GIVE CHANCE TO STUDENTS FOR SHAPING THEIR LIVES WITH THE SPORTING SPIRIT PAGE-8 (OPINION)

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.

SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Vice-President Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov of Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation and party

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov, Vice-President of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation in Nay Pyi Taw on 30 January 2023.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov, Vice-President of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation at the parlour of the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Also present at the meeting were Union Ministers Dr Kan Zaw and U Ko Ko Hlaing and officials. The Vice-President of the association was accompanied by officials from the association.

At the meeting, both sides frankly exchanged views on further improvement of friendly relations and cooperation between Myanmar and Russia, further cooperation in economic and technological measures on a wider scale, operating direct flights between the two countries to develop the tourism industry, import and export between the two countries, and promotion of cooperation in all sectors for further enhancement of bilateral relations more than now.

After the meeting, the Senior General and the Vice-President of the association exchanged commemorative gifts and had documentary photos taken. — MNA/TTA

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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

Conveyance of Maravijaya Buddha image combined with parts 1, 2 and 3 onto jewelled throne continues

The conveyance of the 90° lifted image onto the jewelled throne is in progress yesterday.

MEMBERS of the Sangha led by State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chair Mandalay's Bhamo Monastery Abbot Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa and Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academies Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Maha Dhamma Kahtika Bahujana Hitadhara Shwegyin Nikaya Chairman Shwegyin Sangharaja Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nyanissara together with well-wishers led by leading donor State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attended the ceremony at which the Maravijaya Buddha image was lifted to be placed on the jewelled throne in Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory on the morning of 26 January.

The process of lifting up the Buddha image combined with parts 1, 2 and 3 to be placed on the jewelled throne is using a steel tower crane starting from 8:10 am on 26 January. The image was lifted to 26° as well as the 31 feet high position from the reclining position on 26 January, 51° as well as the 52 feet high position on 27 January, 68° as well as the 63 feet high position on 28 January and 90° as well as the 75.5 feet high position at 9 am on 29 January. The whole lifting-up process took 72 hours and 50 minutes.

The conveyance of the 90° lifted image onto the jewelled throne continued at 11:16 pm on 29 January and it was getting close to the jewelled throne at 10:17 am on 30 January when the distance was 81 feet, and the process took 11 hours and one minute.

Those from the Myanmar Engineering Council and military engineers took seven months in building a steel tower installed with eight cranes to lift the image to be placed onto the throne after combining the carved parts of the image and building a steel basket for conveying the image to avoid damage, using some 3,800 tonnes of iron wares.

Although those Myanmar engineers did not have the technology and experience in lifting large and heavy mass before, they applied their work experiences to do so with utmost effort after creating the designs and checking the work process with the use of modern technologies in building the Maravijaya Buddha image.

It was reported that eight cranes from the steel tower continue lifting the steel basket carrying the Buddha image combined with three parts and the image weighing 2,367.5 tonnes and it will continue the work in procedures. All the construction tasks and lifting tasks aim to enable the people to peacefully pay homage to the Buddha image, take meditation and view Tri Pitaka treatises preached by the Lord Buddha.
— MNA/KTZH

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United strengths of all ethnic people needed to build a future developed Union State

THE State Administration Council's efforts in fulfilling the development of ethnic regions while serving the State responsibilities, the need for ethics to firmly grasp that opportunity to be fully utilized for regional development, prospects to shape a future developed Union State through united strengths of all ethnic people.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the peace talk with the peace delegations led by Chair of the Pa-O National Liberation Organization-PNLO Khun Thurein, Chair of the Lahu Democratic Union-LDU Kyar Solomon and Vice-Chair of the Arakan Liberation Party-ALP Saw Mra Razar Lin on 22 August 2022)

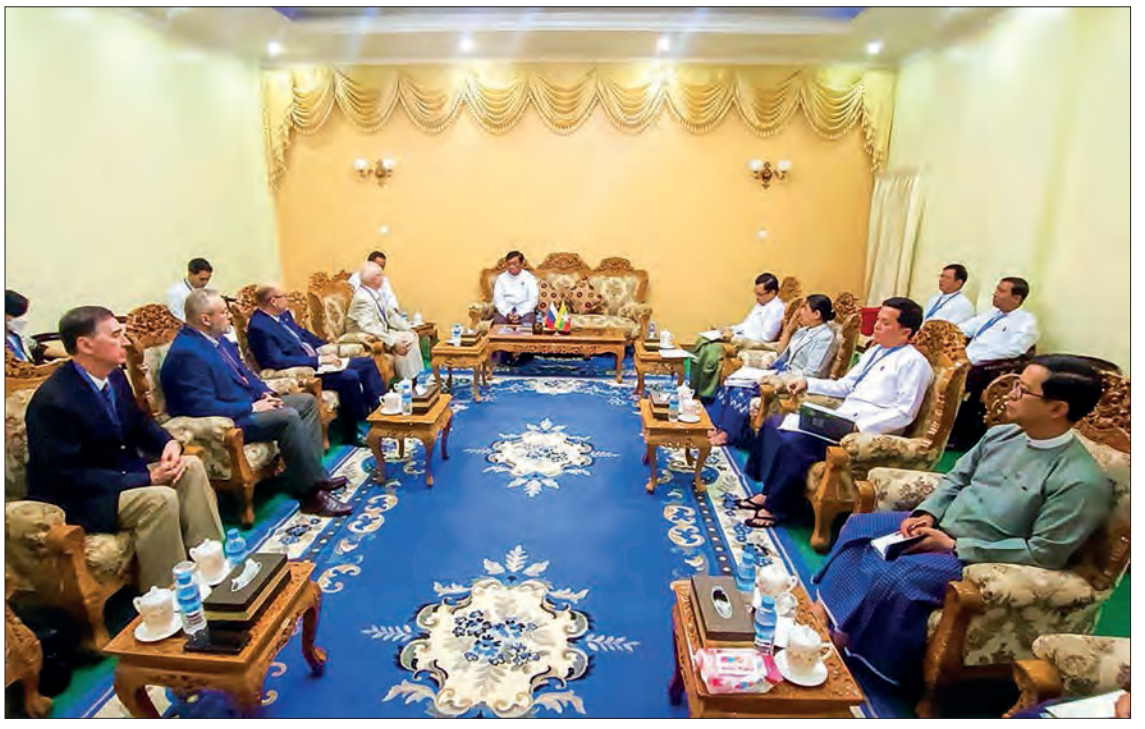
SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Vice-President Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov of Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation and party

NEWS ON PAGE-1

The Senior General presents the gift.

The Senior General poses for the documentary group photo at the event yesterday.

MoEP Union Minister meets Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation vice-president



Union Minister U Thaung Han receives the vice-president of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation yesterday.

UNION Minister for Electric Power U Thaung Han met a delegation led by Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov, Vice-President of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation at 10 am yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Union Minister elaborated on the all-round implementation status resulting from the long-term and mutually friendly relations over 75 years, Russian technical assistance and cooperation in the development of Myanmar's electricity sector since previous years, the status of discussions and agreements signed between Heads of State of the two countries, study tours of renewable energy and thermal power plants during goodwill visits, formation of working committees on cooperation, potential status for cooperation in projects of various energy sources including hydropower and wind power in Myanmar, Russian investments in lithium battery manufacturing plants for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) which are to be used in Myanmar in the not-distant future, opportunities to cooperate with local companies from Myanmar in electrification projects, methods of economic cooperation in the producing and selling of electricity and finance matters. Deputy Minister Dr Aung Zeya, departmental heads, officials from the Embassy of the Russian Federation and the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation were present at the meeting. — MNA/TS

Myanmar, Thai ministers agree to strengthen educational cooperation

Union Minister Dr Nyunt Pe holds talks with Thai educational delegation led by the Thai Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

UNION Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe received Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Prof Anek Laothamatas and a Thai education delegation yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Union minister highlighted the educational cooperation between the universities of Thailand and of Myanmar, signing about 60 MOUs between the universities of two countries till December 2022, mutual exchange programmes of students, teachers and cultures, more emphasis on seminars, conferences, research collaborations and research paper reading sessions, cooperation in areas such as microbiology, marine science, food science, agriculture and livestock education, fisheries education, the study of climate change, tourism, language teaching and learning, the art of teaching, technology-based teaching methods, educational quality control and warranty of quality.

The Thai Minister said that their visit to the Ministry of Education in Myanmar aimed at promoting friendship between the two ministries and to find out the fields of education that can be cooperated. They can cooperate and assist Myanmar universities in the necessary sectors and will build a network of communication and cooperation between the two ministries, he added.

