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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Five-Point Road Map

1. Priority will be given to fully realizing peace, stability and rule of law throughout the Union to safeguard the socioeconomic life of the people.
2. People-centred development work that enhances socioeconomic well-being will be undertaken to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.
3. Processes will further continue to consolidate a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and build a Union based on democracy and federalism.
4. Priority will be accorded to work aligned with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, in order to achieve enduring peace for the entire nation.
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.

Prices of black grams, pigeon peas on upward trajectory amid robust foreign demand



Myanmar is the top producer of the black gram that is primarily demanded by India. Pictures show varieties of beans and pulses – Myanmar's major export items.

YANGON Region Chamber of Commerce (Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre) sees a bustling trade activity of black grams and pigeon peas.

On 1 February, the price of pigeon pea was K1,930,000 per tonne while black gram fetched K1,762,000 per tonne.

At present, the prices stood at K2,126,500 per tonne for pigeon peas and K1,860,000 for black grams, showing a sharp increase of K196,500 per tonne of pigeon pea and K98,000 per tonne of black gram within one month.

The price rise is attributed to the strong demand by India and China.

Myanmar bagged over US\$1.1 billion from more than 1.5 million tonnes of pulses exports

over the past ten months in the current financial year 2022-2023 (April-March). The pulses' export volumes were 185,505.772 kilograms of pigeon pea (\$144.611 million) and 595,886.762 kilos of black gram (\$489.688 million).

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

India has growing demand and consumption requirements for black grams and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2021, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive



years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that annual quota.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes

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

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Objectives of 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day

- To serve primary duties of Tatmadaw for successfully safeguarding Our Three Main National Causes, and protecting the State Constitution and shielding the genuine disciplined multiparty democratic system
- To emphasize agreements in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible for the restoration of the durable and perpetual peace across the nation as ceasing of armed conflicts is an actual requirement for realizing the multiparty democratic system
- To render assistance in protecting the national interests of the State, in safeguarding the life and property of the people and in participating in relevant sectors with utmost efforts whenever natural disasters fall
- To provide the necessary assistance by Tatmadaw for holding a free and fair multiparty democratic general election upon completion of undertakings in accord with the provisions of the state of emergency for the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism.

Public notice on overseas employment training courses and OWIC applications

- THE Department of Labour reviews and permits the proposals to join the oversea employment training courses and apply for OWIC by the skilled workers who will work abroad on their own plans, labourers on leave, those who work with permanent residence permit within two or three days during office hours under the procedures. It also announces the lists of those who are allowed to join the course and make OWIC on the Safe Migration Telegram Channel.
- In applying for overseas employment training courses and OWIC, the department has learnt that brokers/licenced oversea employment agencies advertise their services on Facebook and OWIC-related Facebook groups at large amounts of service charges. Some workers also completely hand over the applications of training courses and OWIC to the brokers/ licenced oversea employment agencies.
- It also found that the brokers/ licenced oversea employment agencies submit fraudulent work permits, visas, immigration seals, leave approval letters, certificates of overseas employment training, graduate certificate or certificate of proficiency in the handwriting of one person.
- If the brokers/ licenced oversea employment agencies are found submitting fake documents, action will be taken against the workers who engage with brokers and or licenced overseas employment agencies in addition to the brokers and agencies.
- The Department of Labour reviews and grants the training and OWIC as quickly as possible within two or three days in office days and it demands just the documents from the workers that they can easily get, so it is announced that the workers should not take the services of brokers/agencies at high service charges and should apply for in person.

Department of Labour

Application for registration, political party establishment rights ongoing

THE State Administration Council released the Political Parties Registration Law 2023 as the State Administration Council Law No 15/2023 on 26 January for the formation of political parties in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The Union Election Commission released the rules for the registration of political parties through Notification No 10/2023 while Announcements No 2/2023 and 3/2023 regarding the right to establish and continue the establishment and registration of political parties were issued on 31 January 2023.

Under Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Law, Falone-Sawur Democratic Party, which is desirous of organizing a political party, yesterday applied for permission to establish a political party under the law and rules, and the Union Election Commission is processing further verification. —MNA/KZL

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State Administration Council Press Release

Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who reside in various regions for many reasons

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, with worries, have evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries due to the incitements and intimidation of NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful associations and terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, stimulation of CDM, and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities on 1 February 2021.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of unlawful association and terrorist group CRPH and NUG, and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in those areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. **The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.**
4. As those who evade their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from the evaded areas to various parts of Myanmar.
5. As such, the information was released that if those who evaded to various areas, except for persons who committed any kinds of crime, wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord due to multiple worries, the citizens abroad can contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates in accord with the easing restrictions under the law.

Information Team
State Administration Council

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Encouragement needed for emergence of good human resources

Only when human resources are qualified, will it gain qualified work forces. Hence, encouragement must be given to emergence of good human resources.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 8/2022 of the Union government on 1 November 2022)

Union Minister meets MoFA staff in Yangon

UNION Minister U Than Swe of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered the speech at the meeting with the staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Yangon), which was held at the Wun Zin Min Yazar Hall, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Yangon) at 1 pm on 24 February 2023. Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing, U Chan Aye, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the director-general, deputy director-general of the Strategic Studies and Training Department, officials and staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the meeting.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Than Swe mentioned that some officials and staff from the Strategic Studies and Training Department and other individual departments must be necessary to be dutiful to their respective departments and the ministry. Furthermore, he



Union Minister U Than Swe addresses the meeting with the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Yangon) yesterday.

stated that it is needed not only to be full quality to build their working environment but also to learn hard work of office duties, as well. He also insisted that it is vitally important that officials and staff must be loyal to their nation as well as civil servants must be more effective in their work and always seriously consider their duties. Furthermore, they need to consult each other

for a pleasant working environment and they must be working together in order to promote the dignity of the ministry.

Moreover, he urged that all of the Government staff must avoid party politics and definitely follow the Government rules and regulations. He also addressed that, due to the nature of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, foreign service staff are

essential to understand the political development of Myanmar and they have to explain clearly the current political situation of Myanmar to the international arena. The meeting was concluded in the afternoon.

Afterwards, Union Minister U Than Swe and Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing met and discussed with the chairman of the Executive Board, members

of the Senior Advisory Board and the Executive Board of the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) in the meeting room of the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) office at No 37, Than Ta Man Street, Annexe Building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Yangon) at 2 pm.

During the meeting, Union Ministers clarified the position and policy of the government and explained the implementations of the ministries and the plans to be carried out in the future as well.

The chairman of the Executive Board, members of the Senior Advisory Board and the Executive Board, U Chan Aye, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were present at the meeting.—MNA

MoALI Union Minister receives Country Director of UNOPS Myanmar



UNION Minister U Ming Naung of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation received Ms Sara Austin Netzer, Country Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services in Myanmar (UNOPS Myanmar) and delegation at the Union Minister's Office yesterday morning.

The meeting was attend-

ed by Deputy Minister Dr Tin Htut and officials from relevant departments.

Both sides frankly discussed the ministry's help and support in development activities being carried out in Myanmar by Livelihood and Food Security Fund (LIFT) and future work programmes. — MNA/TS

Union Minister U Min Naung receives Ms Sara Austin Netzer, UNOPS Myanmar Country Director yesterday.

Daily newspapers available online

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MoHT Union Minister pays working tours in Ngapali beach area



Union Minister U Aung Thaw meets departmental personnel, hoteliers and officials from the hotels and tourism sector and association in Rakhine State yesterday.

UNION Minister U Aung Thaw of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism met departmental officials, hoteliers and tourism industry staff and officials from the Hotel Entrepreneurs Association (Rakhine Zone) at Aureum Palace Hotel in Ngapali yesterday afternoon.

