Islands volcanic arc, a subduction zone extending from New Zealand north-northeast to Fiji. Over the past decades, the volcano has erupted several times.

As Tonga's close friend, China sent two military aircraft and navy ships to deliver disaster relief supplies to the South Pacific island nation, which has a population of more than 100,000. —Xinhua

Eisai, Biogen apply for Alzheimer's drug approval in Japan

JAPANESE pharmaceutical firm Eisai Co said Monday it and US firm Biogen Inc applied with the health ministry for approval of an Alzheimer's drug that could become the first available in Japan that both treats the disease's cause and slows symptom progression.

The two companies hope to gain approval by the end of the year following the US Food and Drug Administration's decision earlier in the month to grant it fast-track approval.

Eisai said it had applied with the European Medicines Agency on 9 January for approval to sell the medicine in Europe. The firm also submitted the drug data to China's National Medical Products Administration in December.

Using an antibody called lecanemab, the new drug co-developed by Eisai and Biogen is for early-stage treatment of the fatal, brain-robbing disease.

Photo shows image of Alzheimer's drug, lecanemab, that is to go on sale in the United States. (Photo courtesy of Eisai Co.) **PHOTO: KYODO**

The drug removes a type of protein called amyloid beta, which is considered the cause of the disease. The protein accumulates inside the brain and destroys nerve cells, Eisai said.

The firm said clinical trials demonstrated the new drug curbed the progression of symptoms, such as worsening memory and impairment in judgment, by 27 per cent compared with a placebo.

According to the clinical trial results, 12 to 17 per cent of those who were administered the drug showed side effects, such as brain edema and bleeding, compared with a group who took a placebo, but most of those who had the side effects only suffered mild to moderate symptoms temporarily, Eisai said.

It is expected that the drug will be expensive after Eisai set it's price in the United States at $26,500 per year. The Alzheimer's Association, a US-based nonprofit organization, said 55 million people in the world are living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.—Kyodo

Eating one wild fish same as month of drinking tainted water: study

EATING one freshwater fish caught in a river or lake in the United States is the equivalent of drinking a month's worth of water contaminated with toxic "forever chemicals", new research said on Tuesday.

The invisible chemicals called PFAS were first developed in the 1940s to resist water and heat, and are now used in items such as non-stick pans, textiles, fire suppression foams and food packaging.

But the indestructibility of PFAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, means the pollutants have built up over time in the air, soil, lakes, rivers, food, drinking water and even our bodies.

There have been growing calls for stricter regulation for PFAS, which have been linked to a range of serious health issues including liver damage, high cholesterol, reduced immune responses and several kinds of cancer.

To find out PFAS contamination in locally caught fish, a team of researchers analyzed more than 500 samples from rivers and lakes across the United States between 2013 and 2015.

The median level of PFAS in the fish was 9,500 nanogrammes per kilogramme, according to a new study published in the journal Environmental Research.

Nearly three quarters of the detected "forever chemicals" was PFOS, one of the most common and hazardous of the thousands of PFAS.

Eating just one freshwater fish equalled drinking water with PFOS at 48 parts per trillion for a month, the researchers calculated.

Last year the US Environmental Protection Agency lowered the level of PFOS in drinking water it considers safe to 0.02 parts per trillion.

The total PFAS level in the freshwater fish was 278 times higher than what has been found in commercially sold fish, the study said.—AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

Singapore tourist arrivals to recover to pre-pandemic level by 2024

A tour boat is pictured in Marina Bay in Singapore on 17 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

SINGAPORE'S tourism authority on Tuesday projected tourist arrivals to the city-state to recover to pre-pandemic levels by next year.

The Singapore Tourism Board said international visitor arrivals in 2022 reached 6.3 million, about a third of the pre-pandemic level.

The top places visitors came from were Indonesia, India and Malaysia.

