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.

# More travellers enchanted to view Bagan's beauty from balloon ride

Hot-air balloons flying over Bagan cultural region by carrying travellers to enjoy panoramic scenes of Bagan. **PHOTO : KANU**

LOCAL and foreign visitors flock to the 16 square miles wide Bagan ancient cultural zone this early period of the year and enjoy overlooking impressive views of Bagan pagodas together with the picturesque sunrise and sunset by riding hot-air balloons.

Bagan hosted regular visitors in December 2022 and the businesses of hotels, motels and residents were operated properly. It is prohibited to climb on the pagodas so as to preserve strength of pagodas, and people have to watch natural beauty from two designated viewpoints. Moreover, the hot-air balloon ride becomes a popular tourist activity in early January.

"Unlike the previous years, Bagan hosts a large number of visitors for its unusual sunrise beauty in the winter. People can enjoy the sunrise and sunset from two exclusive mounds and so they have to make bookings for these spots as there are big numbers of visitors this year. Those wishing to enjoy pleasant feelings by looking at the beauty of Bagan ride hot-air balloons. The balloon capacity is 16 persons and we prepare two balloons in the morning session daily. It costs between K300,000 and K420,000 per person and price changes depending on the remaining seats. The arrival of international travellers is larger than the previous year and they ride balloons. This early period of the year can be said a winter that attracts travellers. The higher number of visitors arrive, the better it is for residents," said in-charge U Win Zaw Oo of Bagan region BOB hot-air Balloon Company.

The hot-air balloon riding service to view the Bagan region by foreign pilots was launched in 1999 and only one company operated such services. Currently, four companies offer services to domestic and foreign travellers. The ballooning service was suspended for two years due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and it resumed this open season starting 7 October 2022 and will run up to 10 April 2023.

There are over 3,800 pagodas and temples and about 20 eminent pagodas in the Bagan ancient cultural zone. It hosts tourists from Russia, China, Germany, France, the US, Japan, Korea and Thailand as well as local travellers this early year. The beauty of Bagan can offer a peaceful and pleasant feeling to visitors with its unique beauty during such a cool season. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH

## Ruili Airlines welcomes passengers of its resumed Mandalay-Mangshi-Mandalay flight to Mandalay International Airport

THE Ruili Airlines' Mandalay-Mangshi-Mandalay (DR-503) flight that was suspended in outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, resumed operation as the maiden trip from Mangshi, Yunnan Province to Mandalay on 21 January. It landed at the Mandalay International Airport (TadaU) at 4:50 pm.

Passengers of 26 Chinese nationals and two Myanmar nationals were on-board and welcomed by Director-General of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism U Maung Maung Kyaw, officials from tourism related organizations and MJas (Mitsubishi Cooperation-Jalux) Airport Services Co Ltd at Mandalay International Airport. The Director-General and officials explained the travel information at the information desk of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and handed out the brochures and QR codes to the passengers for their convenience.

A total of 25 Chinese nationals and six Myanmar nationals were boarded on a flight from the Mandalay International Airport to Mangshi, which left at 5:40 pm. It is reported that the Ruili Airlines will operate Mangshi-Mandalay-Mangshi flights three days a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. — MNA/CT

Passengers of Mandalay-Mangshi-Mandalay flight being welcomed by officials at Mandalay International Airport on 21 January.

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# National Objectives for 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023

1. To strive for the perpetual existence of national solidarity and perpetuity of the Union through the internal strength
2. To make collaborative efforts of all ethnic nationals to restore perpetual and durable peace
3. To join hands in harmony for ensuring the prosperity and food sufficiency of the nation as two national plans through the Union spirit
4. To help develop all regions and states on equal terms and increase employment opportunities with ensuring the health and fitness of the entire National people
5. To practise the genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system through fraternity, solidarity and united endeavours of all ethnic national brethren for building the Union based on democratic and federal systems

# 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.

# Electric Power Ministry announces destruction of PDF terrorist under NUG on tower of 132KV Biluchaung (2)-Tikyit double power cables

22 January 2023

1. The Ministry of Electric Power carries out arrangements to increase generating electricity in various ways for meeting the public demand. As electrification cannot sufficiently meet the demand of the people at present, supply of electricity is based on a fairly supply basis depending on the generating electricity.

2. In so doing, PDF terrorists under NUG are making attempts to intentionally destroy and explode the electrical infrastructures in generating and supplying electricity to the people. On 22-1-2023, a tower of 132KV Biluchaung (2)-Tikyit double power cables on which electricity generated from Biluchaung hydropower plants are being fed to the national grid was blown up in Loikaw Township of Kayah State. As such, such a tower collapsed. Although such a power cable has been destroyed eight times including this time and 23 towers were also destroyed, the Ministry of Electric Power arranges repairing of the towers as quickly as possible.

3. Hence, PDF terrorists under NUG has intentionally blown up power plants, power cables and sub-power stations being operated for electrifying the people 218 times. The Ministry of Electric Power is carrying out repairing tasks in cooperation with the security forces.

*Ministry of Electric Power*

A photo shows fall of tower for 132KV Biluchaung(2)-Tikyit double power cables.

# 2 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 22 January, total figure rises to 633,801

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,801** after **two** new cases were reported on 22 January 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,245**, including **four** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country reached **19,490** on 22-1-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.

The country has vaccinated **30,871,479** people aged 18 and above for COVID-19 vaccines and **6,807,392** people aged under 18 till 21 January 2023.—MNA

# Mottos for 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023

1. Let's go forward in joining hands among ethnic nationals in unison
2. Let's firmly join hands among national brethren of the Union in unity
3. Energetic harmony and stronger unity represent the souls of the Union

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

## The fourth point of the five-point roadmap shapes national causes and political causes

The fourth point of the five-point roadmap was inserted that "Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement." These will shape national causes and political causes. To do so, the peace process must be adopted.

*(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Chairman of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Central Committee Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the 7th Anniversary of Signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) on 15 October 2022)*

# Reference wholesale price set as K 4,440 per viss of palm oil

IT was announced yesterday that it would take action under the Important Goods and Services Act if the persons raise prices, illegally store goods and commit scams in the domestic market.

The Committee for the Supervision of the Import and Distribution of Edible Oils under the Ministry of Commerce has issued a statement in a bid to manage the domestic palm oil prices.

Depending on the daily monitoring of FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, transportation costs, bank expenses, and basic wholesale reference price to be traded in the local market are taken into account, including taxes for setting the proper prices.

According to market and price in the world's palm oil exporters this week, the committee has announced the basic Yangon Reference Wholesale Price of palm oil is K4,440 per viss within 23 and 29 January.

These basic wholesale quotes are available on the Department of Consumer Affairs website: www.doca.gov.mm and on the Facebook page of the Myanmar Oil Traders and Oil Entrepreneurs Association. —MNA/KZW

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# Deputy Minister conducts fieldwork for development of agro-sector in Mandalay Region

DEPUTY Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi and officials inspected Institute of Agriculture in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay Region yesterday.

Officials reported on teaching the students in practical and theoretical measures.

The deputy minister said that the institutes have to arrange teaching and training for students to have readiness to join the workplaces so as to increase the competent human resources in the agricultural sector. He stressed the need to turn out capable farmers in applying modern agriculture and livestock farming techniques as vocational businesses and in sharing necessary techniques with others.

After that, the deputy minister gave food supplies and teaching aid to the teachers and students and inspected the teaching aid farms of the institute.

At Mandalay Coffee Group of Companies Limited in PyinOoLwin Township, Mandalay Region, the deputy minister viewed coffee production process.

In the evening, the deputy minister and officials arrived at PyinOoLwin Township's Doekwin horticultural farm where the farm manager explained the operations of the plantation. The deputy minister instructed officials to produce quality seeds of vegetables and train enthusiasts to grow vegetables and orchids with modern techniques and try to raise research and development.

The Doekwin horticultural farm is to collect orchid species, produce good quality vegetable seeds and conduct plant propagation suitable for the PyinOoLwin flowery city.—MNA/KZL

Mango plants blossoming and bearing fruits.