Furthermore, attendees explained the progress of education and plans for continued cooperation and discussed the issue of signing an MOU at the ministry level. Both sides exchanged commemorative gifts and took documentary photos together. — MNA/TS

SAC-conferred honorary titles presented

On behalf of former Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, wife Daw Thein Yin Chay accepts the Wunna Kyaw Htin honorary title at her home yesterday.

THE State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister conferred honorary titles on recipients individually on 1 and 2 January in marking the 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day. Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe and officials went to offer honorary titles to family members of those who were unable to attend the ceremony on their own and their behalf due to various reasons.

On behalf of former Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, wife Daw Thein Yin Chay accepted the Wunna Kyaw Htin honorary title at her home. — MNA/TS

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

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 organizations 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 17,200 Sinopharm vaccines and 86,000 syringes were delivered to Sittway township and 5,000 Sinopharm vaccines and 50,000 syringes to Thandwe township in Rakhine State. A total of 140 Siopharm vaccines and 700 syringes were also delivered to Paletwa township, 100 Sinopharm vaccines and 500 syringes to Matupi township, 100 Sinopharm vaccines and 500 syringes to Mindat township in Chin State and 18 Sinopharm vaccines to Nay Pyi Daw by military aircraft, respectively.

These vaccines and syringes were accepted by officials and will continue to be distributed to relevant areas. — MNA/MKKS

Vaccines and syringes are coveyed to states and regions by Tatmadaw aircraft.

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MoIP Union Minister attends meeting of Central Committee on Implementation of Permanent Residence System

THE Central Committee on Implementation of Permanent Residence System – PR System in Myanmar held a coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Myint Kyaing in his capacity as the committee chairman talked about the formation of the Permanent Residence System Management Committee led by the State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister, the Central Committee on Implementation of Permanent Residence System led by MoIP Union minister and Working Committee on Implementation of Permanent Residence System led by the MoIP permanent secretary.

Union Minister U Myint Kyaing chairs the coordination meeting of the Central Committee on Implementation of Permanent Residence System yesterday.

He added that there are four types of PR systems in Myanmar and the operations were conducted starting 29 January 2015 and there were 745 applicants till 26 January 2023. A total of 669 applicants including their families were approved by the Union Government Office while seven were rejected according to the PR rules; one cancelled the application; 48 applicants and their families remain to be interviewed by the central committee due to the closure of airlines due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

The central committee should review 20 applicants including families who were inspected by the working committee on 19 January and interview them.

The central committee members should verify systematically in accord with the procedures not to affect the national interests of the country although the PR system supports the development of the nation, foreign income and sustainable development.

Then, the in charge officer reported on the setup of committees, personal data of 20 PR applicants, recommendations of the working committee and ongoing work plans to be carried out after the review of the central committee on behalf of the Central Committee Secretary.

The Union minister gave proper instructions and concluded the meeting.

In implementing the PR system, there are four types of permits: professionals, businesspersons who want to invest in Myanmar, ex-Myanmar citizens who have obtained other citizenships and will contribute to Myanmar, and foreigners who are related by blood to Myanmar citizens. — MNA/KTZH

National Landmark Sculpturing and Painting Youth Camp for LMC Fine Arts Students project over

A Mekong-Lancang cooperation project — the National Landmark Sculpturing and Painting Youth Camp for LMC Fine Arts Students project — continued its second-day programmes virtually at the Myananbonsan Yadanabon hall in Mandalay yesterday morning.

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko, Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Maung Ko and ministers, departmental officials and fine arts students were present on the occasion.

According to the programmes, Myanmar cultural artworks in the Mandalay region and stages of wooden carvings being made in Dabein, Yangon region, were displayed through the video clips. Young sculptors from the member countries of Mekong-Lancang cooperation — Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, explained their way of creation and artworks, had discussions and exchanged their views. Then, they sang the song "We will meet again" and the ceremony came to a close.

The National Landmark Sculpturing and Painting Youth Camp for LMC Fine Arts Students project contributed to mutual friendship and respect and appreciation of different cultures and the exchange of new ideas among young artists in the countries of the Mekong-Lancang region. — MNA/CT

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.

Tatmadaw performs second liver transplant

The second liver transplant is under operation.

THE first liver transplant in the Tatmadaw was successfully performed on two liver transplant patients on 27 and 28 September 2022. At present, for the second time, liver transplant is going to be carried out on three patients and the first day of liver transplant surgery was done through cooperative efforts between the Tatmadaw liver transplant team and the Indian liver transplant team at the special treatment centre in Defence Services General Hospital (1000-bed) in Mingaladon township in Yangon.

The operation was performed on Daw Htay Htay, wife of warrant officer Thein Than Kyaw.

The liver extraction from the donor patient started at 10:30 am in the morning and the extracted liver was transplanted at 5:30 pm and the operation took about 11 hours.

Director of the Directorate of Medical Services Maj-Gen Ko Ko Lwin and officials watched the operation.

The patients are now in the ICU under the care of specialists, paramedics and nurses. They are reported to be in good health. — MNA/KZW

No new case of COVID-19 reported on 30 January, total figure stands at 633,819

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases recorded 633,819 after no new case was reported on 30 January 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached 614,282, including one new recovery .

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to 19,490 on 30-1-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.— MNA

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Thai IDC officials and Myanmar Labour Attache' U Tin Aung meet migrant workers.

Detained Myanmar migrants at Ranong IDC to be returned in Feb

AFTER the demonstration of Myanmar migrant workers on 28 January, officials led by Myanmar Embassy Labour Attaché U Tin Aung and IDC officials negotiated with leaders of Myanmar migrant workers who were detained at the Ranong Immigration Detention Centre (IDC), Myanmar Embassy to Thailand stated on 30 January.

Out of 600 detained migrants at IDC, 220 migrants will be repatriated to Myanmar on 2 February and the rest on 8 and 15 February, respectively.

The Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok expressed thanks to those who reported the events and situations about Myanmar migrant workers to it through social media. — TWA/MKKS

Question type, sample question to be released for 2024 matriculation exam

UNION Minister for Education Dr. Nyunt Pe said that question types and sample questions for relevant subjects for 2024 matriculation examination will be released in early May 2023 before opening the schools in June 2023, at a meeting with chief convenors and officials at the matriculation examination type coordination meeting at the Ministry of Education in Nay Pyi Taw on 26 January.

As the (KG+12) system will be introduced with the new curriculum for the 2024 matriculation examination, sample questions will be released for the purpose of teaching and learning so that teachers and students can observe them in advance.

In addition, the 2023 matriculation examination are regulated strictly according to the procedures, he added.

The Union Minister said that it is necessary to improve the university curricula in conformity with the basic education (KG+12) scheme.—TWA/KZL

Students taking the 2022 matriculation exam.

The Youth Affairs Committee Festival was held on 28 January 2023 in Mandalay Region.

76th Union Day commemorative fair to be held in People's Square

THE 76th Anniversary Union Day commemorative fair will be held in People's Square in Yangon according to the Yangon Region government.

The fair will take place on 11 and 12 February. There will be 25 booths of ministries, 15 of Nay Pyi Taw Council and regions and states, 15 of traditional cultures and regional foods and products of indigenous peoples, and products of 29 industrial zones, totalling 356 booths at the fair.

It will be held from 9 am to 5 pm and there will be entertainment programmes. All facilities and fire safety and security services will be provided for visitors to the fair. — TWA/KZW

Monsoon onion prices fall in Yangon, regional markets

WAREHOUSES in onion-producing regions – Magway, Sagaing and Mandalay – set the price for new monsoon onions at the highest rate of only K1,500 per viss on 29 January, according to the price list in Pakokku and Myingyan onion depots.

On the same day, 52,200 visses of onion arrived at the Pakokku depot. Onions from Myittha, Seikphyu, Yaw and Taungtha areas were priced at the highest rate of K1,450, K1,500, K1,525 and K1,450 per viss respectively.

A total of 42,830 visses of onion entered the market on 30 January, with the highest pricing of K1,500 per viss. In the Mandalay market, onion from the Myittha area fetched the top price of K1,900 per viss. It is reported that the sale of large sizes has been dull.

The wholesale prices per viss of onion were recorded as K1,550-K1,700 for Seikphyu onion, K1,550-K1,650 for Myingyan onion, K1,800-K2,100 for Myittha onion and K1,450-K1,500 for Meiktila onion, Ko Aung Win, a buyer, told the GNLM.