The authority is projecting that visitor arrivals will hit 12 million to 14 million this year, bringing in S$18 billion ($13.6 billion) to S$21 billion in tourism receipts, still below 2019 levels.

On the return of visitors from mainland China, which used to be Singapore's top tourist market before the COVID-19 pandemic, Keith Tan, chief executive of the Singapore Tourism Board, told a news conference, "We are hoping to get for the whole year of 2023 between 30 to 60 per cent of where we were compared to whole year of 2019."

"We will not get there in March or April 2023. But hopefully, things go well in our most ambitious and aggressive scenarios," he added.—Kyodo

Renault in final-stage talks to lower stake in Nissan to 15%

RENAULT SA is in the final-stage of talks with Nissan Motor Co to lower its stake in its Japanese partner to 15 per cent from the current 43 per cent, sources close to the matter said Tuesday, in a major overhaul of their decades-old capital alliance. Renault Chief Executive Officer Luca de Meo plans to meet with Nissan CEO Makoto Uchida in Japan as early as 26 January, aiming to reach an agreement on the review of their capital alliance dating back to 1999, the sources said.

The two automakers plan to reshape their alliance structure to bring their reciprocal stakes to an equal level at 15 per cent, according to the sources. Nissan, which has a 15 per cent stake without voting rights in the smaller French partner, has been seeking a more balanced capital relationship for years.

Nissan has been considering taking a stake in Renault's electric vehicle business Ampere. US chip giant Qualcomm Technologies Inc. said in November it would invest in Ampere, while Google LLC said it would team up with the EV company. Negotiations on reforming the capital structure between Renault and Nissan have made scant progress, as the Japanese carmaker has been concerned that its intellectual property related to EV technology could be shared with others outside the alliance through Ampere.—Kyodo

Logos of Nissan Motor Co (L) and Renault SA. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Cambodia expects 4 mln int'l tourists this year after China's pandemic strategy optimization

CAMBODIA is projected to receive four million international tourists in 2023 after China's optimization of its COVID-19 strategy early this month, a tourism official said on Tuesday.

Kong Sopheareak, director of Tourism Statistics Department at the Ministry of Tourism, said China is the most important outbound tourism market for the world, and China's optimization of its COVID-19 strategy is a boon not only for Cambodia, but also for global tourism.

"We hope that more Chinese tourists, business people and investors will come to Cambodia, given close relationship between our two countries and peoples," he told Xinhua.

"The presence of Chinese tourists is vital to help boost our tourism and economy," he added.

According to Sopheareak, the Southeast Asian nation welcomed 2.28 million international tourists in 2022. Of them, 106,875 were Chinese tourists.—Xinhua

Tourists visit the Angkor Wat temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Siem Reap province on 16 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Thailand's trade with RCEP countries up 7.11% in 2022

THAILAND'S trade with other Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) member countries rose 7.11 per cent year on year to 300 billion US dollars in 2022, official data showed Tuesday.

Since the RCEP's entry into force in January 2022, the pact has yielded positive results for Thailand's trade with other RCEP countries, said Sinit Lertkrai, deputy minister of Commerce of Thailand.

A breakdown of the data showed Thailand's exports to RCEP member countries amounted to 140 billion dollars last year while its imports from RCEP member countries totalled 160 billion dollars, according to the commerce ministry.

Sinit said the pact has not only provided additional tariff reduction or elimination for Thai businesses but also offered trade facilitation measures to speed up the customs clearance procedures, which is especially beneficial for the trade of perishable products.

It has also provided more options for Thai businesses in exporting goods to and importing goods from RCEP member countries, he said. The RCEP comprises 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, and their five trading partners, namely China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.—Xinhua

Japan used car registrations in 2022 hit new record low

USED car registrations in Japan in 2022 hit a record low for the second consecutive year, down by 6.3 per cent from the previous year at 3,495,305 units, data from the Japan Automobile Dealers Association showed Tuesday. Registrations have been on the decline for three years running due to an ongoing semiconductor shortage leading to less production of new units, impacting the number of vehicles that enter the secondhand market through consumer tradeoffs and other means. Registrations included vehicles sold by secondhand car dealers, as well as those made through private ownership transactions.