# Market prospect to attract handsome prices for high quality mangoes this year

MANGOES in great quality will fetch attractive prices in the season this year due to the condition of the mango market, Secretary U Kyaw Soe Naing of the Myanmar Mango Market and Technical Development Association (Mandalay) said.

It is known that mango plants have already started to blossom at some mango farms in Mandalay Region, and it will bring favorable opportunities to local mango growers so as to get handsome prices. The export routes to China have also opened up this year as well, and only good quality mangoes will grasp the big market share and good prices in this mango season.

"Within the region, some areas have already experienced mango blossoms, while others have not yet. This year, growers will get wonderful prices for superior mangoes, due to the market position and the export route to China. They could not earn favourable prices last year because of the diseases in mangoes. Uneven blossom rate makes this year's yield difficult to speculate. By mid-April, good quality mangoes will enter the market and there is a good potential to go for fetching high prices," he added.

It is reported that it would be more convenient if mango growers maintain the quality of mangoes by working together in groups of five or 10 people from the same region. If the groups are implemented regionally, the quality of mangoes will also improve. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/CT

# 13 election sub-commission offices, office furniture in regions and states damaged in mine blasts, armed attacks, setting fire by terrorists

Buildings of election sub-commission offices damaged in attacks of PDF terrorists in regions and states.

CRPH and NUG terrorists formed PDF terrorists to commit destructive acts. Those terrorists destroyed 13 buildings of election sub-commission offices and office furniture in regions and states with blowing up of mines, attacks with small arms and heavy weapons and setting fire from December 2021 to date.

The entire people are requested to cooperate with the government to prevent mine explosions, armed attacks with small arms and heavy weapons and setting fire to departmental offices for ensuring development of the State and peace and stability. And, they have to secretly report information of terrorists to nearby security forces for those terrorists not to stand tall.—MNA

# Illegal timbers, foodstuffs, consumer goods, industrial materials, electronic accessories, vehicles seized

A customs department's inspection team under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force of Bago Region on 18 January seized 39,850 kilogrammes of High Density Polypropylene at an estimated value of K 84,119,684 and four kinds of goods not declared in the chart from two vehicles which were driven from Myawady to Yangon. Two vehicles, two trailers and two containers approximately worth K 147 million, and the action was taken under the Customs Procedures. A combined team under the supervision of Bago Region Forest Department seized 0.9678 tonne of illegal timbers worth K145,170 in Toungoo District and the action was taken under the Forest Department. The total worth of the seizures amounted to K 231,264,854.

Similarly, an on-duty customs team under the supervision of the Customs Department inspected at air cargo garage in Yangon International Airport on 19 January. They nabbed six kinds of goods including 400 Ranco mechanical thermostats and four Samsung curved monitor worth K 19,216,853, which were not drawn out after the specified date and the action was taken under the Customs Procedures.

Bags of Polypropylene seized with container, vehicles and two trailers in Bago Region on 18 January.

On 19 January, a team from customs department under the supervision of Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force of Mandalay region seized nine kinds of goods including 90 windshields worth K 17.24 million, not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from a car driven from Muse to Mandalay and and a Dongfeng and a traitor worth K 7 million. And then, they also seized five pudding cabin table lamps, 200 cartons of Nongfu spring water bottles and 20 kinds of goods worth K 22.591 million from a vehicle driven from Muse to Mandalay on 21 January. And a Higer Bus worth K 10 million carried the goods. The total worth of seizures amounted to K209.831 million and the action was taken under the Customs Procedures.

Next, a customs team of Hpa-an township under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force of Kayin State on 20 January seized six kinds of goods including 40 cartons of Lactasoy Soymilk and two 26 inches TV worth K 3,068,000 from a car driven from Myawady to Bago and a Mitsubishi Canter estimated at K17 million which carried the goods. And they seized five kinds of goods including 1,500 kilogrammes of white sugar worth K 4,018,000 and a Hyundai Starex worth K 15 million which carried the goods from Myawady to Yangon. The total seizures amounted to K 39,086,000 and the action was taken under the Customs Procedures.

Then, a combined team under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force of Sagaing Region on 20 January nabbed a Toyota Wish worth K 7 million without licence at the combined checkpoint at Tagaung ward in Sagaing. On 21 January, a Nissan X-trail worth K 8 million without licence was seized at Mau combined checkpoint in Monywa. The total seizures amounted to K15 million and the action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

Therefore, 24 arrests at estimated value of K514,398,707 were made from 18 to 21 January, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee.—MNA

200 Cartons of Nongfu Spring and pudding cabin table lamps seized in Mandalay on 19 January.

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# Local residents participate in Buddha Pujaniya Festival at Shinpin Sakkainte Pagoda in Minbu

THE 46th Buddha Pujaniya Festival started at Shinpin Sakkainte Pagoda in Minbu City, Minbu District, Magway Region on 13 January.

On the evening of 20 January, vocalists presented songs at the music concert to the accompaniment of the Music Circle Band. On the evenings of 21 and 22 January, main actress Yekyi Chan Mya and troupe presented songs and dances from 6 pm to 11 pm. The event was crowded with people for enjoying the entertainments.

In addition, the festival was facilitated with children's playgrounds, the fairs and sports competitions, and the local residents happily participated in the sports competitions.— Maung Maung (Minbu)/KZW

People enjoy sport events at Buddha Pujaniya festival of Shinpin Sakkainte Pagoda in Minbu Township. **PHOTO : MAUNG MAUNG (MINBU)**

# Maei Gyaing Resort crowded with visitors

Travellers seen at Maei Gyaing Resort in Taungup Township of Rakhine State.

IT was reported that this year's number of visitors to the Maei Gyaing Resort, which is located 17 miles from Maei, Taungup Township, Rakhine State, is on the rise compared to last year.

Maei Gyaing Resort is located about three furlongs from Maei Creek and the resort was opened on 18 December 2021 with five bungalows that can accommodate six people and three common rooms.

"The seating areas have been neatly expanded to enjoy the scenery," said resort founder Ko Win Zaw.

It is a Mountainside Resort type. The purpose of constructing the bungalows, huts and opening the resort is to provide a peaceful and comfortable stay for the travellers who come to those areas.

He said that he wants every traveller from near and far to know that there is a place full of beautiful scenery.

The number of visitors to the resort this year increased more than last year. It is reported that they are mostly travellers who come from near and far, and university students who come in groups.

"It is planned so that you can take a rest while coming to travellers. If you arrive at the resort, will you take a boat ride? whether to swim and feed the fish? Fishing? At night, you can have fun with your friends, have a bonfire and play the guitar, or do whatever you like," he said.

Even if the visitors are going to cook their own meals, pots and pans have been arranged for convenience.

Ko Win Zaw said that if everybody wants to enjoy the cool weather and beautiful scenery while they are looking for a pilgrimage, they should go to "Maei Gyaing".

Ko Win Zaw continued that the Rakhine word Gyaing means "valley".—Maung Maung Htay (IPRD)/KZL

Beautiful scene at Maei Gyaing Resort in Taungup Township.

# Nearly 100 commercial photographers give service at Taungthaman Bridge

THERE are nearly 100 commercial photographers at Taungthaman Bridge in Amarapura township to give service to the visitors by taking commemorative photos on their trips, according to a photographer.

Five photographic studios are operated there. There are some 40 photographers give service to the visitors on the west wing of the bridge, about 15 photographers at the centre of the bridge and some 20 photographers at the east wing as the number of photographers are on the rise starting from early 2022 more than before Covid-19 epidemic period, it is learnt.

"Before Covid-19 period, the visitors took pictures with the use of their mobile phones. So, the number of photographer declined because of difficulties to earn incomes. When the Covid-19 subsided in 2022, the number of visitors increased and took photos on beautiful pictures of visitors with cameras. Some youths work at the bridge under advice of senior photographers," he said.

During the public holidays, number of visitors is about four times more than regular days. Photographers charge K1,500 per 4x6 inches photo, and if the photo does not need to be printed out, and if it is taken in mobile phone or memory stick, the charge will cost K1,000 per work.— Maung Aye Chan/MKKS

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## Yangon-Bagan up/down trains scheduled to resume running as from 24 January

An express train arrives at Bagan railway station.