The Union minister said that beach areas should be clean and pleasant so that they can attract more domestic and international travellers and cooperation between the ministry and respective stakeholders in the sustainable tourism development in the coastal areas. Union Minister U Aung Thaw stressed that if the tourism industry improves related businesses will also improve; as more tourists enter the region,

there will be more job opportunities for residents and income will increase. To increase the number of travellers, it is necessary to implement two aspects — policy and business management — in a balanced manner. The development of domestic tourism should be prioritized and foreign investments also should be invited, he added. The Union minister called for all-round collaborative efforts for the sustainable development of tourism in Ngapali beach areas while the ministry is supporting speedy operations in the interests of the region and the State.

After a round of discussions by attendees, the Union Minister coordinated the necessary things. He looked round the hotels in the Ngapali beach area. — MNA/TS

Videoconferencing meeting held to increase cooperation between Myanmar and Russia in pharmaceutical sector

A video conference was held yesterday to discuss issues related to increasing cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector between Myanmar and Russia and establishing the Myanmar-Russia Pharmaceutical Council.

Director-General Dr Myat Wunna Soe of the Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health, Deputy Director-General Dr Theingi Zin of the Department of Food and Drug Administration and officials, the chairman and members of the Myanmar Pharmaceuticals and Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, Mr Denis Yinokurov from "Chemrar" High-Tech Centre Company based in Russia, International BD and Communication Director and members



The videoconferencing meeting to enhance cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector between Russia and Myanmar is in progress yesterday.

attended the meeting.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed drugs and testing systems related to the treatment of Covid-19 disease, matters to be planned and implemented to support Myanmar; the issue of obtaining registration of medicines in Myanmar; the matter of being able to import at a reasonable price, technical transfer related to pharmaceutical production, and issues of establishment of the Russia-Myanmar Pharmaceutical Council in order to cooperate through the discussion framework between pharmaceutical manufacturers from Myanmar and Russia, distributors, physicians, officials from the Ministry of Health, and authorities. — MNA/KZL

Officials discuss invitation for Myanmar entrepreneurs to attend ASEAN Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Forum

MR Muhammad Arif Hidayatullah, charge d'affaires of the Indonesian Embassy in Myanmar, met UMFCCI president U Aye Win and responsible persons at the office of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry-UMFCCI on Min Ye Kyaw Swa street in Lanmadaw township.

The charge d'affaires said that he wanted to invite Myanmar entrepreneurs to the ASEAN Indo-Pacific In-

frastructure Forum Towards the AOIP (AIPIF) from 6 to 7 September 2023 and discussed matters related to cooperation in the energy sector between Indonesia and Myanmar, offering scholarships to Myanmar students, rice export and smooth operating of banking and financial systems.

UMFCCI president U Aye Win clarified the cooperation in the energy sector with Indonesia, the scholarship programmes and the promotion of

trade and investment between Indonesia and Myanmar.

ASEAN Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Forum will discuss the importance of green infrastructure which mainly includes digital transformation, long-term sustainability, financial system innovation and Myanmar entrepreneurs and professionals from the digital and financial service industries are invited to attend the forum. — Myo Min Thura/MKKS



Kayin State Chief Minister provides foodstuffs, social pensions to people in Kayin State



Kayin State Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo presents social pensions for the elderly 85 and above yesterday.

A ceremony to give social pensions to people aged 85 and above in Hlaingbwe Township, Kayin State, was held in the hall of the office of the Township General Administration Department on 24 February morning.

Kayin State Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo delivered an opening speech and gave social pensions to the Hlaingbwe township administrator for elder people who are 85 and above. For the elder people who are unable to attend the ceremony, officials will personally go to their homes and will hand over their pensions.

After that, the ceremony of providing foodstuffs, clothes, cleaning accessories, funds for building houses for temporary IDPs and social pensions for elder people was held at the Myaing Gyi Ngu Aye Lin Thaya field. At the ceremony, the state chief minister gave an opening speech. State minister and wife, members of the state government and their wives and Lt-Col Saw Kyaw Htoo of Border Guard Force Central Advisory Group gave cash assistance, foodstuffs and clothes to the IPDs from Myaing Gyi Nguu special region and Phapon township. — Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)/KZW

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, foodstuffs, consumer goods, auto parts and vehicles confiscated

A combined on-duty team led by the Myanmar Police Force under the management of the Tanintharyi Region Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force made inspections on 21 February.

Officials captured 90 cartons of cigarettes (made in Thailand) worth K36 million without official documents from two motorbikes in Eain Shae Pyin ward in Dawei township, 200 cartons of cigarettes (made in Thailand) worth K80 million from a warehouse in Kayin Pyin ward in Dawei township and 80 cartons of cigarette worth K28.68 million from a convenience store in Kayin Pyin (South) ward in Dawei township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 22 February, a total of 3.0222 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K1,335,000 was seized in Kanbalu township and an unregistered Hilux car (approximately K2 million) was captured in Monywa township. The actions were taken under the Forest Law and the Export and Import Law.

On 23 February, an on-duty team at the 16th-Mile Kyaukchaw checkpoint confiscated a total of 8.076 tonnes of illegal sawn teak worth K8,883,600 from two vehicles (approximate value of K35 million) heading to Lashio from Mandalay. The action was taken under Customs



Confiscated illegal timbers and goods.

procedures.

A combined team conducted surprise inspections and captured 200 cartons of liquid dishwashing detergent worth K3.6 million and 1200 litres of palm oil (two shrimps) worth K3.36 million without official documents from a Hino truck (approximately K12 million) near Hninzi street in No 1 ward of Myawady township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Officials at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint in Mon State nabbed 110 car tyres worth K4.95 million that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from a vehicle (estimated value of K25 million) heading to Yangon from Myawady and K2.61



million worth of foodstuffs and consumer goods from a vehicle (estimated value of K30 million) heading to Yangon from Kyaikto. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Therefore, 19 arrests (approximately K273,418,600) were made on three consecutive days from 21 to 23 February, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

Drugs seized in Myeik and Kengtung townships

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force searched a man called Barlat (aka) Zarni Htun in Myeik (South) ward in Myeik at 2 pm on 23 February and found 2,000 stimulant tablets with him.

At noon on the same day, members of the Police Force searched a motorbike driven by Lawthar accompanied by Ah Sot near Wammai (new ward) in Kengtung township and found 20,200 stimulant tablets.

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



Two offenders are pictured along with seized drugs and a motorbike.

One new case of COVID-19 reported on 25 February, total figure rises to 633,906

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,906** after **one** new case was reported on 24 February 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,378**, including **three** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 24-2-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. — MNA

CURRENT
AFFAIRS



A general view of the fish and shrimp farms in Htantabin Township.

Htantabin Township runs 11,025.36 acres of fish farming, 481.53 acres of shrimp farming

ANNUAL supervision and inspection are undertaken for fish and prawn farming activities by the Fisheries Department of Htantabin Township in the Yangon Region, to achieve the continuous development of fisheries, ensure the sufficiency of fish feed, improve the socio-economic life of rural people based on fishing activities, and contribute to the development of country's economy. It is known

that there are 11,025.36 acres of fish farming and 481.53 acres of shrimp farming in the Htantabin Township. There are 405 private fish farmers, two fish farming companies and 19 entrepreneurs in the shrimp farming sector in the Htantabin Township, said U Nay Win Aung, the head of the Fisheries Department in Htantabin Township. In fish farming, Rohu, Riv-

er-catfish and Silver pomfret are mainly bred, while Carp and Catla fish are bred to a small extent. Fingerlings are added to the fish ponds only in May, June and July every year, and the fish harvesting is done at a rate of once every 10 months. In harvesting, one Rohu fish weighs 40 ticals (approximately 16.3293 grams/0.576 ounces), and one River-catfish and one Silver pomfret weigh 85 ticals

and 50 ticals respectively. In shrimp farming, they focus only on freshwater shrimp and carry out shrimp farming activities in May and November every year. The harvesting activities are executed twice a year at a rate of once every six months. One shrimp weighs 2.5 ticals when harvested, it is learnt. — Zin Min Htike (Htantabin)/CT

Two trucks collide, bursting into flames in Shan State



A truck carrying a gas tank and another truck reportedly collided and burst into flames in Hsenwi township, Lashio district, Shan state, at 10.50

am on 24 February. Although both trucks were completely damaged by fire, there were no casualties. — TWA/MKKS