By vehicle type, registrations of used passenger cars decreased by 6.4 per cent to 3,039,126 units, while secondhand freight vehicles fell 6.1 per cent to 369,179 units. Prices have increased for used cars due to a rise in popularity as delivery times for new vehicles have been prolonged over the ongoing automotive parts crunch. According to major used car auctioneering operator USS Co, the average winning price for a vehicle in December 2022 was seven per cent higher than in the same month the previous year at 997,000 yen ($7,750). —Kyodo

More global cooperation urged at Davos amid world economic slowdown

GLOBAL cooperation should be accelerated as the world economy slows down sharply, said attendees at the World Economic Forum (WEF)'s annual meeting kicking off Monday in Davos, Switzerland.

The meeting, themed "Cooperation in a Fragmented World", is being held at a time when various challenges threaten world economic recovery, such as the energy crisis, the food crisis, high inflation, interruption of industrial chains, and retreat from globalization, said officials and scholars gathering at the event. The manifold political, economic, and social forces are creating increased fragmentation on a global and national level, said Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF, ahead of the annual meeting. One of the root causes of the fragmentation is actually "a lack of cooperation," which in turn "increases fragmentation in society and leads even more to short-term and self-serving policymaking," said Schwab.—Xinhua

This photo taken on 16 January 2023 shows the exterior view of the Congress Centre for the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2023 in Davos, Switzerland. The WEF's annual meeting opened on Monday in the Swiss town of Davos. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

UK unemployment stable but inflation slams wages: data

UK unemployment is steady but wages have tanked further, official data showed Tuesday, as sky-high inflation sparks a cost-of-living crisis and growing industrial unrest. The unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.7 per cent in the three months to the end of November compared with the three months to the end of October, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement.

However, wages in real terms sank 2.6 per cent as runaway inflation continued to bite. "The real value of people's pay continues to fall, with prices still rising faster than earnings," said ONS director of economic statistics Darren Morgan. "This remains amongst the fastest drops in regular earnings since (comparable) records began" in 2001. Britain has been plagued by strikes in public and private sectors, as pay fails to keep pace with rampant prices.—AFP

Egypt's economic turmoil squeezes struggling middle class

A man walks past vehicles under an overpass bridge in the Azhar district of Egypt's capital Cairo on 16 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

WITH Egypt's economy in crisis, the currency in freefall and inflation skyrocketing, the poor have been hit hard but the middle class is also teetering on the brink.

"It's like we were hit by an earthquake, suddenly you have to let go of everything," said Manar, a 38-year-old mother of two.

"Now whatever semi-humane life people had has been reduced to thinking about how much bread and eggs cost," she told AFP, asking to be identified only by her first name.

The Egyptian pound has lost half its value against the dollar since March, following a devaluation demanded as part of a $3 billion International Monetary Fund loan agreement. Official annual headline inflation hit 21.9 per cent in December, and food prices surged 37.9 per cent in the Arab world's most populous nation.

But Steve Hanke, an economist at Johns Hopkins University who measures inflation based on purchasing power parity and factoring in black market exchange rates, estimated Egypt's real inflation rate at 101 per cent.

The economy, dominated by state and military-owned enterprises, had already struggled after successive blows, from years of political unrest to the Covid pandemic.

But it was Russia's invasion of Ukraine — with both countries key exporters of wheat and sources of mass tourism to Egypt — that set off the latest painful crisis.

The war also unsettled global investors who pulled billions out of the North African country.