THE Yangon-Bagan up/down trains will resume operations on 24 January, according to the Myanma Railways.

The Yangon-Bagan express train service was temporarily suspended, and it will resume as from 24 January, in order to facilitate the convenient travel of passengers. No 61 up Yangon-Bagan train will start running on 23 January and the No 62 down train on 24 January.

According to the schedules of Myanma Railways, No 61 up train will leave Yangon Railway Station at 4:15 pm and arrive at Bagan station at 12 noon the next day and No 62 down train will depart from Bagan station at 4:15 pm and arrive back at Yangon Railway Station at 12 noon the next day.

Yangon Station will sell upper class tickets three days in advance and ordinary class tickets one day in advance. Ticket prices for ordinary class are set at K 7,200, upper class K 14,400 and upper class bunks K 19,800.

The train will stop over at Thayawady, Letpadan, Minhla, Okpo, Gyobingauk, Zigon, Nattalin, Paungde, Padigon, Sinmyeeswe, Shwedaga, Aunglan, Satthwa, Taungdwingyi, Myothit, Natmauk, Layein, Thahmar, Pinchaung, Kyaukpadaung, Ngaminmae and Suti stations.—TWA/KZW

## Plan underway to hold 15th Myanmar Traditional Htamanè competition at Shwedagon Pagoda

THE 15th Myanmar Traditional Htamanè competition will be held at Shwedagon Pagoda on 3 February (14th Waxing of Tabodwe), according to the Board of Trustees.

Htamanè will be offered to Buddha images at prayer halls on the platform of the pagoda where the Ovada Patimokha day will be observed at 5 am on 4 February.

At 6 am, dried rations and Htamanè will be offered to 62 members of the Sangha, and at 7 am, the merit sharing ceremony will take place at Chanthagyi prayer hall.

The Myanmar traditional Htamanè competition will be held at Htanpinkone ground on the lower terrace with participation of 24 teams comprising various religious association and staff from the pagoda board of trustees office.

The price of each large bell-mouthed pan of Htamane is set at K55,000, and well-wishers may donate costs for the Htamane, according to the pagoda board of trustees.—TWA/KZW

Participants actively took part in 13th Myanmar traditional Htamanè competition at Shwedagon Pagoda.

## YRTC to fine YBS buses for overtaking each other

ACCORDING to the Yangon Region Public Transport Committee-YRTC, YBS buses running in the city will be fined for overtaking each other.

At the YBS drivers safety meeting No 19 held by YRTC on 20 January, YRTC joint-secretary U Lyan Cint Mang said that the action will be taken against offenders as from 1 February.

He also said that the buses must be neat and tidy in giving good services to the passengers in order to implement the public transport system with safety and good service.

He also noted that bus fares must not be risen and bus conductors must not be assigned.

If YBS buses overtake each other, offenders will face action taken as a fine of K 10,000 for each time.

In addition, YBS drivers must drive on the right side and if traffic congestions happen, they must take positions on the second lane.

It will be monitored by technology telematics devices and inspection teams for overtaking and blocking of buses on the lanes.—TWA/KZW

Some YBS buses seen in road in downtown Yangon.

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# LOCAL BUSINESS

## Palm oil imports highest in July 2022

THE wholesale price of palm oil reached its highest at K10,000 per viss in the local market in 2022.

The country imported about one million tonnes of palm oil every year before 2021 and the palm oil import volume was reduced starting in 2021. In 2022, the country imported only about 40,000 tonnes per month, according to the market.

It imported 58,609 tonnes in July 2022 which was the highest volume while there were 25,020 tonnes in May and 28,122 tonnes in August. About 80,000 tonnes of palm oil were imported per month previously and the import volume decreased. Some oil dealers raise the prices for the reasons of that decreasing import volume. The authority started issuing weekly Yangon-based basic reference prices every Monday in 2022.

The importers also sell the oil to the public by trucks as per the reference prices in Yangon Region. However, the daily sale in the market is 1,500/2,000 tonnes and the sale rose one time more than the normal demand on 17 March before 18 March 2022 when most of the oil wholesale centres of the Bayintnaung market closed for increasing oil prices of the Yangon market.

In 2022, the oil price rose about K10,000 per viss in August 2022 for reducing palm oil imports and increasing the exchange rate.

The oil price was up about K4,000 per viss than the reference prices. In December, the import volume was 45,708 tonnes and the price was about K5,000 per viss outside the market. The oil exchange price was only K700 per viss more than the reference price.

On 9 January 2023, the price rose about K1,000 per viss for the lower oil price of foreign countries and currency exchange rate despite the oil import. The wholesale price was about K6,100 per viss on that day.

After three days, the prices declined by about K600 per viss and it was K6,000 per viss on 16 January while K6,150 on 19 January and only K5,800 on 21 January. Those who store oil manipulate prices of oil in the market depending on arrival volume of oil.

The world palm oil price reached its highest price while Indonesia, the world's largest producer of palm oil, imposed a strict policy on palm oil export in May 2022. — TWA/KTZH

## New entry to domestic market plummets chickpea price

THE prices moved in the range between K180,000 and K205,000 per 56.25 visses on 1 December and fell to K170,000 and K183,000 per 56.25 visses depending on varieties on 21 December.

The figures showed a sharp drop of K10,000-K22,000 per 56.25 visses within three weeks.

New chickpeas from the Mandalay region started flowing into the Mandalay market. Newly harvested chickpeas will abundantly enter the market in end-January 2023, according to the Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Merchants Association.

The country primarily cultivates paddy, corn, cotton, sugarcane, and various pulses and beans. Its second-largest production is pulses and beans, accounting for 33 per cent of agricultural produce and covering 20 per cent of sown acreage. Among them, black beans, pigeon peas and green grams constitute 72 per cent of bean acreage. Other beans including peanuts, chickpeas, soybeans, black-eyed beans, butter beans and rice beans are also grown in the country.

Myanmar's agriculture sector is the backbone of the country's economy and it greatly contributes to the Gross Domestic Product.

Myanmar ships chickpeas to foreign markets beyond self-sufficiency. More than 18,000 kilogrammes of chickpea worth US$12.678 million have been exported to foreign countries since April 2022, according to the Ministry of Commerce's statistics. — NN/EMM

Chickpea plantations thriving in croplands.

## Myanmar foreign trade surges to over $26.5 bln as of 13 Jan

MYANMAR'S external trade between 1 April and 13 January of the current 2022-2023 Financial Year tremendously rose to US$26.5 billion, reflecting a significant increase of over $4 billion as against the year-ago period, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Cargo trucks rolling into yard of Muse 105th-Mile Trade Zone.

The figures surged from $22.38 billion in the corresponding period last year.

Myanmar's export was worth over $13 billion whereas the country's import was valued at $13.47 billion over the past nine months.

Following the resumption of cross-border trade activities at some Sino-Myanmar borders, the border trade bounced back to $6.353 billion, showing an increase of $400.69 million year on year. Similarly, Myanmar's seaborne trade amounted to over $20 billion over the past nine months, indicating a sharp rise of $3.74 billion from the year-ago period.

Myanmar targets to achieve exports worth $15.5 billion and imports worth $14 billion in the 2022-2023FY, the National Planning Law stated.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on reducing the trade deficit, export promotion, import substitution in the market diversification.

The external trade stood at $15.5 billion in the past mini-budget 2021-2022 (October-March) period and $29.58 billion in the 2020-2021FY, as per the Commerce Ministry's statistics. —KK

# OPINION

## Don't underestimate the potential of the Covid-19 pandemic today

THE infection rate of the Covid-19 pandemic is declining day by day but everybody should not underestimate its impacts because any disease is like a snake bite which can bring danger to the life of the victims if they cannot receive potent medical treatments in time.

During the period of breaking out the disease from 2019 to date, scientists and medical experts invented potent medicines to fight against the pandemic so as to save the life of people. They produce more and more potent medicines for battling the pandemic to drop the infection rate. But, Covid-19 surged its infection to be fatal to people again and again.