Green channel planned for those who need to travel abroad in time

A green channel has been arranged for those who need to travel abroad in an emergency to be able to obtain a passport quickly and passport application has to be made with the recommendations of the relevant ministries, according to the Passport Issuing Office of Myanmar on 23 February. In applying for a passport through the green channel, MoU workers, religious organizations, those who are going to attend cultural exchange fairs, seafarers, people who are going abroad on leave, people who are going abroad for medical treatment and their helpers,



Passport applicants are seen at the Passport Issuing Office in Yangon.

travel agencies, scholars, government employees who are going abroad on business will have to apply with correct and complete personal information and with the recommendations of the director-general and above the level of the respective ministry. The application will have to be sent through the respective ministry to the chairman of the Myanmar Passport Issuing Office. Then, the passport can be obtained by making an online appointment. If there is any difficulty in such doing, applicants can contact the chairman's office phone numbers: 09882156633, 067-341-2830 and make enquiries. — TWA/KZW

LOCAL BUSINESS

MoC reports arrival of home EV chargers

HOME chargers for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) have arrived at the designated port, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

On 21 February 2023, five 7 kW GB AC home EV chargers were released at the port by Chindwin Shan Co Ltd. To support the EV sector in the domestic market, imports of chargers for electric vehicles have been exempted from Customs tariffs. Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) released a notification dated 15 February that it will give priority to electric vehicles (EVs) and related business sectors.

In the exercise of the power conferred under Sections 43 and 100 (B) of the Myanmar Investment Law, MIC issued this statement with the approval of the Union government.

Enterprises executing installation, manufacturing and

restoration services of the EVs, renewable electricity generation, EVs charging service businesses, electric vehicle battery production, EV battery and related service business, electric bus operation services, electric taxi and transport service businesses and scientific research development business are included in those priority sectors.

During the establishment and ideation phase for incorporation and operations, those businesses can seek a permit from the MIC to enjoy tariff relief or zero-customs tariff status and the exemption for other taxes levied in the country under Section 77 (A) of the Myanmar Investment Law and income tax exemption under Section 75 (C) of the Myanmar Investment Law for the importations of machinery, essential equipment and accessories, spare parts and construction

raw materials that cannot be found in domestic markets.

Electric vehicles (EVs) are entitled to zero-Customs tariff status, according to the notification released in early November 2022 by the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

To encourage the number of EV users and improve the related business, tariffs for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) imported under Completely Built Up (CBU), Completely Knocked Down (CKD) and Semi-Knocked Down (SKD) in Customs Tariff of Myanmar 2022 were reduced to zero per cent in accordance with the decision of the Union Government.

Types of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) include road tractors for semi-trailers, buses or motor vans for the transport of ten or more people including the driver, trucks, motor vehi-



Chindwin Shan company imported five 7 kW home chargers for battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

cles for personal use, three-wheeled vehicles for the transport of persons, three-wheeled vehicles for the transport of goods, electric motorcycles, electric bicycles, ambulances, prison vans and hearses.

According to this directive, the imports of spare parts (for

instance, charging station equipment and device) with the recommendation of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy and the spare parts with the recommendation of the Department of Industry can be done between 2 November 2022 and 31 March 2023. — NN/EM

YGEA requests shops to sell pure gold at K2,790,000 per tical

YANGON Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) appealed to shops and traders to sell pure gold at K2,790,000 per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) on 22 February 2023, under the guidance of the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market.

Meanwhile, the YGEA set the reference price of pure gold at K2,154,800 per tical on 23 February. The association issues the price every day except for its holidays. There is a large price difference of over K630,000 per tical between the YGEA's reference price and the requested price.

The market price of gold rallied at around K2,860,000 per tical, showing a large gap of over K700,000 per tical with the YGEA's reference price.

YGEA calculated the price depending on the Central Bank of

Myanmar's reference exchange rate of K2,100, with some addition, while the US dollar is exchanged at K2,860 in the unauthorized market. The price of gold in the domestic market is highly correlated with the gold spot prices and dollar exchange rate.

The soaring dollar exchanging at over K4,500 drove the pure gold price up to a record-high of K3.7 million per tical in late August 2022. For the gold price to decline, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has been selling gold ingots under the competitive bidding system in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw.

With an aim of reducing gold prices, the YGEA and Mandalay Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association sold gold bullion supplied by the executive members and the members as well.

Under the guidance of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market was formed on 21 January 2022 as gold and currency market stability play a crucial role in the trade facilitation.

The objectives of the committee are inspecting and prosecuting market manipulation, checking if there is compliance with payment rules or not in the domestic market, and proceeding against those unscrupulous traders who intend to interfere with the free and fair operation of the market under the existing laws, by-laws and regulations in line with the official directives, illegal foreign currency holding, illegal trade and taking legal actions against price manipulators. — NN/EM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 24 February 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,075
Octane 95	K2,145
Diesel	K2,125
Premium Diesel	K2,205

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,145,300 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,857,000 per tical

US Dollar Vs Kyat

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market	K2,860 to K2,875

The above prices may change from time to time.

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.

OPINION

Take preventive measures of possible dangers in the nation

THE Central Bank of Myanmar is implementing anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) measures under the leadership of the government by cooperating with the departments concerned and private sectors. Recently, the Central Bank of Myanmar organized an awareness-raising campaign on Fit and Proper directives issued by CBM in Yangon targeting the banks and non-banking financial institutions, mobile banking service providers, merchant acquiring services, licensed money transfer counters, stakeholders of money exchangers and companies' directors.

Currently, non-banking financial institutions are taking preventive measures to curb the inflow of finances, properties and profits

from defendants in financial institutions. It should make efforts not to include those who commit money-laundering processes in the investment and capital in all financial institutions, businesses and vocational processes.

The money laundering is a tool of unscrupulous persons to cause deterioration in the regular money circulation in the country. It can affect the collapse of banking and monetary service systems on which the people rely. It is because the cases of money laundering can subsequently occur corruption, terrorism, poverty, socio-economic problems, incomes and daily life of the people, prices of commodities, security and trust in own currencies.

In fact, banking and monetary services take a long time to seek the trust of the people in the monetary sector for shaping their banking and monetary services. Hence, both the people and any monetary service institutions need to prevent money laundering in any forms not to disintegrate the society.

Moreover, any financial institutions need to avoid the acts of financing the terrorism not to be harmful to peace and stability of the nation. At the same time, those institutions must improve their services in order to accelerate boosting of State economy through digital banking services and digital payment system.

Furthermore, financial institutions are to join hands with the authorities in exposing the crimes which may possible cause terrible losses in businesses and companies as well as dangers of money laundering measures. If so, these activities will help the country be stable and peaceful.

That is why both the government and the people including State-owned and privately-run financial institutions are responsible for maintaining the regular circulation and operations and for preventing possible dangers of these businesses for the sake of the whole nation. It is because that only when they take preventive measures of deterioration in daily process of the nation will the country and citizens be free from possible collapse of the financial institutions and deterioration of peace and stability.

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The Role of the Judiciary in the Effective Enforcement of Trademark Rights

By Kyaw Kyaw (Judicial Officer)

EVERY person in Myanmar has the right to access justice. The Judiciary of Myanmar is committed to providing equal access, ensuring fairness, and upholding the rule of law for everyone. (Judicial Strategic Plan (2018-2022))

The Myanmar Judiciary is committed to delivering the highest level of judiciary quality and integrity to all who appear in court. Preserving and enforcing the rule of law is a key task for the judiciary. (Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027))

The first and foremost function of the judiciary is to give justice to the people, whenever they may seek justice at the competent Court. The Court can award punishment to the accused who after trial are found guilty of violating the existing laws of the state or the rights of the people or can award relief for aggrieved party.

Trademark Rights could be enforced by civil litigation or criminal prosecution.

All contractual agreements that deal with the transfer of trademarks are also governed under the Trademark Law and Contract Act.