Since mid-2022, monsoon onions have been planted earlier due to the high price of onions. Thus, onions entered the markets early and dealers earned double the price than usual. On 8 December 2022, Myingyan and Myittha onions got the record price of K4,400 and K4,800 per viss respectively. The price fell to the average price of K2,600 per viss at the end of December and K1,650 per viss at the end of January 2023. Likewise, the highest wholesale price per viss stood at K3,500 in early December and dropped down to K1,500 at the end of January in regional markets.

It is known from the old price lists that the Seikphyu onion was valued at K225-650 per viss and the Myittha onion at K500-K975 per viss, on 29 January 2022. — TWA/CT

New monsoon onions from Yesagyo Township entering the Pakokku market.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Myanmar kicks off 5,000-tonne white sugar export to Viet Nam this sugarcane season

MYANMAR commenced to ship 5,000 tonnes of locally-produced white sugar to Viet Nam, said U Win Htay, vice-chairman of Myanmar Sugar and Sugarcane Related Manufacturers Association.

Myanmar has signed an agreement to export 45,000 tonnes of white sugar to Viet Nam. The sugar mills have started to run sugarcane crushing operations from early December last year. Sugar produced from those mills is conveyed to Viet Nam. About 5,000 tonnes have been shipped to Viet Nam and more will be delivered there.

"The sugar export to Viet Nam began with the sugar mills running in December 2022. Sugar fetched approximately US$550 per tonne in the foreign market. Some countries in Asia, some western countries and China proposed to buy Myanmar's sugar. The country prioritizes local consumption so it cannot meet the foreign demand yet. When the production improves in the coming years, it is expected to penetrate more external markets. The sugarcane acreages will be upped for sure. Myanmar exports the remaining beyond self-sufficiency. The annual production of sugar is estimated at 450,000 tonnes," he elaborated.

Export bags of sugar are seen being loaded onto the vessel.

The sugar mills in the eastern and western Bago Region, Mandalay Region, northern and southern Shan State and Sagaing Region are operating at full capacity. Sugarcane cultivation is primarily seen in Shan State and Sagaing Region, followed by Bago Region. — Maung Aye Chan/EM

Myanmar sets over 2 mln tonnes of corn export target this season

MYANMAR aims to achieve more than two million tonnes of corn export target this season, said U Min Khaing, patron of Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

The corn output in 2023 is estimated at three million tonnes and one million tonnes are planned for domestic consumption.

"The yield does not drop just like last year. Normally, the corn production rate is around 3 million tonnes. The domestic consumption does not reach a million tonne," said U Min Khaing.

China is purchasing Myanmar's corn through cross-border trade under the poppy substitution programme. Legitimate corn trade between Myanmar and China commenced at the end of 2022. A total of 112 companies have been given the go-ahead for corn exports. Additionally, Myanmar shipped corn to China, India, Viet Nam and the Philippines via maritime trade channels.

Myanmar is allowed to export corn to Thailand with tax exemption from 1 February through border posts.

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 corn price was on a gradual increase on the back of foreign demand, touching a high of K1,280 per viss (one viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes).

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 Viet Nam.

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/EM

Newly-harvested green gram prices escalate on Sino-Myanmar border reopening

GREEN gram (Shwewah variety) market sees an upward trajectory in prices in the Mandalay market when some cross-border posts between Myanmar and China resume trade activity in early 2023, traders engaged in the Mandalay market said.

Newly-harvested green gram enters the market from Kayan Thongwa, Madaya, Singu, Htigyaing and Katha areas. The price of green gram (Kayan Shwewah variety) increased to K20,000 per three-basket bag this year from K140,000 in the year-ago period. Similarly, green gram (Shwewah) cultivated in central Myanmar regions jumped to K165,000 per bag from K110,000 per bag," said U Soe Win Myint, an owner of the Soe Win Myint depot.

"The new green gram started to flow into the market in the last week of January 2023. It is time that the Sino-Myanmar border trade is reopened. The market sees a bustling trade at harvest time. The green gram is mainly exported to foreign markets – China and India. The growers feel delighted with the high price. The border posts that have been shut down for three years amid the pandemic were reopened. That being so, the green gram market sees a great prospect. The prevailing price of green gram (Kayan Shwewah) hit the highest in a decade," he elaborated.

Green gram is cultivated in Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions throughout the year like the rice crop. Meanwhile, it is commonly found as a winter crop in Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady regions. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/EM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 30 January 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,275
Octane 95	K2,355
Diesel	K2,490
Premium Diesel	K2,570

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,265,500 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,847,000 per tical

Dollar Price

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market	K2,845 to K2,860

The above prices may change from time to time.

OPINION

Give chance to students for shaping their lives with the sporting spirit

THE sporting spirit is the best driving force to uplift the morale of the youths who would shoulder the State responsibilities of the State at different capacities in the future. Those youths with high morale and morality will be able to lead the future nation and nationals on the path of the multiparty democratic system.

To have a sporting spirit, children and youths must be trained at young ages while they are learning basic education at different levels. Only when the basic foundation of the spirit is sound will their lives be on the right track leading to the goals they anticipate. Hence, basic education teachers as well as sports trainers play a key role in shaping the lives of those youths.

Recently, the basic education students' sports festival for the 2022-23 academic year took place at the Wunna Theikdi Stadium-B in Nay Pyi Taw from 18 to 27 January 2023. The festival comprised men's and women's football, volleyball and track and field, and men's Sepak Takraw events in which a total of 1,680 students participated.

> Victories of the athletes representing Myanmar in international-level sports competitions are good results to show off the unity of the State, prestige, and patriotic spirit of the people. Hence, all the students need to take lessons from the students' sports festival to forge the spirit to uplift the prestige and integrity of the nation as well as their lives.

Sports competitions should not be focused on just winning and losing. Those students took part in the festival with perseverance, tolerance, skills, sporting spirit, unity, following disciplines, and politeness which are tools to shape the mindsets of those students to have better lives with new perspectives and knowledge. It is sure that those student-athletes would bring good results of sporting spirit to their practical life in relationships with their families, societies, and environs.

The health and fitness of all citizens will be the strength to build a new modern nation that will create a pleasant and prosperous society. If so, people from such a society will have the chance to enjoy the fruits of developing Myanmar in the future shaped by the new generation of youths.

On the other hand, those student-athletes will have the opportunity to show off their brilliant skills and talent at the festival. If so, they might be chosen as selected players at some different levels and then the selected players represent the whole nation. One of the essences of the students' sports festival is to turn out outstanding athletes for the country.

Victories of the athletes representing Myanmar in international-level sports competitions are good results to show off the unity of the State, prestige, and patriotic spirit of the people. Hence, all the students need to take lessons from the students' sports festival to forge the spirit to uplift the prestige and integrity of the nation as well as their lives.

ARTICLE

Read Up on Colourful Literature

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)

IN this day and age, languages are widely studied from three points of view: (1) literature, based on the written form or history of a language, (2) language, relying upon the listening, speaking, reading, writing or thinking skills of a language, and (3) linguistics, underlying the scientific study or criticism of a language. Of these points, literature is still the most common field of study for advanced learners in universities as far as I know. In the eyes of the literature, not every written work such as notices in towns is literature, even though the English word `literature´ is derived from the Latin word `litteratura´, which has `writing´ in meaning. Of course, any literature to the core has taken in such long-lasting effects on readers that they would like to read it on and on or again and again at any time. Nowadays literature will die out very quickly only if most readers except for a few devotees of literature have forgotten or not read it, I reckon. At the bottom literature is worth studying for whatever purpose. So, I am going to share two general types of literature, many literary devices, some approaches to literature and the reason why literature should be studied here.

Generally speaking, there are only two genres of literature from the point of view of the written form: poetry and prose. Poetry is mostly a short-in-length piece of written work that contains a fixed number of syllables or stanzas, rhymes and rhythmic patterns. On the other hand, the prose is a commonly long piece of writing which does not need a limited number of words, paragraphs, rhymes or rhythms at all – in other words, it can be composed quite freely. From a subject-matter point of view, literature may be categorized as fiction or non-fiction. In general, fiction includes novels, novellas, stories, short stories, classics, tales, fairy tales, folktales, tall tales, science-fiction, mysteries, fantasies, romances, fables, myths, and legends; non-fiction consists of biographies, autobiographies, textbooks, reference books, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and atlases. Some literature is found to consist of a mixture of poetry and prose, for example, drama, which has four major types _ comedies, tragedies, tragicomedies, and melodramas, to the best of my knowledge.