According to the World Bank, nearly one-third of Egypt's 104 million people already live below the poverty line, and almost as many are "vulnerable to falling into poverty".—AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V HAN ZHI VOY.NO. (2220E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V HAN ZHI VOY. NO. (2220E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AIPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S WILHELMSEN PORT SERVICE(S) PTE LTD

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GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Poorest learners benefit least from public education funding: UNICEF

ONLY 16 per cent of public education funding goes to the poorest 20 per cent of learners, while 28 per cent goes to the richest 20 per cent, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) said in a report published Tuesday, highlighting global educational inequality.

Children from the poorest households benefit the least from national public education funding, UNICEF said in the report titled "Transforming Education with Equitable Financing," which looks at government spending from pre-primary through tertiary education in 102 countries.

"We are failing children. Too many education systems around the world are investing the least in those children who need it the most," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell.

The gap is most pronounced among low-income countries, as children from the wealthiest households benefit from over six times the amount of public education funding compared to the poorest learners, UNICEF said.

In middle-income countries like Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal, the richest learners receive around four times more public education spending than the poorest.

In high-income countries, the richest usually benefit from 1.1 to 1.6 times as much public education spending as the poorest, with countries like France and Uruguay at the higher end of the gap.

Children wear face masks while they read in a classroom at a primary school in the popular district of Attecoube in Abidjan on 25 May 2020 on the first day after resumption of classes after COVID-19 coronavirus lockdown. **PHOTO: AFP**

UNICEF called for equitable financing to combat "learning poverty." The report found that just a one percentage point increase in the allocation of public education resources to the poorest quintile of learners could potentially lift 35 million primary school-aged children out of learning poverty.

"Investing in the education of the poorest children is the most cost-effective way to ensure the future for children, communities and countries. True progress can only come when we invest in every child, everywhere," said Russell.

The report also found that children living in poverty are less likely to attend school, drop out sooner, and are less represented in higher education, which receives much higher public education spending per capita.—Xinhua

Europeans launch alliance for climate-friendly cities

Swiss President Alain Berset delivers remarks at the Congress centre during the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos on 17 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

CULTURE ministers from across Europe have launched an alliance to create more sustainable and climate-friendly buildings and urban landscapes, Switzerland said Monday. "In future, politicians, business and civil society will be working together to create better-designed cities, villages and landscapes," the Swiss government said, announcing the launch of the new "Davos Baukultur Alliance".

Baukultur is shorthand for the preservation and development of quality, sustainable and culturally relevant buildings and cities. Swiss President Alain Berset had invited culture ministers from 31 European countries to a two-day meeting in Davos, ahead of the World Economic Forum that kicks off in the luxury ski resort on Monday.

Along with civil society organizations and major companies from the building and real estate industries, they agreed to launch an international network to help meet planning and construction challenges, including transitioning to more sustainable energy sources.—AFP

Erdogan, Putin discuss grain deal, Türkiye's mediation efforts

TURKISH President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Monday discussed the grain deal and Ankara's efforts to mediate between Kyiv and Moscow, the Turkish presidency said in a statement. In a phone conversation, the two leaders discussed the "grain corridor and the export of ammonia, as well as concrete steps to produce flour in Türkiye from the Russian grain and send them to the African countries in need," according to the statement. Erdogan reiterated that Ankara was "ready to undertake the task of facilitating and mediating for the achievement of a lasting peace between Russia and Ukraine".—Xinhua

Facts about Russia-Ukraine conflict: IAEA establishes mission at Ukraine's nuclear plant

The following are the latest developments in the Ukraine crisis:

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) established the support and assistance mission at the Pivdennoukrainsk nuclear power plant (NPP) in southern Ukraine, IAEA Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi said on Monday.

"We are here to stay to help ensure nuclear safety and security during ongoing conflict," Grossi tweeted after the flag-raising ceremony at the plant. Soon, the IAEA will be permanently present at all Ukrainian NPPs, Grossi said.

The Russian Armed Forces do not strike residential buildings or civilian infrastructure but military targets in Ukraine, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a daily briefing on Monday.