Intellectual Property is defined in the Stockholm Convention, which established WIPO. This Convention state that intellectual property includes the rights related to literary, artistic and performing artists, phonograms and broadcasts, inventions in all fields of human endeavour, scientific discoveries, industrial designs, trademarks, service marks and commercial names and designations, protection against unfair competition and all other rights resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields.

Myanmar's Long-awaited Trademark Law was enacted on

January 30, 2019, establishing the legal framework for a trademark registration system and enforcement of trademark legal protection.

Intellectual Property Rights mean the right granted by law to protect inventions made by one's own intellect. This expression includes copyright, patent rights, industrial design rights, trademark rights, and other types of intellectual property rights. (Trademark Law, Section: 2(i))

Trademark means a mark that distinguishes the goods of one enterprise from those of another in the course of trade. (Trademark Law, Section: 2(k))

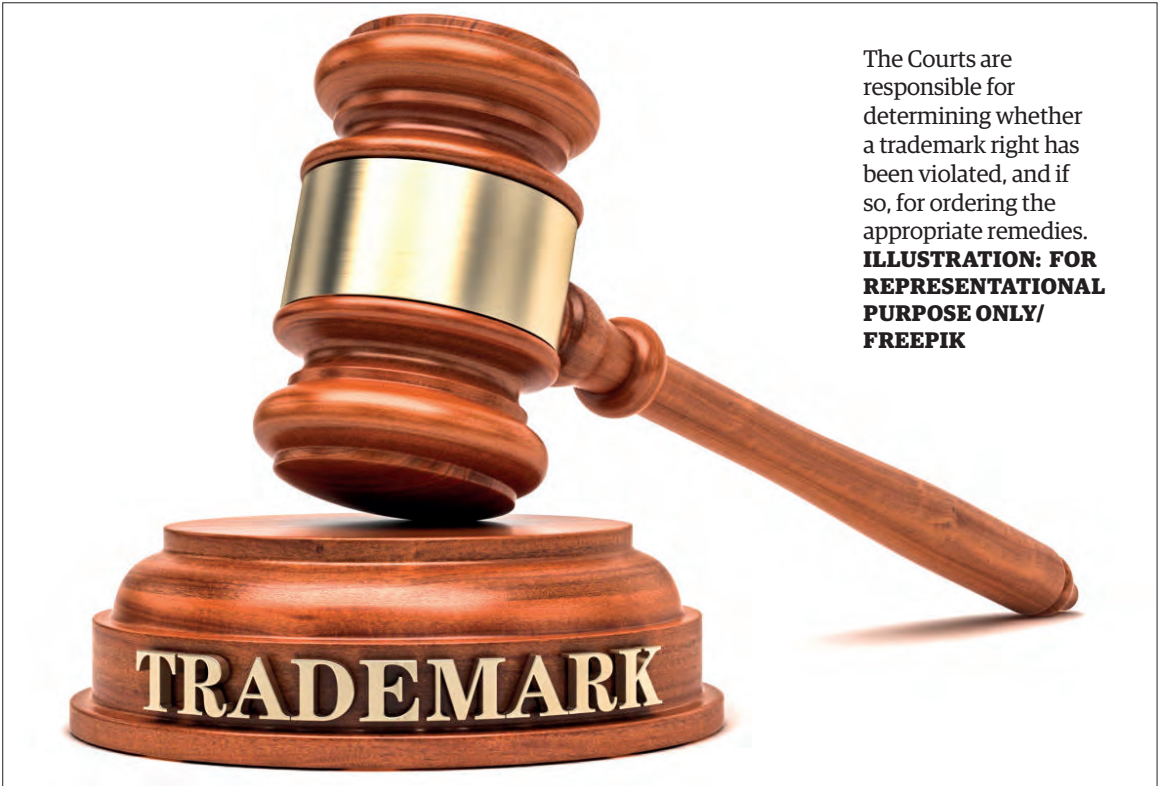
Intellectual Property Rights Court means either a Court which has been established by the Supreme Court of the Union, in accordance with the law, to adjudicate matters related to intellectual property rights or a Court which has been conferred the jurisdiction. (Trademark Law, Section: 2(u))

The trademark rights protections for their effectuality depend upon the enforcement.

Enforcement means that the right-owner must have the possibility to take action against anyone who infringes his or her right.

It is important to note that article 37(c) of the Constitution of Myanmar shall permit the citizens' right to private property, right of inheritance, right of private initiative and patent in accordance with the law, which in relevance to IP ensure the right of the inventor, author over his or her invention.

The right holder may claim a miscellaneous suit to the intellectual property rights Court for provisional measures orders through civil action for damages according to the provisions in sections 79 and 80. (Trademark Law, Section:



The Courts are responsible for determining whether a trademark right has been violated, and if so, for ordering the appropriate remedies. **ILLUSTRATION: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/ FREEPIK**

77(a))

The right holder may institute to the intellectual property rights Court for criminal action or civil action. (Trademark Law, Section: 77(b))

If an application is submitted according to subsection (a) of section 77, an intellectual property rights Court may pronounce one or more of the following provisional measure orders for civil remedies with regard to the infringement of trademark rights: (1) a suitable order to prevent the entry of products which infringe upon trademark rights, including imported goods where duties have been paid to the Customs Department, into Myanmar's commercial area; (2) a suitable order to maintain the original condition of evidence relating to the alleged infringement upon trademark rights; (3) a suitable order to amend, cancel or confirm the suspension order issued by the relevant Customs Department. (Trademark Law, Section: 79(a))

With regards to the infringement of trademark rights, an In-

tellectual Property Rights Court may pronounce one or more of the following orders without prejudice to any civil-related laws and the Code of Civil Procedure in a suit under subsection (b) of section 77: (1) an appropriate order to prevent the infringement of trademark rights, including the prevention of imported goods, which violate trademark rights and for which duties have been paid to the Customs Department, from entering the commercial area of Myanmar; (2) (aa) an order for the infringer to pay a sufficient sum to the right holder to compensate for the damages suffered by the right holder due to the infringement of trademark rights or; in appropriate cases, the amount of damages set beforehand by the right holder or the profits enjoyed by the infringer or both; (bb) an order to pay an appropriate amount for the right holder's expenses, including Court fees and attorney fees; (3) an order to destroy or remove the trademark rights infringing goods from the trade routes market, without paying damages, in order not to

harm the right holder; (4) an order to destroy or remove the equipment mainly used to produce the trademark rights infringing goods from the commercial area. (Trademark Law, Section: 81(a))

When the Intellectual Property Rights Court orders the amount of a fine for an offence prosecuted under this Law, it may award an order to pay all or a part of such fine to the aggrieved party as damages. (Trademark Law, Section: 84)

The Intellectual Property Rights Court may order the right holder to pay the respondent compensation in addition to Court fees, including attorney fees, and other expenses, in cases where the right holder falsely claims, without good faith, that his trademark rights have been infringed on. (Trademark Law, Section: 82)

TRIPs Agreement is the fundamental guideline for the interpretation and adjudication of intellectual property rights matters.

The TRIPs Agreement describes provisions concerning the enforcement of trademark rights.

The enforcement of trademark rights involves not only Trademark Law, but also Civil and Criminal law, and other related laws, a country's judicial system is defined by its constitution, and many of the provisions in the TRIPs Agreement concerning the enforcement of trademark rights are limited to general and abstract provisions.

The TRIPs Agreement provides that Members shall ensure that enforcement procedures are available under their law so as to permit effective action against any act of infringement of intellectual property rights. (Article 41(1)) of TRIPs Agreement)

The TRIPs Agreement provides that procedures concerning the enforcement of intellectual property rights shall be fair and equitable. They shall not be unnecessarily complicated or entail unreasonable time limits or unwarranted delays. (Article 41(2) of TRIPs Agreement).

The judicial authorities shall have the authority to order the infringer to pay the right holder damages adequate to compensate for the injury the right holder has suffered because of an infringement of that person's intellectual property right by an infringer who knowingly, or with reasonable grounds to know, engaged in infringing activity. (Article 45(1) of TRIPs Agreement)

The TRIPs Agreement also provides for provisional measures to prevent goods that infringing intellectual property rights from entering channels of commerce (Article 50 of the TRIPs Agreement).