From Oxford, poetry says poems in general, where the English word `poem´ comes from the French word `poeme´ or the Greek word `poiein´, which means `to make or create´. By Oxford, the word `poem´ is termed a piece of writing in which the words are chosen for their sounds and the images they suggest, not just for their obvious meanings; the words are arranged in separate lines, usually with a repeated rhythm, and sometimes the lines rhyme at the end, depending on how to write poems. What is more, the word `poem´ is defined as a piece of writing that expresses emotions, experiences, and ideas, especially in short lines using words that rhyme or have a particular pattern of sounds, according to Longman relying upon what subject matter is involved in poems. A poet's choice of words is of vital importance in writing a poem so as to point up his feelings, thoughts and the like to the best of his ability. To my eye, the chosen and written words of a poem seem like the nectar of a flower both of these contain sweetness, that is. Accordingly, a poem can be literally referred to as a bank of nectar.

The prose is of two main forms: the spoken form and the written form. It is reasonable to assume that spoken words existed earlier than written forms just because human beings could possibly speak to each other with sounds and then words many moons ago. Like poetry, the prose is not always short and to the point; its writing is prominently dependent on a few of the five common ways _ descriptive, narrative, imaginative, expository, or causative. In prose are significantly essay writing, article writing and story writing regarding sorts of writing styles besides writers' own styles of writing. Including any diverse sentence structure, the free-thinking of a writer is broadly allowed in writing prose, whereas poetic licence to change the normal rules of language is fully given in composing poetry. In spite of this, only prose writing has been playing far and away the most influential role in the world of modern literature until now for the reason that prose is actually seen to be more explicit even for the man in the street by comparison with poetry. It is seriously accepted that prose is still the life of every developing literature. That is also why prose always comes first in the teaching of language professional teachers carry out.

As far as I am aware, there are so many recurrent literary devices, in which `literary devices´ denotes linguistic techniques that writers apply to expressing their ideas and enhancing their writing:1) alliteration, the use of the same letter or sound at the beginning of words that are close together, as in sing a song of sixpence, 2) allusion, something that refers to or mentions another person or subject in an indirect way, 3) anecdote, a very short story that is told to make a point, 4) assonance, the repetition of vowel sounds in non-rhyming words, such as cold and killed, 5) consonance, also the repetition of final consonants of accented syllables or important words, like strong and string, 6) flashback, a scene that happened earlier in time than the main story, 7) foreshadowing, hints or clues in a narrative to suggest what action to come, 8) hyperbole, an exaggeration of facts for seriousness or comic effect, for instance ` His eyes opened wide like saucers.´, 9) imagery, a language that produces pictures in the mind of people reading or listening, for example `The stunning blue waters sparkled with brilliant clarity.´, 10) irony, words that say the opposite of what is really meant, e.g. England is famous for its food., 11) metaphor, a word or phrase in an imaginative way to show that two things have the same qualities and make the description more powerful, e.g. She has a face of jasmine., 12) motif, a subject that is repeated or developed, 13) onomatopoeia, words containing sounds, e.g., cuckoo, 14) oxymoron, a phrase of two words that seem to the opposite of each other, e.g., a deafening silence, 15) paradox, a statement containing two opposite ideas that make it impossible or unlikely, although it is probably true, e.g. More haste, less speed., 16) personification, the practice of representing non-living things as human beings, e.g. grey mist on the sea's face, 17) satire, a way of criticizing a person, an idea or institution in which humour is used to show their faults or weaknesses, 18) simile, a word or phrase that compares something to something else, e.g. a face like a mask, as white as snow, and 19) symbol, someone or something that represents a more general quality or situation, i.e. Roses have always been a symbol of love.

Perhaps there are four approaches to literature which may be especially done by language learners. The first approach is literature merely as enjoyment in reading; the second approach is literature as a body of knowledge or as contents; the third approach is purely as language practice material; and the last one is literature as a stimulus for personal development. Whichever approach is made, great works of literature can tell many truths about life, reflect the universal truth that must be accepted by all, represent the majority of people from every corner of the globe, pass alive and kicking through different ages, and even keep world peace. Most but a few language learners tend to find it pretty boring to study literature in that a study on literature is, as usual, so hard to understand the whole lot, particularly due to archaism in this literature, at first; even so, whether or not any literature interests a reader also lies in both his mentor's method of grasping literature and the subject matter of literature itself. Nevertheless, when some readers have studied literature a lot, they will get that literature very well and enjoy studying literature more than before for certain.

Language researchers, needless to say, should have studied as much literature as they can afford in order to undertake their better research. And everyone must have read a lot of literature with the time of their own so that they will become well-informed readers. Writers also need to read a wide variety of literature, which is written in different languages if at all possible. By doing so, they may certainly get to see their private writing style for the future that is not all the same as those of their former authors. Even translators and interpreters have got to look at more than one literature ad infinitum in order that they will be able to dig up beautiful usages or sentences from various literature, which help boost their writing and speaking. It stands to reason that language teachers had better learn literature as much as they can for it is down to them to capture the essence of the literature about which they deliver a lecture as well. Suffice it to say that it will be worth everybody's while to read up on colourful literature. ■

China lifts visa issuance restrictions on Japanese citizens

CHINA said Sunday it will resume issuing ordinary visas for Japanese citizens, a procedure it suspended in early January in protest of Japan's tightened COVID-19 measures for travellers from China, in a move that could thaw bilateral relations.

The Chinese Embassy in Tokyo said it was resuming issuance the same day. The step is expected to ease concerns among Japanese businesses operating in China.

The end of the restrictions came as Beijing focuses on the recovery of its economy battered by stringent antivirus measures involving lockdowns and a subsequent explosion of infections later in 2022.

Beijing has similarly halted issuing visas to South Korean citizens but yet to announce the restart of the procedure. China had approved issuing some types of visas to Japanese and South Korean citizens as exceptions made for diplomats, government officials and businesspeople facing urgent needs.

Japan, South Korea and a number of other countries have tightened border controls on travellers from China as it reopened its borders and scrapped quarantine measures on 8 January.

They cited a lack of credible infection data and fears that a new virus variant could emerge in China. On 10 January, Beijing halted visa issuance for Japanese and South Korean travellers, criticizing their entry restrictions on visitors from China as "discriminatory".

Tokyo had lodged a protest with Beijing through diplomatic channels and demanded termination of the restrictions, which Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said "seem to have nothing to do with" countermeasures against COVID-19.

The Japanese Embassy in Beijing had argued China's approach "completely lacks reciprocity" as Tokyo has not restricted the issuance of visas for Chinese citizens intending to visit Japan. Japanese business representatives welcomed the move, with an executive of a business body saying China "tried to minimize negative impact" on economic activities as it lifted the restrictions soon after the Lunar New Year holidays through Friday, during which production is usually suspended.

A senior official of the China unit of a Japanese manufacturer expressed hope that Beijing will reintroduce a 15-day visa-free visit for Japanese citizens at an early date so that business leaders can travel to the neighbouring country more easily.

Specifically, Japan currently requires travellers from mainland China to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of departure.

In addition, all travellers from mainland China and those who have visited the country within seven days are required to take a PCR or high-sensitivity antigen test upon arrival in Japan. Those who test positive must quarantine at a designated facility for up to seven days.

Pedestrians walk in front of a billboard advertising Japan at a subway station in Beijing on 29 January 2023. **PHOTO: KYODO**

On Friday, South Korea extended its restrictions on issuing short-term visas for travellers from China through 28 February, citing concerns that the virus could spread further in the neighbouring country following the Lunar New Year holidays.

Chinese health authorities said last Wednesday that COVID-19 infections in China had peaked on 22 December last year, with new daily cases reaching 6.94 million, after the end of lockdowns and frequent PCR testing earlier that month sparked a massive wave of cases.

SOURCE: Kyodo

SCI/ENVIRON
WORLD

Horn of Africa drought drives 22 million to hunger

FROM southern Ethiopia to northern Kenya and Somalia, around 22 million people are at risk of hunger as the worst drought in four decades grips the Horn of Africa.

In the afflicted areas, inhabitants — who eke out a living mainly from herding and subsistence farming — are experiencing their fifth consecutive poor rainy season since the end of 2020.

The United Nations says 12 million people in Ethiopia, 5.6 million in Somalia and 4.3 million in Kenya are "acutely food insecure".