Whatever it may be, scientists including medical experts conduct the research on genetic progress of variant Covid-19 viruses which are spreading across the nation. The continuous research tasks brought results in finding the Omicron variants BA2, DA4 and DA5 viruses. DF7 variant virus was found in the United States of America and Europe in September 2022. In late December 2022, infection of the XBB1.5 virus increased to 2.3 per cent. At present, a high infection rate of the BF7 variant virus of Omicron is happening in some neighbouring countries of Myanmar.

> Myanmar should expect the possibility of occurring the situation to break out the infection of a new variant virus of Covid-19 at any time. To be able to fight against the disease, all citizens have to make preparations for taking preventive, control and treatment measures at all times without fail.

BF7 is quicker to transmit than other variants. It has a shorter incubation period with a greater capacity to infect people who have previously been infected with COVID-19 or even vaccinated. The victims of such kinds of viruses can suffer from sneezing, coughing, sore throat, weak voice, fever, fatigue and so on. Some patients may face vomiting and suffering from diarrhoea.

Currently, the BF7 variant virus can be seen in the United States of America, Germany, France, Belgium, Denmark and other European countries as well as some neighbouring countries of Myanmar. Despite declining the infection rate during the pandemic, most global counties are still facing severe infection depending on climatic conditions and other important points.

Hence, everybody residing in Myanmar should not decline their tempo of fighting against the pandemic all over the nation. They all should follow the protocols related to the prevention of Covid-19 issued by the Ministry of Health. All citizens young and old including children need to accept vaccination given by the local authorities so as to build an assured society.

Myanmar should expect the possibility of occurring the situation to break out the infection of a new variant virus of Covid-19 at any time. To be able to fight against the disease, all citizens have to make preparations for taking preventive, control and treatment measures at all times without fail.

# ARTICLE
## WEATHER REPORT

## Insurance Market in Myanmar

**By U AC**

MYANMAR'S insurance market was opened up from 2013 onwards. Since then, the market has grown albeit not as much as expected. In a country where the population take-up of insurance products is less than 10 per cent, it seems surprising that the market penetration is taking so long.

As with insurance markets across the world, we have both life and general insurers in Myanmar, 17 and 9, respectively. In terms of ownership, there are eight local-privately owned, one SOE (State Owned Enterprises), five foreign and three joint ventures, for life insurance. For general insurers, there is one SOE, five locals and three joint venture companies. The product range is not limited either, with both types of insurance having over 20 different products each.

The one and only SOE insurer covering both markets are Myanma Insurance (not 'Myanmar'). The uniqueness of it being the only Unlimited liability insurance entity. It occupies the top position in general insurance and #2 in life insurance, probably due to the unlimited liability and government business for the former and insuring civil servants for the latter.

Some mistaken Myanma Insurance as the regulator. The regulator for the insurance industry is Insurance Business Regulatory Board (IBRB), not Myanma Insurance.

The insurance penetration in the country is very low at present. The industry development is at a very nascent stage. There are lots of potential for growth in every sector of the industry, life, health, travel, car, or otherwise. Contrasting with the mobile phone and the internet, it took less than five years for mobile and internet penetration to reach 100 per cent of the population. The insurance market is taking much longer than expected.

All entities and individuals are encouraged to buy coverage from licensed insurers within the country. Purchasing coverage from unlicensed overseas insurers carries additional risks, especially in terms of difficulty in making claims, conflict resolution and mediation through the IBRB. If one insists, companies and individuals can still purchase products from overseas insurers, through Myanma Insurance fronting, i.e., the SOE entity, acting as agent for unique products of overseas insurers, for a fee.

One of the reasons for the slow pickup of life insurance in Myanmar seems to be the soft Kyat currency. Imagine you paid 3 Kyats per month for 100,000 Kyats death coverage 40 years ago. At that time, that seemed like a good deal. Yet, assuming that the person insured is still alive today. K100,000 or less than $50, would amount to almost nothing, let alone compensate for death or funeral expenses. These figures are real and factual promotions done by Myanma Insurance forty years ago at schools, as death cover for the parents. Now we can clearly see the issue of inflation and insuring in a soft currency.

The antidote to this would be to go for life insurance of short duration (which in turn eliminates the crucial advantage of life insurance) or go for inflation-adjusted life coverage. At least, the detrimental impacts of inflation would be somewhat mitigated.

### Current Status

The market is profitable and growing at present. More and more products are being introduced every year. People are becoming aware of the availability of insurance products as the agents get trained and push for sales. The downside of this is that more insurance frauds are being experienced at the same time. The most common is in the car insurance sector. Even though the payout ratio is 25 per cent on average across the industry, the car insurance payout is the odd one out with more than 50 per cent payout (from the premiums collected). It is time the insurance industry starts keeping a record of insurance fraudsters so that honest policyholders do not have to subsidize the criminal actions of these few people.

Every car in Myanmar needs to have third-party liability insurance provided by Myanma Insurance, at the time of vehicle license renewal. The cost is only around $10-$15 and the payout is only around $1,500 in the event of the death of a third party, caused by the insured motorized vehicle. Comprehensive coverage for cars only became widely available after the insurance industry's liberalization in 2013.

Recently the insurance market was shaken up by the announcement that private insurers were no longer covering terrorism risks. Democracy campaigns of NNCP (NUG, NLD, CRPH, PDF) terrorists finally hurting the insured public too. Instead of adjusting via increased premiums, private general insurances take the easy way out, of not wanting to deal with terrorist activities, which some of them probably supported initially. Those wanting coverage for terrorism, war and unrest now flocked to Myanma Insurance as their saviour.

At the end of the day, the industry is still a licensed business sector and as such, expected to be profitable, at least in the long run.

### Claim Disputes

Claim disputes are a rarity in Myanmar. In 2021, there are less than five handled by IBRB. Most of the disputes resulted from different interpretations of insurance terms.

### More Agents and Agencies

More agents are being trained in both life and general insurance. The agents work under one year contract committing themselves to the insurer. The companies acting as agencies with teams of agents are likely to appear in the foreseeable future too.

■

## Experts highlight challenges in fighting COVID-19 at WEF

PUBLIC health experts and officials attending the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2023 have cautioned against some major challenges in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, as Omicron variants are still spreading rampantly worldwide.

They emphasized the impact of long COVID, vaccine inequality and pandemic-related misinformation at the meeting held at Davos, Switzerland.

### PANDEMIC "FAR FROM OVER"

While the COVID situation has been better than that in the early stages, Michelle Williams, dean of the faculty at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, warned at the WEF that the "bottom line is this pandemic is far from over."

Williams said that there are still 526 deaths per day from COVID-19 across the United States, up from about 400 per day in October last year.

"What's really disappointing is nine out of 10 of those deaths could be averted," if vaccines and boosters would have been taken, and other behavioral aspects, such as ventilation, mask-wearing, and appropriate social distancing practised, Williams said.

"So for me as a public health person, knowing that we could avert nine out of 10 of those deaths reminds me of the fact that we have to avoid prematurely talking about this pandemic being over," she said.

The expert also cited social-economic implications that "long COVID" would inflict upon society in the future.

"In the US alone, over 174,000 COVID infants will have a life course impacted by this pandemic," she said. "And it's not only going to be impacting individuals and families, but the economic impact of long COVID … is that it's going to cost us 3.7 trillion (US) dollars. That's going to have financial impacts."

### VACCINE INEQUALITY

While COVAX was launched in 2020 to accelerate the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines and to guarantee fair and equitable access for every country in the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) has long been complaining about rich countries stockpiling the majority of multiple vaccine supplies.

Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, said at the WEF that for three years in half of the lower-income countries, 53 per cent of the population have got their primary vaccination. Globally, the coverage rate is 64 per cent.

The expert also cited social-economic implications that "long COVID" would inflict upon society in the future. This photo taken on 31 August 2022 shows the production line of COVID-19 vaccine under the Butantan Institute in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Since June 2020. **PHOTO: BUTANTAN INSTITUTE/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

"We realize that the disparities were still there," Berkley said.