In the TRIPs Agreement, at least regarding copyright and trademarks, a right holder who has valid grounds for suspecting an infringement may apply to the customs authorities to suspend the release of the infringing goods (Article 51 of the TRIPs Agreement).

Further, the TRIPs Agreement provides that right holders may be required to provide security to prevent them from abusing their rights (Article 53 of the TRIPs Agreement).

The provisions in the TRIPs Agreement concerning border measures comprise (1) suspension of release by customs authorities (Article 51), (2) application (Article 52), (3) security or equivalent assurance (Article 53), (4) notice of suspension of the release of goods (Article 54),

(5) duration of suspension of the release of goods (Article 55), (6) indemnification of the importer and of the owner of goods (Article 56), (7) right of inspection and information (Article 57),

(8) ex officio action (Article 58), (9) remedies (Article 59), and (10) De minimis imports (Article 60).

The TRIPs Agreement provides that Members shall provide for criminal procedures and penalties to be applied at least in cases of willful infringement of trademark or copyright on a commercial scale (Article 61).

Intellectual Property concerns the invention of any artistic, literary, scientific creation, concept etc. by human intellect. Intellectual property rights refer to rights vested by the state to the inventor. IPR is a strong tool, to protect investments, time, money, effort and the like invested by the inventor of an Intellectual Property, since it grants the inventor an exclusive right for a certain period of time to use his invention. Thus IPR supports the economic development of a country by encouraging industrial development and economic growth.

Judges are routinely required to evaluate competing interests, and addressed the role of balance of convenience analyses, proportionality concepts and judicial

discretion at different stages in trademark right infringement proceedings, with differences in the application of judicial discretion across jurisdictions.

The important objective of providing legal certainty for the users of the trademark protection system, rendered through timely proceedings and considered decisions, is in order for the judiciary to serve its role in promoting balanced and effective trademark protection and innovation ecosystems.

Even though Court's decisions may have manifold and unintended policy consequences, judges are required to decide the case before them. Judicial decision-making regularly requires Courts to take into consideration the public interest and, in certain jurisdictions, Courts may also exercise suo moto powers as part of the adjudication process in public interest litigation.

The Judiciary actively contributes in the first stage by enforcing contractual obligations arising out of contracts dealing with trademark rights.

The Courts are responsible for determining whether a trademark right has been violated, and if so, for ordering the appropriate remedies.

The judiciary can play a role in determining the scope of trademark rights, such as the scope of trademark protection, the scope of industrial design protection, the scope of patent protection and the scope of copyright protection.

Effective protection of trademark rights may encourage creativity, innovation, the national economy and the development of societies.

So, the judiciary can play a pivotal role in establishing trademark rights enforcement.

Study reveals how chest CT indicates lung abnormalities after two years of Covid

ACCORDING to a study, chest CT demonstrated residual lung anomalies in patients two years following COVID-19 (RSNA). This is the first study to present

two-year follow-up data on the effects of coronavirus on the lungs.

The findings of the study were published in Radiology, a journal of the Radiological Society of North

America. Globally, more than 600 million people have recovered from COVID-19, but concerns remain that some organs, especially the lungs, may suffer long-term

damage after infection.

Qing Ye, MD, and Heshui Shi, MD, PhD from Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan,

China, and colleagues set out to assess residual lung abnormalities in patients up to two years post-COVID-19 pneumonia. They also looked at the correlation be-

tween residual lung abnormalities and changes in lung function.

In this prospective study, 144 patients (79 men and 65 women, median age 60) discharged from

the hospital after SARSCoV-2 infection between 15 January and 10 March 2020, were included. Three serial chest CT scans and pulmonary function tests were ob-

tained at six months, 12 months and two years after symptom onset. Residual lung abnormalities after discharge from the hospital included fibrosis (scarring), thickening, honeycombing, cystic changes, dilation of the bronchi, and more.

SOURCE: ANI

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

Russia launches empty ship to ISS to replace damaged capsule

AN uncrewed Russian Soyuz capsule took off early Friday from Kazakhstan for the International Space Station to eventually bring home three astronauts whose return vehicle was damaged by a tiny meteoroid.

The Soyuz MS-23 vessel lifted off successfully from the Russian-operated Baikonur Cosmodrome, live video broadcast by ISS-partner NASA showed.

Though the capsule is scheduled to dock with the ISS early Sunday Moscow time, it is not expected to bring home US astronaut Frank Rubio and Russian cosmonauts Dmitry Petelin and Sergei Prokopyev until September.

The three arrived at the ISS last September aboard MS-22, and were originally only supposed to stay about six months, until the end of March.

But their capsule began leaking coolant on 14 December – shortly before Russian cosmonauts were to begin a spacewalk – after being hit by what US and Russian space officials believe was a tiny space rock.

MS-23 was initially scheduled to launch in mid-March



The damage caused by the suspected tiny meteoroid to the MS-22's cooling system raised fears that there could be problems during reentry, when the capsule experiences extreme temperatures. **PHOTO: NASA/FILE**

with two cosmonauts and an astronaut on board who would eventually take over for Rubio, Petelin and Prokopyev.

Without replacements however, the three will now spend almost a year on the ISS.

After delivering humans to the ISS, capsules stay attached to the orbiting research lab throughout the duration of missions, in case of any emergencies and to ferry the crew home.

The damage caused by the suspected tiny meteoroid to the MS-22's cooling system raised fears that there could be prob-

lems during reentry, when the capsule experiences extreme temperatures.

A similar leak in mid-February also affected the Russian Progress MS-21 cargo ship, which had been docked to the ISS since October.

That uncrewed ship left the space station last week.

In addition to the three crew awaiting the arrival of MS-23, there are also four others currently on the ISS, who arrived on a SpaceX Dragon capsule last October as part of the Crew-5 mission.—AFP

China's Yangtze River sees improved water quality in 2022

THE Yangtze River, the longest waterway in China, saw continuous improvement in its water quality in 2022 as the country continues its efforts on the river's protection, an environmental official said Wednesday.

In 2022, the quality of the water in 98.1 per cent of the Yangtze's sections stood above Grade II, the second-highest level in the country's five-tier water quality system, said Huang Xiaozeng, head of the department of water ecology and environment at the Ministry of Ecology and Environment during a press conference.

This marks an increase of one percentage point year-on-year, according to the ministry.

It was the third consecutive

year that the main stream of the Yangtze River has maintained Grade II water quality, it said. The Chinese government has attached great importance to the Yangtze's conservation. To restore the biodiversity along the river, China implemented a full fishing ban in 332 conservation areas of the Yangtze River basin in January 2020. The move has since been expanded to a 10-year moratorium along the river's main streams and major tributaries, effective 1 January 2021.

In 2022, the water quality of the main stream of the Yellow River, known as the "Mother River" in China, reached Grade II for the first time, according to the ministry.—Xinhua



Aerial photo taken on 30 June 2022 shows a scenery of the Yangtze River in Yibin, southwest China's Sichuan Province. **PHOTO: WANG XI/XINHUA**

Hundreds of species of wildlife worldwide contaminated with "forever chemicals:" study

WIDESPREAD pollution from the toxic "forever chemicals", known as Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS), is contaminating and potentially harming hundreds of species of wildlife around the world, said a new study published on Wednesday.

The study, released by the Environmental Working Group, an American nonprofit environmental group, reveals the global extent of the PFAS pollution problem with a first-of-its-kind map using rigorous data to show the sheer scale of the threat PFAS

pose to wildlife. Pollution from the "forever chemicals" contaminates polar bears, tigers, monkeys, pandas, dolphins and fish and has been documented in more than 330 other species of wildlife around the world, some endangered or threatened, said the study. Researchers pointed out that hundreds of studies have found PFAS chemicals in a wide variety of other wildlife species globally, including many types of fish, birds, reptiles, frogs and other amphibians, large mammals, like horses, and small mammals, such as cats, otters and squirrels.