Men walk among animal carcasses at the village of Antalale, 50 kilometres from the city of Gode, Ethiopia, on 13 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

The overall figure has almost doubled from 13 million at the start of 2022, the UN's World Food Programme said in a January 23 report.

Across the region, 1.7 million people have been driven from their homes by a lack of water and pasture, it said.

Climate shocks

The Horn of Africa is one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change, and extreme weather events are occurring with increased frequency and intensity.

Since 2016, eight of the 13 rainy seasons have seen below average rainfall, according to data from the US-based Climate Hazards Centre.

The last famine was declared in Somalia in 2011, when 260,000 people — half of them children under the age of six — died of hunger, partly because the international community did not act fast enough, according to the UN.

At that time, the region had encountered two poor rainy seasons, compared to five in the current drought.—AFP

New Zealand's Auckland mayor warns "more dangerous" severe weather ahead

MAYOR of New Zealand's largest city Auckland Wayne Brown warned "more dangerous" severe weather is ahead after heavy rainfalls and floods have claimed four people's lives since Friday.

"The worst was not behind Auckland, with more heavy rain expected," Brown told media at a community centre on Monday, adding the ground was so saturated and the drains so full that "it could be more dangerous than even Friday" when Auckland declared a state of emergency amid severe flooding.

All schools and childcare centres in Auckland remain closed until 7 February, according to the Ministry of Education.

Brown said he has asked the military's help with things like sandbagging if needed. The city will later have "the big Auckland clean-up" to remove storm waste.

"We're all in this together", said the mayor, calling on people to stay at home, stay away from floodwaters and follow the directions of emergency services.—Xinhua

Fight climate change without slowing growth, says UAE's COP28 chief

THE fight against global warming should not be at the expense of economic growth, the UAE oil chief who will lead this year's UN climate talks said on Monday.

Sultan Al Jaber, the United Arab Emirates' special envoy for climate change and CEO of oil giant ADNOC, said the energy transition needed to make the planet "wealthier and healthier".

"We need to hold back the global rise in temperatures to 1.5 degrees (Celsius), without slowing economic growth," he told a graduation ceremony at the Mohamed Bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence.

"We need to drive an inclusive energy transition that leaves no one behind, especially in the Global South. We need to make our planet wealthier and healthier at the same time."

Al Jaber's appointment as president of COP28 in November and December has been criticized by activists who said it threatens the "legitimacy" of the global forum against climate change.

The minister of industry and advanced technology is a veteran of COP meetings and heads a leading renewable energy company. His appointment was welcomed by US climate envoy John Kerry.

The last UN climate talks, held in Egypt in November, ended with a landmark deal to create a "loss and damage" fund to cover the costs that developing countries face from climate-linked natural disasters and slower impacts like sea level rise.

But observers were left disappointed that little progress had been made on reducing planet-heating emissions from fossil fuels.

The UAE, one of the world's biggest oil producers, argues that crude remains indispensable to the global economy and is needed to finance the energy transition.—AFP

Columbia disaster that scuttled the space shuttle

AMERICA may now be aiming to put astronauts back on the Moon, but for years the United States turned its back on manned missions after the Columbia space shuttle disaster.

Its space programme suffered a catastrophic setback when all seven astronauts were killed when the shuttle broke up on re-entering the Earth's atmosphere 20 years ago on 1 February 2003.

It was the second shuttle disaster after the Challenger explosion of 1986 which also killed the crew and led to sharp criticism of the safety culture at NASA.

The shuttle fleet was grounded for two and a half years and it sparked a major shift in American space flights.

In 2004, president George W Bush announced that the eye-wateringly expensive programme would be retired.

For years after the last shuttle flight in 2011, NASA found itself dependent on Russia for transport to the International Space Station (ISS) until Elon Musk's Space X began flying passengers there in 2020.

As well as the Moon, Washington is now preparing for a manned mission to Mars, scheduled tentatively for the late 2030s or early 2040s.

'Trails of smoke'

Columbia broke up at 203,000 feet (61,900 metres) over eastern Texas just as the mission controller in Houston was talking to Columbia commander Rick Husband.

"To Columbia, here is Houston... we did not copy your last" message.

After a moment, Husband replied: "Roger but..."

After a brief crackling noise, contact was lost.

Columbia disappeared from radar screens at 9:00 am (1400 GMT), 16 minutes before it was due to land.

The flaming debris from the 80-tonne craft was caught streaking across the sky over the southern US by local TV stations, with parts scattered over Texas and Louisiana.

Bob Molter from Palestine, Texas, told National Public Radio how he saw the shuttle break up in the sky.

"There was a big boom that shook the house for more than a minute, and I went outside because I thought there had been a train accident on the nearby line.

"But there was nothing, and then I looked up and saw the trails of smoke zig-zagging, going across the sky."

Heroes

Columbia was the oldest shuttle to fly in orbit.

When it took off on its 28th flight on 16 January 2003 for a 16-day mission to carry out experiments it had been in operation for over 20 years.

Flight STS-107 was launched under extremely tight security in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks and due to the presence on board of Israel's first astronaut, Ilan Ramon.

Bush cut short a stay at the Camp David presidential retreat and raced back to Washington following the tragedy. In a televised address he hailed the crew, two of whom were women, as heroes. A probe revealed that the shuttle disintegrated due to damage caused by a piece of foam from the external fuel tank that took a chunk out of the orbiter's left wing during liftoff.

This left it unable to withstand the extreme temperatures generated by re-entry.—AFP

World 'dangerously unprepared' for next crisis: Red Cross

ALL countries remain "dangerously unprepared" for the next pandemic, the Red Cross warned on Monday, saying future health crises could also collide with increasingly likely climate-related disasters.

Despite three "brutal" years of the Covid-19 pandemic, strong preparedness systems are "severely lacking", the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said.

The world's largest humanitarian network said building trust, equity and local action networks were vital to get ready for the next crisis.

A health worker prepares a dose of the Covid-19 coronavirus booster vaccine for airport workers at Ngurah Rai Airport near Denpasar on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on 30 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

"All countries remain dangerously unprepared for future outbreaks," the IFRC said, concluding that governments were no more ready now than in 2019.

It said countries needed to be prepared for "multiple hazards, not just one", saying societies only became truly resilient through planning for different types of disaster, as they can occur simultaneously.

The IFRC cited the rise in climate-related disasters and waves of disease outbreaks this century, of which Covid-19 was just one.

It said extreme weather events were growing more frequent and intense, "and our ability to merely respond to them is limited".

The IFRC issued two reports making recommendations on mitigating future tragedies on the scale of Covid-19, on the third anniversary of the World Health Organization declaring the virus an international public health emergency.

"The Covid-19 pandemic should be a wake-up call for the global community to prepare now for the next health crisis," said IFRC secretary general Jagan Chapagain.—AFP

N Korea lifts 5-day lockdown over flu in Pyongyang: Russian Embassy

NORTH Korea has lifted a five-day lockdown in Pyongyang to stem the spread of flu and other respiratory illnesses, the Russian Embassy in the capital said Monday.

The embassy posted on its Facebook account an image of a notice from the North's Foreign Ministry announcing the end of the lockdown at midnight Sunday.

North Korea had requested diplomats in the capital to refrain from going out since last Wednesday, citing a rising number of seasonal respiratory diseases including influenza. The ministry did not refer to COVID-19.

NK News, a website that provides news and analysis on North Korea, reported Sunday that thousands of civilians in Pyongyang had been engaged in a practice event the previous day for an 8 February military parade, based on its analysis of satellite imagery.

The parade is believed to be intended to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Korean People's Army.

The timing of the lockdown may have had more to do with ensuring the parade's success than addressing a sudden or severe outbreak, NK News said.—Kyodo

Over 500 women in Japan used overseas sperm bank as demand grows

MORE than 500 women in Japan made use of a major Denmark-based sperm bank in the roughly three and half years through last October, a recent report by the company showed, highlighting growing domestic demand for the service.

Cryos International, the world's largest sperm bank with around 1,000 registered donors, has sold sperm to single women, sexual minorities and women with infertile husbands in Japan since officially launching local consultation services in March 2019.

With only around 150 clients in Japan tallied in November 2020, recipients have jumped more than three-fold in the roughly two years to October 2022.