He denied that the Russian forces caused the deadly collapse of a residential building in the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro last week, saying that it was destroyed by Kyiv's interceptor missile.— Xinhua

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi (C-R) and Ukraine's Minister of Energy German Galushchenko (C-L) speak during a visit to Pivdennoukrainsk nuclear power plant in Yuzhnoukrainsk, Mykolaiv Oblast, on 16 January 2023, amid Russia's military invasion on Ukraine. **PHOTO: AFP**

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

China's population shrinks for first time in more than 60 years

A nurse takes care of a newborn baby at a hospital in Fuyang, in China's eastern Anhui province on 17 January 2023. **PHOTO: STR / AFP**

CHINA'S population shrank last year for the first time in more than six decades, official data showed Tuesday, as the birth rate slows in the face of mounting financial pressures and shifting social attitudes.

The world's most populous country is facing a looming demographic crisis as its workforce ages, which analysts warn could stymie economic growth and pile pressure on strained public coffers.

Analysts point to the soaring cost of living — as well as a growing number of women in the workforce and seeking higher education — as reasons behind the slowdown.

"Who dares to have kids?" a Shanghai resident in his thirties said Tuesday.

"The unemployment rate is so high, Covid destroyed everything, there's nothing we can do. Next year we'll have declining growth again."

The mainland Chinese population stood at around 1,411,750,000 at the end of 2022, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported, a decrease of 850,000 from the end of the previous year.

The number of births was 9.56 million, the NBS said, while the number of deaths stood at 10.41 million. The last time China's population declined was in the early 1960s, when the country was battling the worst famine in its modern history, a result of the disastrous Mao Zedong agricultural policy known as the Great Leap Forward.—AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Viet Nam's president resigns out of personal wish: state media

VIETNAMESE President Nguyen Xuan Phuc has resigned and has had his memberships at the Politburo and the 13th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (CPV) removed, the Vietnam News Agency reported on Tuesday.

He made the decision out of his personal wish, which was announced at a meeting of the Central Committee of the CPV's meeting held on Tuesday, the official news agency said.

Phuc was elected as the Vietnamese president in April 2021. —Xinhua

Israel discovers 3 stone anchors dating back to over 4,100 years

THREE ancient stone anchors that date back to more than 4,100 years were discovered in the Mediterranean Sea, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) said Monday evening.

The anchors were found near the shores of the northern Israeli city of Haifa by swimmers, who saw three stones with holes that did not appear to have been naturally created, the IAA said.

The shape of the stones is triangular, and a large biconical hole was carved on both sides of each one.—Xinhua

Kobe marks 28 years since deadly quake with pre-pandemic-scale event

THE western Japan city of Kobe on Tuesday marked the 28th anniversary of the magnitude 7.3 earthquake that took 6,434 lives, with its first ceremony in three years at a pre-pandemic scale.

Residents and victims' families observed a moment of silence at 5:46 am, the same time the Great Hanshin Earthquake struck the port city in Hyogo Prefecture and neighbouring areas on 17 January 1995.

The ceremony, which came after memorials were reduced in scale or cancelled in 2021 and 2022, saw participants light thousands of candles forming "1.17 1995", the date of the disaster, and this year's message, "musubu", meaning to be bound together. Under pandemic limits, commemorations at Higashi Yuenchi, a park in Kobe's Chuo Ward, had used around half the number of candles at a normal-scale event.

This year's pre-dawn event saw some 10,000 bamboo and paper lanterns lit to mark the anniversary. Masashi Ueno, who lost his 20-year-old daughter Shino in the quake, spoke at the park on behalf of the victims' relatives. Reflecting on the pain of Shino's death at the very start of her adult life and the shock of finding her body, Ueno said, "We must make use of the lessons learned from the disaster."—Kyodo

A resident prays by lanterns in a park in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, on 17 January 2023, the 28th anniversary of the Great Hanshin Earthquake. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Norway wealth fund invests further in renewable energy

NORWAY'S sovereign wealth fund, financed from taxes paid by the nation's oil and gas industry, said Tuesday it had bought a stake in solar plant and wind farm projects in Spain from Iberdrola.