"From country to country, and across continents, PFAS pollution is everywhere. No matter the location, no matter the species, nearly every time that testing is done we find contamination from these toxic chemicals," said researchers in the study.—Xinhua



PFAS chemicals are a class of forever chemicals used in firefighting foam and consumer products like non-stick cookware, waterproof textiles and cosmetics. Over 300 wildlife species showed traces of the nearly indestructible synthetic chemicals. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Lake Garda tourists flock to island reconnected by drought

ON foot or by bike, visitors stream across the narrow path connecting the small island to the edge of Lake Garda, a symbol of the winter drought hitting northern Italy.

Dotted with cypresses and rocky white beaches, San Biagio island was in the past only accessible by boat.

But historically low waters on the lake have revealed a sand and stone causeway – and tourists are flocking to the site.

"It's a beautiful sight, but sad at the same time, because

it's caused by drought. We hope it will be short-lived," said Alberto Pampuri, 62, who cycled to the spot with his wife and two friends from nearby Brescia.

The unusual phenomenon recalls the "Floating Piers" installation created in 2016 by artist Christo, when yellow floating footbridges were placed across nearby Lake Iseo.

"But they were artificial bridges, whereas this is a natural work of art," said Agata Carteri, a 48-year-old teacher.—AFP

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

Japanese court orders govt to pay damages over forced sterilization

A Japanese court on Friday ordered the government to pay damages to a hearing-impaired woman who underwent forced sterilization under a now-defunct eugenics protection law, the fourth such ruling.

The Shizuoka District Court found the 1948 law unconstitutional and awarded 16.5 million yen (\$123,000) to the plaintiff, a resident of the central Japan prefecture, who filed the lawsuit in 2019 claiming she underwent sterilization surgery in 1970.

It is the fourth case in which

damages have been awarded over forced sterilization, following rulings by the Tokyo and Osaka high courts and the Kumamoto District Court.

In handing down the ruling, Presiding Judge Yoshinori Masuda said the sterilization infringed on the woman's freedom to decide whether to bear a child in violation of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to pursue happiness.

The non-consensual surgery "based on the discriminatory idea that the birth of disabled

offspring should be prevented" resulted in "enormous mental and physical suffering," he said.

The court ruled that the government was obligated to compensate the woman, and the statute of limitations of 20 years for an unlawful act under the Civil Code did not apply.

Similar lawsuits have been filed with 10 courts and a branch across Japan. Most of the district courts have dismissed the claims for compensation over the expiry of the statute of limitations.—Kyodo



Supporters of a plaintiff gather in Shizuoka, central Japan, on 24 February 2023, ahead of a court ruling on a claim for damages over the now-defunct eugenics protection law. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Low estrogen levels paired with higher CGRP levels may jump-start migraine: Study



The study involved three groups of female participants with episodic migraine. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ ANI**

AS estrogen levels fluctuate, a new study has found for female participants with migraine, their levels of the protein calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP) that plays a key role in starting the migraine process also fluctuate.

The study is published in the online issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

"This elevated level of CGRP following hormonal fluctuations could help to explain why migraine attacks are more

likely during menstruation and why migraine attacks gradually decline after menopause," said study author Bianca Raffaelli, MD, of Charite — Universitätsmedizin Berlin in Germany.

"These results need to be confirmed with larger studies, but we're hopeful that they will help us better understand the migraine process."

The study involved three groups of female participants with episodic migraine. All had at least three days with migraine in the month before the study.

The groups were those with a regular menstrual cycle, those taking oral contraceptives, and those who had gone through menopause. Each group was compared to a group of female participants of similar ages who did not have migraine. Each group had 30 people, for a total of 180.—ANI

NEWS IN BRIEF

One woman dies every 2 mins in pregnancy, childbirth: UN

A woman dies every two minutes due to pregnancy or childbirth complications, despite maternal mortality rates dropping by a third in 20 years, the United Nations said Thursday.

Rates fell significantly between 2000 and 2015 but largely stagnated between 2016 and 2020 – and in some regions have even reversed, the UN said.

The overall maternal mortality rate dropped by 34.3 per cent over a 20-year period – from 339 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 223 maternal deaths in 2020, according to a report by the World Health Organization and other UN agencies. — AFP

Peru declares health emergency over dengue outbreak

PERU on Thursday declared a "health emergency" in 13 departments in the country's north, centre and southeast due to an outbreak of dengue.

The emergency would remain in place for 90 days, according to an official notice, after the health ministry recorded more than 11,500 cases and 16 deaths due to the disease so far in 2023.

This represented a "considerable increase" of 72 per cent from the same period in 2022.

Last year, the country had more than 72,800 dengue cases and 84 deaths.—AFP

Skipping breakfast may compromise immune system: Study

ACCORDING to a recent study from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, fasting may make it harder to fight against infections and raise your chance of developing heart disease.

The study, which concentrated on mouse models, is one of the first to demonstrate that skipping meals causes the brain to react in a way that harms immune cells. The findings, which

centre on breakfast, were released in the Immunity journal and may help researchers better understand how long-term fasting may influence the body.

"There is a growing awareness that fasting is healthy, and there is indeed abundant evidence for the benefits of fasting. Our study provides a word of caution as it suggests that there may also be a cost to fasting

that carries a health risk," said lead author Filip Swirski, PhD, Director of the Cardiovascular Research Institute at Icahn Mount Sinai, adding, "This is a mechanistic study delving into some of the fundamental biology relevant to fasting. The study shows that there is a conversation between the nervous and immune systems." —ANI



According to a recent study from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, fasting may make it harder to fight against infections and raise your chance of developing heart disease. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE**

ECONOMY
WORLD

S Korea freezes rates, ending year-long run of hikes



Economic conditions could improve in the second half of the year, with recovery in the Chinese economy and demand in the IT industry bouncing back, but global economic uncertainties were still “judged to be high”. **PHOTO: AFP**

SOUTH Korea’s central bank on Thursday froze benchmark interest rates at 3.5 per cent owing to concerns over the slowing economy, ending a year-long run of hikes.

The Bank of Korea decision comes after the economy shrank in the last three months of 2022 — the first time since the second quarter of 2020 as the pandemic kicked in.

The reading prompted speculation that the BOK would have to adjust its pace of monetary tightening.

It had hiked rates eight times since January 2022 — with one pause in February — as it fought to curb rising prices, which surged last year after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine sent the cost of energy and food soaring.

While the inflation is projected to be “above the target level” this year, the BOK said in a statement it was deemed “appropriate to judge whether the base rate needs to rise further while assessing the pace of (the) inflation slowdown”.

“Currently available infor-

mation suggests that the slowdown of global economic growth and inflation has continued,” it added.

The BOK said the economy had slowed because of weakening consumption and a continued decrease in exports.

Economic conditions could improve in the second half of the year, with recovery in the Chinese economy and demand in the IT industry bouncing back, but global economic uncertainties were still “judged to be high”, the bank said. — AFP

Bosnian furniture sector spurs economic growth

THE screech of chainsaws echoes through a Bosnian forest edged by snowy peaks, where lumber is to be crafted into high-end furniture to adorn European or South Korean homes.

The Bosnian furniture industry has seen steady growth, punctuated by an unexpected boom during the Covid-19 pandemic as supply chains in China ground to a halt, allowing new competitors to edge into a lucrative market.

It has proven to be a rare success story in the Balkan country that has been plagued by decades of economic malaise following a disastrous civil war in the 1990s.

In the northern Bosnian town of Tesanj, the furniture company Artisan has been key to the sector’s surge. Its employee headcount has jumped from 200 to 300 in the past three years alone, according to sales manager Armin Huremovic.

Founded in 2007, the com-



Exports from the furniture industry have been steadily growing for years. **PHOTO: AFP**

pany made its mark abroad five years later at an international trade fair in Cologne, Germany.

“It took us a long time to gain trust because we come from Bosnia,” Huremovic told AFP.

But the gamble has paid off.

\$855 for a chair

Their hardwood furniture

— some designed by the likes of Canadian-US artist Karim Rashid and German product designer Michael Schneider’s firm — is now exported to more than 65 countries.