A nonpartisan parliamentary group is deliberating on legislation for assisted reproductive technology using donated sperm or ova in Japan, but an outline of a bill last March showed that commercial transactions would be prohibited.—Kyodo

Supplied photo shows Hiromi Ito, the head of Cryos International's Japan operations, at an academic conference on fertility treatments in Kobe, western Japan, in November 2019. **PHOTO: KYODO**

A poster pictured on 30 January 2023 at a subway station in Seoul notifies passengers that the wearing of masks remains mandatory on trains but otherwise is no longer a must on the station premises after South Korea lifted most of its mandatory indoor mask-wearing rules. **PHOTO: KYODO**

S Korea eases indoor mask mandate amid downtrend in COVID-19 cases

SOUTH Korea on Monday lifted most of its mandatory rules for the wearing of masks indoors after more than two years, as the country is believed to have entered a downward trend in the COVID-19 pandemic.

People are now allowed to visit most indoor locations, including schools and gyms, without masks. But the mask mandate remains in place for public transport and locations such as hospitals, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said.

The government also reiterated that the number of COVID-19 patients may increase after the easing of the indoor mask mandate, which has been in effect since October 2020, and it will closely monitor the situation going forward.

The mandate for wearing masks outdoors was lifted in May last year.

On Monday, South Korea reported 7,416 new cases of coronavirus infection over a 24-hour period, according to the agency, bringing the cumulative caseload to 30,157,017.

The death toll stood at 6,239, with 30 more cases added.—Kyodo

ECONOMY
WORLD

Pedestrians walk past an electronic sign showing the closing numbers on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, along a street in downtown Tokyo on 18 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Markets waver before rate decisions

GLOBAL stock markets diverged Monday as traders struggled to maintain momentum from last week's gains.

Shanghai and Tokyo rose as mainland Chinese markets reopened from holidays, while European indices mostly fell ahead of interest rate decisions by major central banks this week.

London flatlined amid a collapse in the share price of online betting firm 888.

The US Federal Reserve is forecast Wednesday to lift interest rates by just 25 basis points, down from a half-point hike last month, which followed four straight 75-point increases.

The Bank of England and the European Central Bank will then unveil their latest decisions one day later, with more hikes on the radar.

"Stocks were on the back foot ... as attention shifts to this week's vital Federal Reserve meeting, as well as supporting acts in the shape of ECB and BoE," said Markets.com analyst Neil Wilson.

Even a strong Wall Street performance was not enough to lift sentiment, after data showed the Fed's preferred inflation gauge rose in December at its slowest pace in more than a year.

The central bank meetings come as a string of recent data suggests that last year's monetary tightening campaign by policymakers was beginning to kick in, with price rises beginning to slow from their multi-decade highs.—AFP

Cambodia earns US$ 966 mln from bicycle export in 2022

CAMBODIAN exports of bicycles to international markets hit 966 million US dollars in 2022, up 48 per cent from 651 million dollars in the year before, said a Ministry of Commerce report released on Monday.

The Ministry of Commerce's Undersecretary of State and Spokesman Penn Sovicheat said the bicycles had been shipped to more than 50 countries and regions including the European Union, Britain, the United States, Canada, Japan and China.

"Bicycles have become one of our main manufacturing products for exports after clothes, shoes, and travel goods," he told Xinhua.

According to the spokesman, Cambodia is the top player in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in terms of bicycle exports.

Currently, five bicycle factories are operating in Cambodia, all located in special economic zones in Bavet city in southeastern Svay Rieng province.—Xinhua

More people prefer second-hand products in Viet Nam after COVID-19

THE consumption habits of Vietnamese people are changing after the COVID-19 pandemic, with many using second-hand products to save money and promote sustainability, local media reported on Monday.

The three most popular categories to sell second-hand items are electronics, home and furniture, and motorcycles, local newspaper Vietnam News reported.

The all-time top three most searched keywords for second-hand items are speaker, laptop and TV set, it said.

The consumers in Viet Nam are younger and more concerned about the environment and sustainable development, the newspaper reported, citing local experts.

According to a report from Cho Tot, a multi-category platform for second-hand products in Southeast Asia, their users have extended the life cycle of millions of items, including 76.8 million fashion items, 33.9 million electronic products and 11.1 million home and furniture items over the past decade.

Viet Nam's secondhand market is valued at 1.1 billion US dollars and there is an increased preference in the country for pre-owned goods, local Tuoi Tre (Youth) newspaper cited a Redseer Strategy Consultants report.

With more people in Viet Nam choosing to buy used products, Cho Tot estimated the second-hand market in the country to reach 5.1 billion US dollars by 2026, the newspaper said.—Xinhua

Turkish economy to benefit from upcoming production of gas field in Black Sea

THE national oil firm of Türkiye, Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO), declared earlier this month that it would begin producing natural gas from a gas field in the Black Sea in March and pumping it into the national network, which energy analysts believe can cut Türkiye's expensive bills for energy imports and help to mitigate the steep inflation that has been battering the country.

The discovery of the Sakarya gas field in the Black Sea in 2020, with reserves estimated at 540 billion cubic metres (bcm), is considered a breakthrough in Türkiye, a country that has relied largely on imported oil and gas. Official figures show that in addition to another gas field discovered later near the Sakarya field, the country's natural gas reserves in the Black Sea total 710 bcm, which are valued at approximately one trillion US dollars on the global market.—Xinhua

Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) headquarter building is pictured on 7 November 2012 in Ankara. **PHOTO: AFP**

Direct link established between Iranian, Russian banks: official

THE Iranian top banker said on Sunday that a direct connection has been established between the banks of Iran and Russia, reported the semi-official Tasnim news agency.

Mohammadreza Farzin, governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), said that within the framework of the joint action plan of banking cooperation signed last year by the two countries' central banks, the first step towards the implementation was taken on Sunday.

Farzin added that the Iranian banking network will also have a direct connection with other 106 foreign banks, stressing the banking channel between Iran and the world is being reinstated.

The CBI announced on Sunday that Iran's electronic financial messaging system, known as SEPAM domestically, and the Financial Messaging System of the Bank of Russia, known as SPFS, were connected following the signing of a deal between the two central banks on the same day.

At the signing ceremony, Mohsen Karimi, the CBI's deputy governor for international affairs, said the step will help prepare the ground for traders and banks from the two countries to increase cooperation and transactions without facing the restrictions imposed by the sanctions, according to Iran's official news agency IRNA.

He added that based on the agreement, all Iranian banks abroad and foreign banks that are connected to Russia's SPFS, including over 100 banks in 13 countries, will be able to exchange messages and communicate with the banks inside Iran.

Iran and Russia, both of which are under sanctions imposed by the United States, have recently expanded their bilateral political and economic relations to counter the US moves.—Xinhua

S Korea's car export hits record high in 2022

SOUTH Korea's automotive export hit a fresh record high last year due to robust demand for eco-friendly vehicles, government data showed on Monday.

Car shipment advanced 16.4 per cent over the year to 54.1 billion US dollars in 2022, topping 50 billion US dollars for the first time, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.

The number of exported vehicles expanded 13.3 per cent to 2,311,904 last year.

Export for eco-friendly cars jumped 38.0 per cent to 16.1 billion US dollars, while the number of exported such vehicles surged 36.8 per cent to 554,019. Both figures recorded highs last year.

The number of vehicles manufactured in local factories climbed 8.5 per cent over the year to 3,757,065 in 2022 amid the eased supply disruption of semiconductors used to make cars.

The number of cars sold in South Korea, including locally-made and imported vehicles, was 1,684,299 in 2022, down 2.4 per cent from the previous year.—Xinhua

Toyota group's global auto sales top in 2022 for 3rd straight year

TOYOTA Motor Corp group's global auto sales ranked top for a third consecutive year in 2022, exceeding Germany's Volkswagen AG as the Japanese carmaker managed to mitigate the impact of chip shortages that also affected its rivals, data showed Monday.

Toyota said it sold around 10.48 million vehicles globally last year, including those produced by the group's minivehicle maker Daihatsu Motor Co. and truck manufacturer Hino Motors Ltd, down 0.1 per cent from a year earlier.

The Japanese auto giant said its global output increased 5.3 per cent to 10.61 million units, as enhanced production capabilities in North America and Asia helped limit the adverse impact of the coronavirus pandemic and parts shortages.

Although Toyota's global auto sales dropped for the first time in two years, the volume was far ahead of rival Volkswagen, which saw its sales plunge 7.0 per cent in 2022 to 8.26 million units, due to supply chain disruptions.