It is the fund's second direct investment in renewable energy infrastructure since the Norwegian parliament authorized such investments in 2019.

The latest deal will see the fund — which has more than 1.2 trillion euros ($1.3 trillion) in assets — pay the Spanish energy group 600 million euros for 49 per cent of a portfolio comprising seven solar plant projects and five onshore wind projects.

It is capable of generating 1,265 megawatts, equivalent to the annual electricity consumption of 700,000 Spanish households, the fund said in a statement.

The deal, which requires approval by Spanish authorities, is expected to be completed in the first three months of the year.

Nine of the 12 projects concerned are currently under development and are expected to be finished by 2025, it added.

In April 2021, the fund announced it would buy for 1.38 billion euros a 50-per-cent stake in what was then the world's second-largest offshore wind farm, the Borssele 1 & 2, located in the North Sea off the coast of the Netherlands.

The sovereign wealth fund invests in the Norwegian state's oil and gas revenue in shares, bonds and real estate in order to finance the future needs of the country's generous welfare state.—AFP

Poorest learners benefit least from public education funding: UNICEF

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SPORT

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

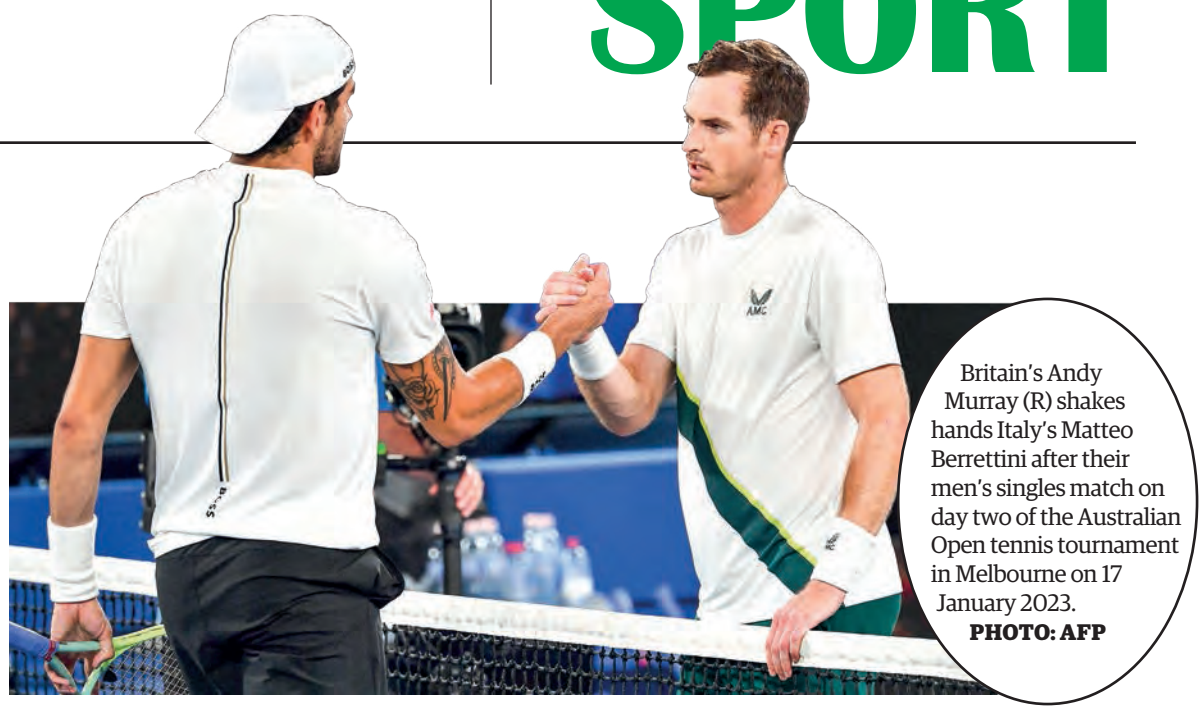
(a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
(b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
(c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

(a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
(b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
(c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

(a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
(b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
(c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.