They offer chairs that sell for around 800 euros (\$850) and tables that easily fetch nearly 9,000 euros. — AFP

Coffee harvest plunges amid Central American exodus

NESTLED in the mountains of central Honduras, the “El Encanto” coffee farm is tackling this year’s harvest with half the pickers it needs.

In Costa Rica’s Central Valley, the “Hersaca Tres Marias” farm faces a similar dilemma. The seasonal laborers both rely on are among the thousands to have abandoned Central American shores in search of a better life elsewhere.

“Many of our coffee pickers now go to the United States, to other countries, for a lack of opportunities” at home, farmer Selvin Marquez, 34, told AFP in Siquatepeque, some 90 kilometres (56 miles) north of the Honduran capital Tegucigalpa.

Coffee growers like Marquez are at their wit’s end, watching the fruit of their labour, and their incomes, shrivel up.

Marquez planted five hectares of coffee that now needs harvesting. But he has only 20 of the 40 pickers he needs.

One of them is Jose Samuel Hernandez, 34, in the fields with his wife Esly Mejia, 24, daughter Alexa, two, and sister-in-law Gleny, 20.

Every hand counts, and even Alexa helps pick some of the low-hanging fruit while playing with a dusty teddy bear.

The family cuts 182 kilograms (402 pounds) in eight hours and receives the equivalent of \$0.10 per kilo. —AFP



With high altitudes, fertile volcanic soil, warm temperatures, steady rainfall, and tropical climate, Costa Rica is uniquely positioned to produce superior coffee beans with fine aromas and flavour. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ EMBASSY OF COSTA RICA - SINGAPORE/AFP**

China’s economic powerhouse province kick-starts new year with robust foreign investment

EAST China’s economic powerhouse Jiangsu Province saw its actual use of foreign direct investment (FDI) hit 4.83 billion US dollars in January, up 24.6 per cent year on year, the provincial commerce department said.

Jiangsu led the country in the actual use of FDI in January, with the manufacturing sector logging 1.04 billion US dollars, up

9.3 per cent year on year, and the service industry surging 40.3 per cent year on year to 3.71 billion US dollars in the period. The actual use of FDI going to high-tech industries posted 1.24 billion US dollars, up 47 per cent year on year.

In particular, the province saw its actualized FDI from the Republic of Korea skyrocket by 1071.3 per cent year on year in January

and that from Japan surge by 437.8 per cent year on year in the period. Thanks to its favourable business environment, Jiangsu has long been a popular destination for global investors. In 2022, the province newly approved 35 regional headquarters and functional institutions of transnational corporations, bringing the total to 366. — Xinhua

One billion users, but bans mount up for TikTok

TIKTOK'S breakneck rise from niche video-sharing app to global social media behemoth has brought plenty of scrutiny, particularly over its links to China.

The European Commission is the latest organization to ban the app from its equipment, following similar moves in the United States.

So is TikTok a spying



Global action against TikTok, owned by Chinese firm ByteDance, kicked off in earnest in India in 2020. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

tool for Beijing, a fun app, or both?

Under pressure

Global action against TikTok, owned by Chinese firm ByteDance, kicked off in earnest in India in 2020. It was among the Chinese apps barred after deadly clashes on the border between the two countries, with New Delhi saying it was defending its sovereignty.

The same year, US President Donald Trump threatened a ban and accused TikTok of spying for China -- an idea that has gained ground in Washington. — AFP

World's last Meccano factory to close next year in France

THE owners of the world's last dedicated Meccano toy factory have said it will close by next year after more than half a century in France because of rising costs.

Spin Master said Wednesday the factory's falling competitiveness left it with "no other choice" but to close it down by the first quarter of 2024.

Production at the site, in Calais on the English Channel coast, had been affected by difficult market conditions, made worse by recent increases in the cost of raw materials and



The French Meccano factory is to close by early next year. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

energy, it said. Meccano is a model construction system invented by Briton Frank Hornby in Liverpool at the end of the 19th century, and generations

of children have built mechanical devices using the kits. The Calais Meccano factory opened in 1959 and was taken over by Spin Master in 2014. — AFP

Telecom firms aim to shrug off slump at annual get-together

TELECOM companies will aim to put a positive spin on their current slump in fortunes when they gather in the Spanish city of Barcelona on Monday for the annual Mobile World Congress (MWC), the biggest event in the industry's calendar.

Demand for products including smartphones has fallen with the onset of a global economic slowdown and rising inflation, bringing tough times to companies all along the supply chain.



Organizers say the show will be better than ever after recent editions were hampered by the pandemic and travel restrictions. PHOTO: AFP

But industry body GSMA, which organises the MWC, said this year's event would be buoyed by

the return of Chinese delegates after Beijing finally lifted Covid-era travel restrictions. — AFP

Boeing halts deliveries of 787 again on fuselage issue

BOEING has suspended deliveries of the 787 Dreamliner again following new issues with a fuselage component, US aviation regulators said Thursday.

The latest pause is a disappointment for the aerospace giant after it resumed deliveries of the jet in August following a halt

of more than a year.

Boeing is "conducting additional analysis on a fuselage component," the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said in a statement. "Deliveries will not resume until the FAA is satisfied that the issue has been addressed. — AFP

Transferring Distributor for Registered Products

Distribution of following pesticide registered by Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Singapore) is transferring from Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Myanmar Branch) to Farm Link Co., Ltd. Any Objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, West Gyogone, Insein Township within two weeks.

Sr	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Type of Reg.	Reg No.
1.	CURTAIL 30 EC	Propargite 300 g/L EC	Full	F2017-1557

Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Myanmar Branch). Room 209, Rangoun Business Centre; No. 97. West Shwe Gon Daing Road, Bahan Township, Yangon. Tele: 09-5145328

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V RICH SEAWAY VOY.NO. (047N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V RICH SEAWAY VOY.NO. (047N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-2-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V RATANA THIDA VOY.NO. (242W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V RATANA THIDA VOY.NO. (242W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-2-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MTT SAISUNEE VOY.NO. (23MS09N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MTT SAISUNEE VOY.NO. (23MS09N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-2-2023 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 MTT SHIPPING SDN.BHD.

China calls for resuming peace talks to resolve Ukraine crisis

CHINA has called for international efforts to create conditions for the resumption of peace talks to resolve the Ukraine crisis.

China on Friday released a paper stating its position on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, saying dialogue and negotiation are the only viable solution to the Ukraine crisis.

The international community should stay committed to the right approach of promoting talks for peace, help parties to the conflict open the door to a political settlement as soon as possible, and create conditions and platforms for the resumption of

negotiation. China will continue to play a constructive role in this regard, said the paper.

All parties must stay rational and exercise restraint, avoid fanning the flames and aggravating tensions, and prevent the crisis from deteriorating further or even spiralling out of control, it said.

All parties should support Russia and Ukraine in working in the same direction and resuming direct dialogue as quickly as possible, so as to gradually deescalate the situation and ultimately reach a comprehensive ceasefire, it added. — Xinhua



China said that the threat or use of nuclear weapons should be opposed, and nuclear proliferation must be prevented and nuclear crisis avoided. A Russian Yars RS-24 intercontinental ballistic missile system parades through Red Square during a rehearsal of the Victory Day military parade in Moscow on 6 May 2018. **PHOTO: KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV/AFP/FILE**

Prayers for peace amid new missile threats as Ukraine war enters 2nd year

UKRAINIANS will hold ceremonies across their war-ravaged country Friday on the first anniversary of Russia’s invasion, with President Volodymyr Zelensky to assure them of victory even as they face the threat of new missile strikes. A year ago to the day, Russian President Vladimir Putin stunned the world by sending troops across the border, in a move seen as punishment for Kyiv’s pivot to the West.

On Friday, Zelensky will hold a news conference to mark the bitter milestone, while commemorations will be held across the country.

One of the ceremonies will be held in the town of Bucha, which has become a byword for Russian atrocities, while priests will lead prayers for peace.