The Toyota group saw its global production expand for the second straight year after closely communicating with its suppliers, but the procurement of new vehicles has not caught up with demand, with sales still behind the record 10.74 million in 2019 before the pandemic. "Becoming the top in sales volume is not our goal. We will continue to aim to be a company that is trusted in each region," a Toyota official said.—Kyodo

(FILES) This file photo taken on 31 October 2022 shows a woman cycling past the logo of Toyota Motor displayed at a car showroom in Tokyo. Japan's Toyota was the world's top-selling automaker in 2022, retaining its lead over German rival Volkswagen for the third year running, company data showed on 30 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Nissan, Renault agree to make mutual cross-shareholding equal

NISSAN Motor Co and Renault SA have agreed to bring their mutual cross-shareholdings equal at 15 per cent, the Japanese and French carmakers said Monday, marking a major revamp of the decades-old capital alliance.

Calling the agreement "an important milestone" in their partnership, they said in statements that Renault will cut its 43.4-percent stake in Nissan, while the Japanese automaker maintains its shareholding in its partner and will invest in Ampere, a new electric vehicle company to be established by the French carmaker.

The agreements, set to be formally decided by the carmakers' respective boards, are expected to be announced as early as 6 February in London, sources close to the matter said.

"The ambition is to strengthen the ties of the alliance and maximize value creation for all stakeholders," Nissan said, adding they will also promote the partnership in projects in Latin America, India and Europe.—Kyodo

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

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MAERSK VALENCIA VOY.NO. (302W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK VALENCIA VOY.NO. (302W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP/MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MTT SAISUNEE VOY.NO. (23MS091N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MTT SAISUNEE VOY.NO. (23MS091N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S STARLINE AGENCIES ASIA LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V SINAR BANDA VOY.NO. (274N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BANDA VOY.NO. (274N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V ALVAN VOY.NO. (SCY1146)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ALVAN VOY. NO. (SCY1146)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** 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 LAND AND SEA INTERMODAL LOGISTICS SDN BHD LINE

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

People march during a protest against power cuts in Johannesburg, South Africa, 25 January 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

S African president says electricity crisis continues to undermine economic growth

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Sunday that the electricity crisis in the country continues to undermine economic growth and investment.

"Load shedding damages businesses, disrupts households, compromises the provision of social services, and affects the safety and well-being of the people," Ramaphosa, also president of South Africa's ruling party African National Congress (ANC), made the remarks at the ANC's National Executive Council lekgotla.

"Resolving the energy crisis and putting an end to load shedding is one of our most immediate and pressing challenges," he said.

As a result of load shedding, companies are reluctant to invest, productivity is dampened, economic growth cannot be sustained, and jobs cannot be created on the necessary scale, said Ramaphosa.—Xinhua

Kremlin says Johnson's claim about Putin missile threat a 'lie'

THE Kremlin on Monday dismissed as a "lie" accusations from former British prime minister Boris Johnson that Russian President Vladimir Putin personally threatened him with a missile attack.

"What Mr Johnson said is not true. More precisely it's a lie," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"Moreover, this is either a conscious lie — then you need to ask Mr Johnson for what purpose he chose this version of events — Or it was unintentional and in fact he didn't understand what President Putin was talking to him about."

The apparent threat came in a telephone call just before Moscow ordered troops into Ukraine in February 2022, according to a new BBC documentary to be broadcast on Monday.

"I know what was discussed during this conversation... There were no missile threats," Peskov said.—AFP

Strikes, 'sleaze', stability: Sunak marks 100 days as UK PM

ON reaching 100 days in 10 Downing Street this week, Rishi Sunak will double the duration of Liz Truss's brutally short term as British prime minister.

But having stabilized panicky financial markets after the calamitous Truss tenure, the Conservative leader has little to celebrate.

Double-digit inflation is fuelling a winter of misery for many in Sunak's Britain.

On Wednesday, the day before his mini-anniversary, up to half a million workers will escalate a rolling series of strikes to shut down schools, railways and other public sectors.

Opposition Labour leader Keir Starmer has been portraying the wealthy premier as "weak" and out of touch, as both parties gear up for an election likely next year.

"Is he starting to wonder if this job is just too big for him?" he told the diminutive Sunak in parliament last Wednesday.

The Labour leader was merciless as he ran the rule over Britain's state of permacrisis since Brexit and the Covid pandemic, and "sleaze" among the Conservatives. Ambulance drivers have also been striking, joining nurses on their first-ever walkout. But Sunak is adamant that unions' pay demands will only fuel the decades-high inflation.

"Being an effective manager of public money and public services is not a sin," senior minister Michael Gove said, rejecting criticism that Sunak is an uninspiring leader after Boris Johnson, who preceded Truss.—AFP

Blinken urges 'calm' as Israel-Palestinian conflict flares

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged "calm" and "deescalation" after violence has flared between Israel and the Palestinians, as he kicked off a Middle East tour in Cairo on Monday.

Washington's top diplomat, after meeting President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and the country's foreign minister, left Egypt headed for Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Israel is reeling from an attack that killed seven civilians outside a synagogue in annexed east Jerusalem on Friday, a day after the deadliest army raid in years in the occupied West Bank claimed 10 lives.

"We've seen horrific terrorist attacks in the last couple of days that we condemn and deplore," Blinken told Saudi TV channel Al Arabiya.

In a press conference in Cairo on Monday, Blinken urged "all parties to calm things down and deescalate tensions" while also stressing the "importance of working for a two-state solution".

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks during a press conference with Egypt's Foreign Minister (not pictured) in Cairo, on 30 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

In the latest bloodshed, Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian man in the West Bank city of Hebron, said the Palestinian health ministry — the 35th Palestinian killed this month, according to an AFP tally based on official sources from both sides.

The United States has historically taken a lead on Middle East diplomacy, and Egypt, which has relations with Israel, has long served as a mediator in the Israel-Palestinian conflict.—AFP

Uzbekistan gas explosion kills at least five

A gas explosion tore through a flat in Uzbekistan killing at least five people, officials said Monday, as residents facing a brutal energy crisis resort to makeshift heat sources.

Gas and electricity shortages in the Central Asian country have led to the sacking of a slew of senior officials this month, as Uzbekistan struggles under historically low temperatures.

The resource rich ex-Soviet nation is plagued by ageing energy infrastructure, which regularly leads to deadly incidents. The emergencies ministry said the explosion on Sunday damaged a four-storey building in the city of Nukus, the administrative centre of the autonomous Karakalpakstan region, which last summer saw deadly protests over self-determination.

The ministry said rescue workers pulled five bodies from the rubble and that an injured five-year-old girl was taken to hospital.

The blast was triggered by an "air-gas mixture" in an apartment on the top floor, it added. The impoverished region of Karakalpakstan covers more than a third of Uzbekistan but is home to just two million people.

According to state statistics, around 150 people died last year from carbon monoxide poisoning in Uzbekistan, the most populous country in Central Asia with around 35 million people.

Temperatures in the capital Tashkent plunged to just above -20 degrees Celsius (-4 degrees Fahrenheit) earlier this month.—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Japan reactor shuts down after alert, no radiation rise seen

A reactor at a Japanese nuclear power plant automatically shut down on Monday after an alert, but no radiation rise was detected and regulators said they were investigating the cause.

The reactor at the Takahama power plant in central Fukui region halted at around 3:20 pm (0620 GMT) after an alarm warning of a rapid decrease in the number of neutrons, according to the Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NRA).

But the NRA said in a statement that the "reactor is cooling normally" and "there is no impact on the surrounding environment", as no abnormalities in radioactive levels were detected.

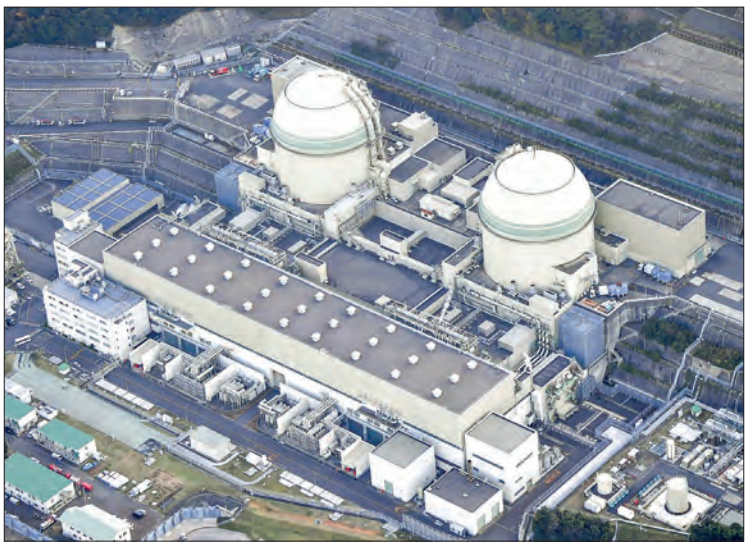
Operator Kansai Electric Power Co said in a statement it was still investigating the cause.