Addressing a panel discussion at the WEF, Michael Ryan, executive director of WHO's Health Emergencies Program, said that "there is no way out of this pandemic right now without vaccines as the central strategic pillar."

"Being able to use those vaccines equitably is not only a fair and important humanitarian objective, it's the best way for us all to get out of the pandemic phase that we're currently in right now," Ryan said.

To ensure vaccine equity, Richard Hatchett, CEO of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, a global vaccine partnership, called on countries and manufacturers at the WEF to prioritize vaccine supply to the global program COVAX and to support the local production of tests, vaccines and treatments around the world.

Hatchett also asked pharmaceutical companies to stand in solidarity with developing countries by sharing licences, know-how and technology to find a way out of the pandemic.

### BUILDING TRUST

Even with enough vaccines and preparedness, response to similar public health crises in the future could still be compromised, if there is a lack of solid trust between the public, governments and academia. Meanwhile, the rampant spread of misinformation on social media would also make things worse.

Williams said a diverse society needs to have multiple layers of communicators and different styles of communicating.

The expert said governments should understand the people and the communities they are serving, reckon with the reasons for mistrust, and then work collaboratively and respectfully in addressing the appropriate message and messenger to promote change.

"That's where a better understanding and behavioral sciences are going to help us," said Williams.

Berkley pinpointed "intentional misinformation" as one of the challenges, while citing the bad COVID situation in the United States as an example.

*SOURCE: Xinhua*

## Myanmar Daily Weather Report

**(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 22 January 2023)**

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 23 January 2023:** Weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Kachin State 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 (4 - 6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperature in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and Shan State.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 January 2023:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 January 2023:** Partly cloudy

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 January 2023:** Generally fair weather.

The Global New Light of Myanmar
www.gnlm.com.mm
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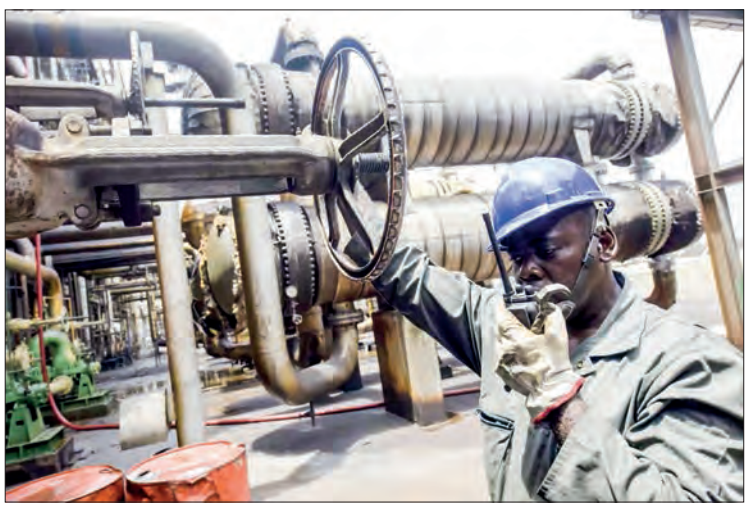
SCI/ENVIRON
WORLD

# After Davos, a race for money to stop climate change



Oil production in the Democratic Republic of Congo, whose president slammed the "hypocrisy" of wealthy countries urging greener initiatives without providing financial help. **PHOTO: AFP**

US climate envoy John Kerry bluntly summed up in one word what the planet needs to avoid a global warming catastrophe at the World Economic Forum this week: money.

The annual meeting of the global elite in the Swiss Alpine resort of Davos was a chance for top government officials, CEOs, academics and campaigners to debate how to tackle the climate crisis.

The bill is monumental: Kerry and others warned that trillions of dollars were needed to speed up the world's efforts to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

But the week-long forum exposed fault lines over how to meet those targets at a time when the world faces a costly war in Ukraine, an economic downturn, soaring inflation and a cost-of-living crisis.

The US government is pouring $369 billion dollars into its green energy transition through tax incentives and subsidies for electric cars and other technology under its landmark Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Kerry warned however that public funds alone were not enough, as he used his Davos appearance to press his case that the private sector has a major role to play — if firms can be shown there is money to be made.

The former US secretary of state admitted that he sounded like the corporate raider Gordon Gekko from the film "Wall Street" when he said earlier this week that "money, money, money, money, money, money, money" was needed to meet the 1.5C target.—AFP

# A fifth of new cars in California zero-emission in 2022: data

ONE-IN-FIVE new cars sold in California in 2022 was a zero-emission vehicle, the state said Friday, as the largest car market in the United States charges towards its goal of electrifying its fleet.

Last year officials set ambitious targets for boosting the number of electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs) on the roads, as they look to slash planet-warming gases produced by combustion engines.

The California Air Resources Board announced in August the sale of new gasoline and diesel-powered cars would be eliminated by 2035, setting an aggressive timeline to phase them out.

On Friday the California Energy Commission said 18.8 percent of new cars sold in the state in 2022 were EVs, PHEVs or fuel cell electric vehicles, all of which California includes in its zero-emission category.

Ten years ago, that figure was two percent.

"California continues to lead the zero-emission vehicle revolution with groundbreaking policies and investments that drive innovation, create good jobs and expand (zero-emission vehicle) access and affordability across the state," said Governor Gavin Newsom.

"Keeping our focus on the communities that are most impacted by the intensifying climate crisis, we'll keep pushing ahead to make our clean transportation future a reality in California."

Data showed Tesla continued to dominate the market for EVs, with around two-thirds of the 346,000 zero-emission vehicles sold in the year being made by Elon Musk's company.—AFP

Ford plans to produce more than 2 million electric vehicles annually. Ford F-150 Lightning assembly in Dearborn, Mich. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/FORD MOTOR COMPANY/AFP**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Britain's Tim Peake steps down from ESA astronaut corps

BRITAIN'S Tim Peake has hung up his spacesuit, stepping down from Europe's astronaut corps to become an ambassador for space activities, the European Space Agency said on Friday.

Peake, who became the first British astronaut to visit the International Space Station in 2015, said it had been an "incredibly exciting and rewarding" 13 years. —AFP

### Thunberg, protesters demand 'climate justice' in Davos

GRETA Thunberg and other young climate activists held a small protest on Friday accusing the global elite at the World Economic Forum in Davos of doing little to save the planet.

Some 30 protesters gathered in freezing temperatures down the road from the WEF congress centre, holding signs reading "SOS" and chanting "What do we want? Climate justice! When do we want it? Now!" —AFP

# Brazil begins first operations to protect Amazon

Indigenous leaders listen to Sonia Guajajara, the head of Brazil's Indigenous People Articulation, as she speaks during a press conference on 12 November 2019 in Paris, as part of a tour calling on EU lawmakers to exert pressure on the Brazilian government to better protect the rights of indigenous communities, and scrutinize companies profiting from deforestation in the Amazon. **PHOTO: THOMAS SAMSON/AFP/FILE**

BRAZIL this week began the first operations against Amazon deforestation since veteran leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office, the Ibama environmental agency said Friday.

On the campaign trail before his October election victory — when he defeated far right climate change skeptic Jair Bolsonaro — Lula promised to end deforestation by 2030.

The Amazon rainforest suffered during Bolsonaro's four-year presidency as the former army captain repeatedly enacted laws favoring agriculture and mining in the forest at the expense of that critically important ecosystem. Reducing deforestation is key to slowing climate change.

"The deployment of teams for the start of inspection operations began on 16 January 2023," Ibama told AFP.

Average Amazon deforestation soared by 75 per cent during Bolsonaro's presidency, compared with the previous decade. —AFP

# Chinese rejoice in first holiday after COVID response change

STARTING from Saturday, the Lunar New Year's Eve or "Chuxi" in Chinese, hundreds of millions of people are celebrating the Spring Festival in China, the grandest holiday for the Chinese.

Festivities, which were curtailed by the COVID-19 epidemic, are back in full force after a downgrade in China's COVID-19 management strategy earlier this month.

The weeklong holiday this year shows that for many life is going back to normal.