Britain's Andy Murray (R) shakes hands Italy's Matteo Berrettini after their men's singles match on day two of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on 17 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Murray wins Australian Open five-set epic as weather plays havoc

ANDY Murray rolled back the years to defeat 13th seed Matteo Berrettini in a five-set epic at the Australian Open on Tuesday, on a day when sweltering heat and then heavy rain played havoc.

There was also controversy off the court on day two after organizers banned Russian and Belarusian flags at Melbourne Park.

Novak Djokovic was set to make his eagerly anticipated return to the Grand Slam later Tuesday, following his ban and deportation last year.

The day looked set to belong to the 35-year-old Murray — and Melbourne's famously fickle weather. The Briton saved match point to defeat Italy's Berrettini 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-7 (7/9), 7-6 (10/6) in 4hrs 49mins on Rod Laver Arena, where the roof was closed because of the extreme heat.

"I will be feeling this this evening and tomorrow," the former world number one, who plays with a metal hip after career-saving surgery, said. "But right now unbelievably happy and proud of myself." The three-time major winner faces either Fabio Fognini or Thanasi Kokkinakis in round two. Also in the men's draw, Russia's fifth seed Andrey Rublev ended the tournament of 2020 finalist Dominic Thiem 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 in 36 degrees Celsius (96.8 Fahrenheit) temperatures.

Former US Open champion Thiem was outplayed as he continued his return from a wrist injury that kept him off the court for nine months across the 2021 and 2022 seasons.—AFP

Yangon United sign Hlaing Bo Bo on two-year loan

YANGON United Football Club recently announced that former Yadanabon Captain Hlaing Bo Bo has joined the team on a two-year contract.

Upon his arrival to the new team, Hlaing Bo Bo said, "I am thrilled to join Yangon United, and I am going to push myself better to get fit with the team squad to hold the Champion title. I want to play AFC Cup to showcase my skill in this international competition."

"The silver medalist of the 2015 SEA Games in Singapore, Hlaing Bo Bo was from Paleik Youth Academy in Singaing Township, Mandalay region. He joined the Yadanabon youth team in 2009 and was scouted for the Myanmar U-16 team. Then he was promoted to Yadanabon senior team in 2011 and held the Champion title in 2014 and 2016. Hlaing Bo Bo was offered a contract from Thai League-1 club Sukhothai FC and loaned a half-year contract to begin his first international debut. Due to his stunning performance, he kept making an appearance in Myanmar National Team since 2016," a football official said. — KZL

Klopp has no plans to quit as he plots Liverpool overhaul

JURGEN Klopp says he will not leave Liverpool unless he is told to go, hinting at a major overhaul of his ageing squad at the end of the season.

A sixth Premier League defeat of the campaign at the weekend means the 2020 champions are 10 points outside the top four with just over half the season remaining.

Klopp last year signed a contract extension until 2026 and the 55-year-old stressed only the sack would prevent him seeing that through.

"Either the manager's position changes or a lot of other things change," he said. "So as far as I am concerned unless someone tells me I will not go.

"So that means maybe there is a point where we have to change other stuff. We will see that, but that is something for the future. Like summer or whatever. Not now.

Liverpool's German manager Jurgen Klopp arrives for the English Premier League football match between Brighton and Hove Albion and Liverpool at the American Express Community Stadium in Brighton, southern England on 14 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

"I have space and time to think about it — we have to play better football now."

Captain Jordan Henderson (32), Fabinho (29) and 31-year-old Thiago Alcantara remain first-choice picks in a midfield that is showing its age but Klopp denied he was being too loyal to the old guard.—AFP