Fukui regional officials also said it was unclear what had caused the alarm to go off, according to public broadcaster NHK, though they noted there were no abnormalities in reactor temperature or pressure.

The reactor, one of four at the Takahama plant, only restarted operations late last year after routine inspections.

There are 33 reactors in Japan, but fewer than a third are back in action more than a decade after a deadly tsunami in March 2011 caused a meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear plant.

Not all are operational year-round, and the country is heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels.—AFP



File photo taken on 12 December 2022, shows the No 3 (L) and No 4 (R) reactors at Kansai Electric Power Co's Takahama nuclear power plant in the Fukui Prefecture town of Takahama, central Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO**

ANA delays departure of 2 flights from Naha Airport over bomb threat

All Nippon Airways Flight 462 waits at Naha Airport at 1:32 pm on 30 January 2023 after takeoff was suspended for "safety reasons". **PHOTO: KYODO**

ALL Nippon Airways Co delayed two flights scheduled to depart from Naha Airport on Monday after receiving a bomb threat, according to the Okinawa prefectural government.

Both flights eventually departed around two hours behind schedule after it was confirmed there were no abnormalities. No passengers or crew members were injured.

The Japanese airline and authorities are investigating the situation.

Of the two planes, Flight 462 left the boarding gate at Naha Airport but returned before takeoff. The aircraft was scheduled to depart at 11:25 am and arrive at Haneda airport in Tokyo at 1:40 pm, but instead departed at 1:38 pm, according to ANA.

A 45-year-old woman who was among the passengers said the aircraft returned to the terminal at around 12:50 pm while queuing for takeoff. Passengers appeared restless after the captain announced there had been a bomb threat, she said.—Kyodo

China's Sichuan to scrap three-child limit as birth rates drop

SOUTHWEST China's Sichuan province will lift its three-child birth limit and remove restrictions on single parents as the world's most populous nation faces a looming demographic crisis.

China's population shrank last year for the first time in more than six decades, official data released this month showed, and the nation of 1.4 billion has seen birth rates plunge to record lows as its workforce ages.

China ended its strict "one-child policy" — imposed in the 1980s out of fears of overpopulation — in 2016 and began allowing couples to have three children in 2021.

But that has failed to reverse the demographic decline.

Faced with falling birth rates, authorities in Sichuan on Monday said they would remove the limit on the number of children a family can have and lift a ban on single women registering a birth.

The Sichuan Provincial Health Commission said the new rules would take effect on 15 February.

Out-of-wedlock births are frowned upon in China, with the National Health Commission saying in 2017 that they were "against the public order and against good morals".—AFP

Police among 47 dead and 150 wounded in Pakistan mosque blast

POLICE officers were among at least 47 killed and 150 wounded in a blast at a mosque inside a highly sensitive Pakistan police headquarters on Monday, prompting the government to put the country on high alert.

The attack happened during afternoon worship in the provincial capital of Peshawar, close to former tribal areas along the Afghan border where militancy has been steadily rising.

A frantic rescue mission was underway at the mosque, which had an entire wall and some of its roof blown out by the force of the blast.

"Many policemen are buried under the rubble," said Peshawar police chief Muhammad Ijaz Khan, who estimated between 300 and 400 officers usually attended prayers at the mosque.

"Efforts are being made to get them out safely," he added.

Bloodied survivors emerged limping from the wreckage, while bodies were ferried away in ambulances as the rescue operation continued.

"It's an emergency situation," Muhammad Asim Khan, a spokesman for the main hospital in Peshawar, told AFP, adding that at least 47 had been killed and 150 wounded.

Security personnel and rescue workers prepare to search for the blast victims in the debris of a damaged mosque inside the police headquarters in Peshawar on 30 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

As darkness fell, at least four men were still trapped in the wreckage, visible through cracks in the concrete, alongside bodies yet to be recovered.

"We have given them oxygen so that they don't have problems in breathing," said Bilal Ahmad Faizi, a spokesperson for the rescue organization 1122.

'Black smoke rising'

The police headquarters in Peshawar is in one of the most tightly controlled areas of the city, housing intelligence and counter-terrorism bureaus, and is next door to the regional secretariat.—AFP

SPORT

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

S African president says electricity crisis continues to undermine economic growth

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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.

Cambodian Traditional Chess women's tourney held ahead of 32nd SEA Games

THE Cambodian Traditional Chess (Ouk Chaktrang) women's tournament was held at the Myanmar Chess Federation at Aung San Stadium, Yangon at 9 am on 27 January.

Six female contestants including Honey Aung, Cho Mar Win, Su Su Hlaing, Mya Sabei, Myo Myo Thu, and Soe Moe Khaing competed in the chess tournament, and the tournament will be held until 31 January.

The Cambodian traditional chess game (Ouk Chaktrang) will be included in the next 32nd Southeast Asian Games, and the winners of the current chess tournament will be selected as preliminary players to compete in the SEA Games, officials said. —Bala Soe/KZL

Two female chess players compete in the Cambodian Traditional Chess (Ouk Chaktrang) women's tournament which is being held at Aung San Stadium, Yangon. **PHOTO: BALA SOE**

Mitoma wonder goal sends Brighton past Liverpool in FA Cup

JAPAN winger Kaoru Mitoma scored a spectacular late winner as Brighton knocked holders Liverpool out of the FA Cup with a 2-1 victory on Sunday.

Mitoma sealed the fourth-round tie two minutes into stoppage time at Amex Stadium when he turned a defender inside out with a fake shot, keeping the ball in the air before steering high past Liverpool keeper Alisson from close range.

"I knew the defender would jump with a fake shot. I'm happy to have kept my composure to score," said Mitoma, who has four goals from the past six games in all competitions. "I can earn even more trust from my teammates when wins come our way and I think it's a good cycle."

Harvey Elliott slotted home the 30th-minute opener for Liverpool before Lewis Dunk diverted in Tariq Lamptey's long-range effort nine minutes later for the hosts. Mitoma gave another dazzling performance on the left wing before hitting the memorable winner.

"I think it's (my) best moment so far because (it was) at the end of the game...and we won because of this goal. So I'm very happy," said Mitoma.—Kyodo

Djokovic unsure on injury return after Australian Open 'perfect 10'

NEW Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic said on Monday he hopes to return to action in a month's time but is "not sure" how quickly his injured hamstring will heal.

The Serb also revealed that he had not had time to properly celebrate winning a record-extending 10th Melbourne title on Sunday.

His 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5) victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas saw Djokovic equal Rafael Nadal's men's record of 22 Grand Slam tournament wins and go back to world number one in the rankings.

Djokovic was troubled throughout the competition by his left hamstring, although it improved as the Grand Slam went on.

While the 35-year-old paraded the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup around the gardens of Government House in Melbourne on Monday for a photoshoot, he was asked by AFP how his leg was and when he might play again.

"I'm not sure, I'm going to do some medical check-ups in the next few days," he replied. "Then I'll be able to talk about it a bit more and understand the situation."

Serbia's Novak Djokovic poses with the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup trophy following his victory against Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas in the men's singles final match on day fourteen of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on 29 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Djokovic pulled his hamstring before the Australian Open, having won a warm-up event in Adelaide, and was badly hampered at times at Melbourne Park, particularly in the early rounds.

At one point he did not practise between matches.

"As it stands today I am still signed in for the Dubai tournament, which is in a month's time. I hope I'll be able to come back to the courts in several weeks' time," he said Monday.

"Let's see, you know, I'll speak to the medical team and then take it from there," he added. Djokovic's coach, Goran Ivanisevic, said most players would not have played after a pre-tournament scan showed the extent of the hamstring injury.

"But not him — he is from outer space," Ivanisevic told reporters.

"His brain is working different. He gave everything, 77 therapies a day.

Every day was kind of better and better."

Djokovic said there had not been time for any partying on Sunday night to mark his latest achievement.

Asked how he had celebrated the victory, he smiled: "With the media, and with doping control! "It was 3:00 am when I went back to the accommodation and it was a long night, but of course a huge relief.

"Ending a tournament and the whole journey here to Australia with a Grand Slam win is always incredibly satisfying," he added.

"I didn't have yet the chance to really celebrate as much as I would like to. I guess that's going to come in Europe."—AFP