On Saturday night, a restaurant in Xingtai City of north China's Hebei Province was filled with pleasant food aromas and laughter, as dozens of families, including Zhao Guoqiang's, enjoyed reunion dinners there.

"I am beyond happy now," said Zhao. For the first time in three years, Zhao's children came home for the Spring Festival and ate out together on Chuxi.

"My son came back from Zhuhai and my daughter came back with her husband and son from Beijing. My 80-year-old mother is perfectly healthy. Tonight, four generations sitting here together makes the food more delicious," said Zhao.

Villagers perform dragon dance at the Tongliang District in southwest China's Chongqing. **PHOTO: XINHUA/LIU CHAN**

Despite the lingering impact of COVID-19, Zhao's familiy and numerous other households across the country are reviving their lifestyles by celebrating the new year holiday as they did before the epidemic struck.

According to official data, this year's Spring Festival travel rush, also known as "chunyun," should see nearly 2.1 billion trips, almost double the figure for the same period in 2022. —Xinhua

# Japan's population drops 0.43% in 2022

A mother and her child walk to nursery school in Osaka, Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO**

JAPAN'S total population shrank by 0.43 per cent or about 538,000 in 2022, official estimates showed Friday, amid the government's pledge to address the demographic challenge.

According to provisional figures released by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the country's total population stood at 124.77 million as of 1 January compared with 125.31 million on the same day in 2022.

The rate of decrease eased slightly from 2021, when the population dropped 0.6 per cent.

In the latest count, people aged 65 or over totaled about 36.21 million, accounting for 29 per cent, while the ratio of those under the age of 15 came to 14.45 million, making up for 11.6 per cent of the population.

With a declining birthrate and an aging population, a shrinking workforce and a greater financial burden on the medical and social security systems are posing challenges to the country.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is set to pledge to secure funds for policies to combat Japan's declining birthrate in his speech at the opening of a regular parliamentary session next week.

In a new year's news conference earlier this month, Kishida promised to focus on policies related to children this year, vowing to tackle the low birthrate through "unprecedented" steps.—AFP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Seasonal flu spreads across Japan as case numbers surge

THE average number of flu patients per medical institution in Japan in the week through Sunday came to 7.37, signaling the beginning of an epidemic, a health ministry survey said.

About 5,000 medical institutions in all of Japan's 47 prefectures reported 36,388 cases of seasonal flu during the seven-day period, the National Institute of Infectious Diseases said Friday.

The nationwide per-institution figure was more than 1.5 times that of the previous week, while the tally of influenza patients across the country is estimated to stand at about 257,000.—Xinhua

### China reports nearly 13,000 Covid deaths over last week

CHINA reported nearly 13,000 Covid-related deaths in hospitals between 13 and 19 January, after a top health official said the vast majority of the population has already been infected by the virus.

China a week earlier said nearly 60,000 people had died with Covid in hospitals as of 12 January, but there has been widespread scepticism over official data since Beijing abruptly axed anti-virus controls last month.—AFP

# Dutch to ban unhealthy designer pets

THE Netherlands wants to ban pets such as flat-faced dogs and cats with folded ears, which look sweet but suffer "miserable" health problems, the government said on Friday.

Dutch Agriculture Minister Piet Adema said he would seek to outlaw the ownership of the designer breeds and to ban photos of them in advertising or on social media.

"We make life miserable for innocent animals, purely because we think they are 'beautiful' and 'cute'," Adema said in a statement.

"That is why today we are taking a big step towards a Netherlands where no pet has to suffer from his or her appearance."

Despite sought-after looks that have made them a favourite with celebrities and a fixture among social media influencers, such pets suffer from a range of health conditions.

The Dutch minister said that owners often "have the best of intentions but are often unaware of the dark side of their pets' appearance".

"This subject touches me as a minister but also as a human," added Adema.

The government would now work out a full list of affected breeds, he said, adding that it could take some time.

But the public broadcaster NOS said squish-faced pugs could be among those banned.

The Netherlands banned the breeding of pets that are affected by their appearance in 2014, but some animals were still being traded illegally or bought from abroad.—AFP

A pug dressed in tartan stands in front of a stand at the 10th Thailand international Pet Variety Exhibition in Bangkok on 26 March 2021. **PHOTO: AFP / MLADEN ANTONOV**

# ECONOMY
## WORLD

# Infantino highlights economic impact of football

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has highlighted the importance of football to the world economy.

In an interview with Xinhua at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023, Infantino said he believed that it was very important to exchange ideas with leaders and business representatives from various countries and regions and to see how football can be integrated into the economy.

"It's not just a game where you have 22 players, referees and fans who watch. It moves a lot as an economic sector in terms of broadcast, sponsorship and ticketing, but also everything that is around in terms of the operations, the catering and so on – the security," he said.

File photo taken on 19 May 2008 shows interior view of the Workers' Stadium in Beijing, capital of China. Renovation of the Workers' Stadium in Beijing started in early August, 2021. The stadium, which was first built in 1959, will be transformed into a professional football arena and put into use in December 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA/DU HUAJU**

In Infantino's view, with a global GDP of 270 billion US dollars, the football industry calls for more cooperation and the sharing of benefits. "There is a lot of potential for the development of this economic sector and all over the world to follow the great example that some European countries have given. There is a lot to do all over the world," said the FIFA President.

Talking about Chinese football, Infantino said: "China is obviously a very, very important country, in general, but in football as well. It is a country that loves football."

Although China has only appeared in the FIFA World Cup finals once in 2002 and has failed to qualify for the tournament on five consecutive occasions since then, Infantino disagreed with the opinion that "China is far away".

"China didn't qualify for the last World Cup in Qatar, but you know Italy didn't qualify either. So it's not so easy to qualify, and China is definitely a candidate for the qualification of the next men's World Cup," he stated.—Xinhua

# Gov't to submit new BOJ chief choice to parliament in Feb: Kishida

PRIME Minister Fumio Kishida said Sunday that Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda will leave his post after his tenure ends in April, increasing the prospect that the government will submit to parliament its choice for his successor next month.

The chief of the central bank "will be replaced," Kishida said on a television program, the clearest remark yet by the premier on the matter. "After deciding personnel affairs, (the government) will present to the Diet."

Kuroda, who has headed the BOJ since 2013, will end his current term on 8 April. He will leave the next governor, who will take office a day later, with several challenges including normalizing its monetary policy by charting an exit from years of large-scale monetary easing.

Current Deputy Governor Masayoshi Amamiya and former deputy chief Hiroshi Nakaso have been floated as candidates to replace Kuroda. Sources from Kishida's Liberal Democratic Party said recently that the government is considering presenting an appointment plan to parliament for the new governor next month.—Kyodo

# In cold Davos, warmer days seen for the world economy

AN air of optimism for the global economy blew through Davos this week after fears that the war in Ukraine, an energy crisis and soaring inflation could trigger a global recession.

"It is less bad than we feared a couple of months ago," IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said at the final panel discussion for the World Economic Forum in the Swiss ski resort on Friday.

Georgieva signalled that the International Monetary Fund may raise its previous forecast of 2.7 per cent global growth for this year when it publishes an update at the end of the month.

European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde was similarly upbeat for the eurozone economy, saying the "news has become much more positive in the last few weeks". People have lunch at a restaurant near the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, France, on 18 June. **PHOTO: GAO JING/XINHUA**

But she cautioned against high expectations.

"Less bad doesn't quite yet mean good," Georgieva said.

"Be careful not to get on the other side of the spectrum, from being too pessimistic to being too optimistic." —AFP

Meta said in November that it would axe more than 11,000 staff after profits more than halved to $4.4 billion (€4.0bn) in the third quarter. Photo shows the group's European operations office in Dublin. **PHOTO: PAUL FAITH / AFP**

# Meta slapped with €5.5mln fine for EU data breach

SOCIAL media giant Meta has been fined an additional €5.5 million for breaches of EU data protection regulations by its instant messaging platform WhatsApp, Ireland's regulator announced on Thursday.

The penalty follows a €390 million fine for Meta-owned media platforms Instagram and Facebook two weeks ago after they were found to have flouted the same EU rules.

In its new decision, the Irish Data Protection Commission (DPC) found the group acted "in breach of its obligations in relation to transparency" the watchdog said in a statement.

In addition, Meta relied on an incorrect legal basis "for its processing of personal data for the purposes of service improvement and security," the DPC added, giving the group six months to bring its data operations into compliance.

The breaches are similar to those explained in the regulator's action against Meta earlier in January.

But the earlier decision also accused the Meta platforms of breaking rules over the processing of personal data for the purpose of targeted advertising.

In that instance the company, co-founded by social media magnate Mark Zuckerberg, was given only three months to respond to comply with the Irish regulator.—AFP

# Japanese securities firms hope stocks jump in Year of the Rabbit

HOPES are high among Japanese securities companies that stocks will rise in 2023, drawing on a Japanese traditional stock market proverb that says shares "jump" in the Year of the Rabbit, after the country's major stock index fell for the first time in four years last year.

The benchmark Nikkei stock index rose 16.4 per cent on average over the past six Rabbit years since 1950, yielding better performances than most of the other 11 Chinese zodiac years, according to Daiwa Securities Co.

Four out of the past six Rabbit years saw stock prices advance. For example, the Nikkei soared 62.9 per cent in 1951 during an economic boom amid the 1950-1953 Korean War.

Rabbit ceramic figurines are lined up at a Shigaraki ware pottery in Koka in Shiga Prefecture, central Japan, on 28 November 2022, as production of the figurines reach its peak in preparation for the Year of the Rabbit in 2023 under the Chinese zodiac. **PHOTO: KYODO**

The index also surged 36.8 per cent in 1999 when the Bank of Japan adopted a zero-interest-rate policy, according to the company.

Encouraged by such a trend, securities brokers have started recommending rabbit-related shares to their clients, such as Zensho Holdings Co., which operates the rice bowl restaurant chain Nakau. The restaurant's name includes the kanji character for rabbit.—Kyodo

# Car testing industry heats up in cold northeast city

WITH the outdoor temperature approaching minus 20 degrees Celsius, Wang Botao, a car testing engineer at China's automaker Geely Auto Group, was driving a car on a frozen lake.

This is the third year Wang has come to Heihe, a city in the country's northeasternmost province of Heilongjiang, to do the testing work.

Heihe's diverse landforms, cold and dry weather in winter, and high-quality services have drawn more and more carmakers to test their new products in the city.

Early in 1989, the Jiefang truck division of China FAW Group Co., Ltd. launched the first car test in Heihe. Over the past 30-plus years, the city has seen a rapid increase in the type and range of testing, as well as in car testing companies and personnel.

So far, Heihe has set up eight cold-area car testing enterprises, 16 testing bases, and 24 exclusive testing bases.

During a normal season, about 170 domestic and foreign car enterprises, more than 4,000 vehicles, and over 7,000 people, will come to Heihe for car testing annually, according to Diao Weidong, director of the Heihe municipal industry and information bureau.

The city's cold-area car testing business volume accounts for more than 80 per cent of the country's total, said Diao.—Xinhua

Geely Auto is a leading automobile manufacturer based in Hangzhou, China and was founded in 1997 as a subsidiary of Zhejiang Geely Holding Group. **PHOTO: CGTN/XINHU**

# Cryptocurrency collapse continues as more major Crypto firms go out of business

US-BASED cryptocurrency lender Genesis Global Capital became the latest company to file for bankruptcy protection after the collapse of crypto exchange operator FTX, NHK World reported.

The company, plus its subsidiaries filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection with a US court on Thursday.

Leading crypto exchange operator Coinbase halted its Japanese operations this month, citing the poor business environment, as per NHK World.

According to Al Jazeera, the company in a statement stated, "Genesis has taken strategic actions to achieve a global resolution to maximize value for all clients and stakeholders and strengthen its business for the future."—ANI

A visual representation of the digital cryptocurrency Bitcoin. **PHOTO: AFP**

# Sudan's prized gum trees ward off drought but workers wither

A vast belt of trees vital for global production of fizzy drinks helps Sudanese farmers adapt to climate change, but in the harsh drylands many are reluctant to take up the trade.

Gum arabic, golden blobs of resin tapped from thorny acacia trees, is an emulsifying agent virtually irreplaceable for global industry. The ingredient is used in everything from soft drinks to chewing gum and pharmaceuticals.

Sudan, in northeastern Africa, is among the countries hardest hit by climate change but is also the world's largest producer of the raw gum.

"It's an important tree to fight desertification as it is drought resistant — and also increases the soil fertility, essential to increasing crop production," said Fatma Ramly, coordinator of the Gum Arabic Farmers' Association, which counts seven million members.

To harvest the amber-coloured resin, farmers must suffer the same climatic extremes as their trees.—AFP

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**
**M.V KOTA HIDAYAH VOY.NO. (KHDY0333N)**

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HIDAYAH VOY.NO. (KHDY0333N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-1-2023** 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 PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL LINES**

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**
**M.V GREEN PACIFRIC VOY.NO. (0UV02E1NC)**

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GREEN PACIFRIC VOY.NO. (0UV02E1NC)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-1-2023** 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.

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**Shipping Agency Department**
**Myanma Port Authority**

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# GLOBAL AFFAIRS

## RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

A Cambodian expert (front) teaches how to use a mine detection device to officials from Ukraine's State Emergency Service on 17 January 2023, in Cambodia. **PHOTO: JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY /KYODO**

## Cambodian experience helping Ukraine rid scourge of landmines

CAMBODIA'S national landmine clearing organization has begun providing demining training to Ukrainian officials visiting the country, as Russia's war on the Eastern European nation continues.

The Cambodian Mine Action Centre, which has removed thousands of mines laid in Cambodia during its civil war, said in a statement released recently that it has been teaching several officials from Ukraine's State Emergency Service demining skills, including how to use a mine detection device made in Japan.

The government organization said it launched the training program in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency, as the two Asian countries have agreed to assist Ukraine's efforts to rid itself of landmines laid since Russian forces invaded in February last year.

JICA said Japan is providing four mine detection devices to Ukraine.

"Based on Japan's past experiences of cooperating on countermeasures against landmines and unexploded bombs in Cambodia and other nations, we will continue to contribute to reconstruction work in Ukraine," Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi told a press conference in Tokyo on Friday.—Kyodo

## Zelensky, Erdogan discuss continuation, expansion of Ukraine's grain deal

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelensky and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed the continuation and expansion of the Black Sea Grain Deal on exporting foodstuffs from Ukraine, Zelensky's press service reported Friday.

During their phone talks, the parties underlined the need to continue the agreement, which is due to expire in March, and noted that there are prospects for the expansion of the deal to other Ukrainian ports.

Zelensky and Erdogan also voiced their support for a humanitarian initiative "Grain from Ukraine" launched in November last year, which is aimed at sending more than 60 vessels with Ukrainian wheat to countries in need by the end of spring 2023.

In addition, the two presidents discussed in detail the necessary diplomatic efforts to implement the Ukrainian Peace Formula, proposed by Zelensky in November last year.

Zelensky thanked Erdogan for organizing the meeting of the ombudspersons of Ukraine, Türkiye, and Russia in Ankara and voiced his hope for Türkiye's assistance in returning home Ukrainians captured by Russia.—Xinhua

## Russia to retaliate after RT accounts frozen in France: reports

MOSCOW will retaliate against French media in Russia after the bank accounts of RT France, the French arm of its state broadcaster, were frozen, Russian news agencies quoting an anonymous foreign ministry source reported Saturday.

Hours later, the director of the channel in France announced that it would have to shut down as a consequence.

"The blocking of RT France accounts will lead to retaliatory measures against the French media in Russia," the TASS and RIA Novosti news agencies quoted the foreign ministry source as saying. The measures "will be remembered", the source said, accusing Paris of "terrorising Russian journalists."

Russia warned it would take "retaliatory measures" against French media in Russia. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The channel's director in France, Xenia Fedorova announced in a statement posted on Twitter later Saturday that this had been the final blow.

"After five years of harassment, the authorities in power have achieved their goal: the closure of RT France," she wrote.—AFP

## WORLD: TOP HEADLINE

In October, anti-France demonstrators gathered outside the country's embassy in Ouagadougou and the French cultural centre was attacked. **PHOTO: ISSOUF SANOGO/AFP**

## Burkina Faso wants French troops out: state news agency

BURKINA Faso's military regime told France it wants its troops stationed in the country to leave within a month, the state news agency AIB reported on Saturday.

"The Burkinabe government last Wednesday denounced the accord which has governed, since 2018, the presence of French armed forces on its territory," AIB said, adding that authorities had given France a month to complete its pull-out.

A source close to the government clarified it was "not the severance of relations with France. The notification only concerns military cooperation agreements".

France has 400 special forces soldiers stationed in junta-ruled Burkina to battle an Islamist insurgency, but relations have deteriorated in recent months.

Sources familiar with the matter told AFP that France's preferred option would be to redeploy its forces in the south of neighbouring Niger, where nearly 2,000 French soldiers are already stationed.—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

# Sweden's NATO bid hit by repeated rows with Türkiye

SWEDEN'S bid for NATO membership is facing a dead end because Ankara's demands to Stockholm to hand over Kurdish activists and prevent rallies attacking Türkiye's leadership have strained ties.

The chances of this changing after Türkiye's parliamentary elections due in mid-May are uncertain, said Paul Levin, director of Stockholm University's Institute for Turkish Studies.

"We can now probably forget Turkish ratification before the elections, which seem to be scheduled for 14 May," Levin told AFP.

"What happens after that depends in part on who wins."

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's objections to Sweden's NATO membership rest largely on Stockholm's refusal to extradite Turkish nationals Ankara wants to prosecute for "terrorism".

And Erdogan is running for re-election.

In December, Sweden extradited a member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) to Türkiye. He had been convicted in a Turkish court and denied asylum in Sweden.

Erdogan wants more action from Stockholm against the PKK, listed as a terror group by Türkiye and its Western allies.

"On one hand, there is a Turkish president who has jailed thousands over alleged insults and who wants to divert attention from a poor economy in the months before an election," said Levin.—AFP

Kurdish-led anti-Turkish protests in Stockholm have further strained relations between the two countries. **PHOTO: TT NEWS AGENCY/AFP**

# Peru closes famed tourist site Machu Picchu due to protests

Peru closed the Inca citadel of Machu Picchu Saturday amid steady anti-government protests, stranding hundreds of tourists for hours. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

PERU has closed its famed tourist site Machu Picchu amid anti-government protests, its Ministry of Culture said Saturday, with hundreds of tourists having been left stranded near the Inca citadel amid deadly unrest.

Demonstrations demanding the resignation of Peruvian President Dina Boluarte have been ongoing since early December, leaving 46 people dead and prompting the government to impose a state of emergency in violence-hit areas.

Authorities announced Saturday yet another protester had died following demonstrations in the country's south, with the victim arriving already deceased at the local hospital in the town of Puno.

Prior to Saturday's closing of Machu Picchu, rail services to the site had already been suspended due to the track being damaged by demonstrators.—AFP

## WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

### India blocks 'hostile' BBC documentary on PM Modi

INDIA'S government said it has blocked videos and tweets sharing links to a BBC documentary about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's role during deadly 2002 sectarian riots, calling it "hostile propaganda and anti-India garbage".

The British broadcaster's programme alleges that the Hindu nationalist Modi, premier of Gujarat state at the time, ordered police to turn a blind eye to the orgy of violence there that left at least 1,000 people dead, most of them minority Muslims.—AFP

### After Brazil unrest, painstaking effort to restore damaged treasures

RANDALL Felix delicately handles the wood on a 19th century chair whose armrest was ripped off when supporters of Brazil's' far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro stormed Congress earlier this month.

"The shock is great," the 63-year-old master craftsman at the Senate museum told AFP. "It's all part of our life, so when we see that a piece has been treated like that, it's very difficult."—AFP

# US media rocked by layoffs amid economic gloom

FROM CNN to the Washington Post, US media are facing tough times, as a series of outlets have announced layoffs this winter amid fears of an economic downturn.

Vox Media, owner of the Vox and The Verge websites as well as the landmark New York Magazine and its online platforms, announced Friday it was letting go seven percent of its staff.

The news follows layoffs at CNN, NBC, MSNBC, Buzzfeed and other outlets.

In a memo to staff on Friday, Vox Media CEO Jim Bankoff announced "the difficult decision to eliminate roughly seven percent of our staff roles across departments due to the challenging economic environment impacting our business and industry."

The memo, which was confirmed to AFP by Vox Media, said the affected employees were going to be notified of being let go within the next 15 minutes. That would mean some 130 out of the group's 1,900 staff.—AFP

From CNN to the Washington Post, US media are facing tough times, as a series of outlets have announced layoffs this winter amid fears of an economic downturn. Washington Post headquarters. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

# SPORT

**GLOBAL AFFAIRS**

Sweden's NATO bid hit by repeated rows with Türkiye

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The Shan United team seen before the pre-season match against GFA FC. **PHOTO : MNL**

## Myanmar National League clubs test pre-season matches

THE Myanmar National League football clubs which are preparing for the 2023 season of the domestic league played pre-season matches on 20 and 21 January.

In the pre-season matches, Shan United beat GFA 2-0, while Dagon Star United defeated Kachin United 1-0.

Rakhine United won All Stars team which is mostly made up with African players 2-1.

Shan United, the current MNL champion, won the first friendly match against GFA.

The Shan United team used new players and young players in the first half, and added core players Kyaw Zin Phyo, Kyaw Zin Lwin, Ye Min Thu, Hein Thiha Zaw, Nanda Kyaw, Myat Kaung Khant and Mark Sarke in the second half.

The winning goals for Shan team were scored by Ti Nyein Min in the first half and Aye Min Thu in the second half.

The MNL clubs slate to play a series of pre-season matches on Saturday and Wednesday.—Ko Nyi Lay/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.

## Australian Open 'void' as big-name casualties mount

Spain's Rafael Nadal leaves the court after losing to USA's Mackenzie McDonald. **PHOTO: AFP**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC ploughs on with a bad hamstring but the 2023 Australian Open will already be remembered for the sheer number of shocks and an absence of "star" names.

Iga Swiatek's defeat on Sunday makes it the first Grand Slam since the Open era began in 1968 to lose the top two seeds in both the men's and women's draws before the quarter-finals.

Halfway through the tournament, fans stop to snap pictures with a large poster of Rafael Nadal on display at Melbourne Park but the man himself is long gone. The top men's seed and defending champion looked far from his brilliant best in his opening match and then went out in the second round to unseeded American Mackenzie McDonald.—AFP

## Haaland scores hat-trick as Man City tame Wolves

ERLING Haaland's fourth hat-trick in 19 Premier League appearances hauled Manchester City to within two points of leaders Arsenal with a 3-0 win over Wolves on Sunday.

Pep Guardiola got the reaction he was hoping for from the English champions after questioning their hunger to retain the title after Thursday's 4-2 win over Tottenham. The hosts had to come from 2-0 down in a dramatic second half against Spurs, but there was little mystery over the destination of the three points once Haaland had broken Wolves' resistance five minutes before half-time.

Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland (rear C) celebrates after scoring his team third goal during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Wolverhampton Wanderers at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, on 22 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Haaland's scoring rate has slowed marginally in recent weeks, but his header from Kevin De Bruyne's cross moved him level with the 23 league goals that saw Mohamed Salah and Son Heung-min share the Golden Boot with last season.

The 22-year-old took his tally to 30 goals in all competitions from the penalty spot early in the second half after Ilkay Gundogan had been upended by Ruben Neves.

Wolves then gifted Haaland his hat-trick just four minutes later as goalkeeper Jose Sa presented the ball to Riyad Mahrez, who unselfishly squared for his teammate to roll into an unguarded net. Guardiola quickly took the chance to give his star striker a rest as Haaland was replaced on the hour mark by Julian Alvarez to Wolves' relief.—AFP