“Evil is still around, and the battle continues,” Zelensky said



A serviceman, call sign Virus, of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Vedmak (Witcher) unit patrols on the frontline near Bakhmut. **PHOTO: AFP**

late Thursday. “But we know for sure that it will end with our victory,” he added.

Ukrainian intelligence has warned of possible new attacks from Moscow, including missile strikes.

Western nations, which have supported Kyiv financially and militarily throughout the war, were also set to commem-

orate the anniversary of what has become the largest conflict in Europe since World War II.

The United States and its G7 allies planned to unveil a new package of sanctions.

On Thursday, the United Nations voted overwhelmingly to demand Russia “immediately” and “unconditionally” withdraw its troops from Ukraine.— AFP

UN demands Russia withdraw from Ukraine

THE United Nations voted overwhelmingly Thursday to demand Russia immediately and unconditionally withdraw its troops from Ukraine, marking the one-year anniversary of the war with a call for a “just and lasting” peace.

Ukraine earned strong back-

ing in a nonbinding vote that saw 141 of the 193 UN members in support, seven opposed and 32, including China and India abstaining.

Coming on the eve of the first anniversary of the brutal war, support for Kyiv was little-changed

from that of last October when 143 countries voted to condemn Russia’s declared annexation of four Ukraine regions. “Today, United Nations General Assembly has just spoken very clear,” said European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.— AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Breakup with France stokes divisions in Burkina Faso

THE ochre, weather-worn walls and tree-lined canal give a sense of tranquillity to the University of Ouagadougou, the highest institute of learning in crisis-stricken Burkina Faso.

It was here, in the university’s Khadafi lecture theatre, that in November 2017 French President Emmanuel Macron met hundreds of students, impressing many with his call for Burkina and its former coloniser to turn the page on their often-fractious past.

Today, Macron’s ringing ap-

peal seems to be a footnote of history — and many Burkinabe are divided about where their future with France should lie.

Wracked by an Islamist insurgency that has sparked two military coups, Burkina Faso has bust up with France, forcing out its ambassador and prompting it to end its 15-year-long military support.

Time-honoured accusations of France’s complicity with African dictators and its “post-colonialist” exploitation of the continent are flying again. — AFP



France said on 28 January it will withdraw its contingent of hundreds of troops stationed in Burkina Faso within a month, after the junta ruling the Sahel country demanded the pullout. **PHOTO: AFP**

Hong Kong martial arts coach jailed for inciting subversion

A martial arts teacher accused of running an armed movement to overthrow Hong Kong and China’s governments was jailed for five years on Friday under the city’s national security law. Denis Wong, 60, was arrested in March 2022 in an undercover bust of his martial arts training hall where police said he and an assistant were teaching “combat tai chi”. Police said they had seized weapons, including machetes, crossbows and steel-tipped arrows, during a raid of his home. Wong later pleaded guilty to inciting subversion, an offence punishable by up to 10 years in prison. — AFP

Vatican, Oman establish diplomatic ties



A groom and a bride pose for photos with St Peter's Basilica in the background. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ AFP

THE Vatican and Oman have established diplomatic relations, a joint statement said Thursday, three months after a visit by Pope Francis to the Gulf.

There are currently 12 Catholic priests working in four

parishes in Oman and the local population of nearly 4.5 million people includes a "significant number of foreign workers", it said.

The pontiff visited Bahrain in November, his second visit to

the Gulf since becoming pope in 2013. His first visit was to the United Arab Emirates in 2019.

Oman's parishes are part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia, which is based in Abu Dhabi.

Most of the country's Catholics are foreign workers from elsewhere in the Middle East and the Philippines, India and Pakistan, the statement said.

Kuwait was the first Gulf country to establish diplomatic relations with the Holy See in 1968. Thirty years later, the Vatican established ties with Yemen, followed by Bahrain in 2000, Qatar in 2002 and the United Arab Emirates in 2007.

There are about 3.5 million Christians — some 75 per cent of them Catholic — in the Gulf, the birthplace of Islam. — AFP

Canada announces support for Iranian temporary residents

THE Canadian government announced on Thursday a relaxation of immigration rules for Iranians in Canada, amid "gross and systematic human rights violations" in Iran.

"These measures will make it easier for Iranians who wish to extend their temporary status in Canada," the immigration department said in a statement.

Iranians will be able to apply for a new permit to study or work in Canada and will be exempt from certain processing fees.

They will be also able to apply for a work permit that allows them to pursue any occupation and for any employer of their choice.

"Canada will not stand idly by in the face of these aggressions as the Iranian regime continues its ongoing human rights violations," Immigration Minister Sean Fraser said.

"Applications from Iranians in Canada will also be processed on a priority basis," the statement said, noting the measures will take effect 1 March. — AFP



A demonstration in support of Iranian women in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on 1 October 2022. Thousands of Canadians have marched in the streets in recent weeks in solidarity with Iran's protests sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini while in the custody of Iran's notorious morality police. PHOTO: MATHIEW LEISER/AFP

US witnesses bloodiest weekend of gun violence so far in 2023

NINE mass shootings took place in the United States over the weekend, resulting in 13 deaths and over 40 injuries, according to the data from Gun Violence Archive, making it the bloodiest weekend of gun violence so far in 2023.

On the heels of several high-profile mass shootings in California last month and an attack at Michigan State University on 13 February, nine mass shootings in a single weekend is "certainly high for this time of year," according to local media. As of 19 February, there have been 81 mass shootings so far this year, compared to 59 during the same period last year.

Mark Bryant, executive director of the Gun Violence Archive, was quoted in a USA Today article as saying that "the number of shootings over the weekend is unusual for mid-February in the US"

Daniel Webster, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, told USA Today that mass shootings

underscored ongoing inaction from state and federal lawmakers. Almost all states witnessing mass shootings over the weekend don't require a licence to carry concealed loaded guns.

"Instead, state lawmakers have pushed Right to Carry laws that either eliminate the need to get a licence to carry concealed guns or make getting such a license very easy," Webster said. "But the 'more

guns everywhere' approach has been found to increase violent crime and does nothing to reduce mass shootings."

Researchers on gun violence say legislative disorder in the United States has fuelled gun violence severity. A case in point was the US Supreme Court decision in June 2022 to strike down a New York state law that limits gun-carrying in public.— Xinhua



Law enforcement personnel on 24 January 2023 open the door of a van in Torrance, California, where the alleged suspect is believed to be holed up. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Three contenders in race to become Scotland first minister

THREE contenders are in the running to succeed long-serving Scottish National Party (SNP) chief Nicola Sturgeon.

Three candidates will go to a ballot of the SNP's 104,000 members, after nominations close on Friday. The result will be announced on 27 March.

Health Secretary Humza Yousaf, 37, has won the most backing from other SNP lawmakers to replace Sturgeon after promising to uphold her policies on same-sex marriage, banning gay conversion practices and gender recognition changes. Yousaf, the first non-

white and first Muslim cabinet member in the Scottish government, took the Holyrood parliament's oath in both English and Urdu.

He has held some of the top jobs in government, including transport minister and justice secretary, but has been criticized in his current role as health secretary over long waiting times and falling numbers of hospital staff. He says he will "absolutely challenge" the UK government's block on Holyrood's gender recognition bill, which he believes is an attack on Scotland's autonomy. — AFP



SPORT

Yangon United wins with five to nil on debut over GFA

YANGON United team played against GFA in their debut match on 23 February and won 5-0. Win Naing Tun scored three goals and Kaung Htet Soe and Okkar Naing scored one goal each for team Yangon. Yangon United team came out with a 4-3-3 set formation, and Win Naing Tun scored the leading goal in the

20th minute of the game. Win Naing Tun again scored the second and third goals in the 29th and 44th minutes of the match, and team Yangon was leading 3-0 at the end of the first half. Four minutes after the restart of the second half, Kaung Htet Soe scored the fourth goal through an assist from

Yan Naing Oo, and the fifth goal was scored by substitute player Okkar Naing in the 85th minute of the game with a left-footed shot over David Htan's free kick. In the later minutes, Yangon United had a few more opportunities, including a penalty kick, but they could not use it. Yangon United celebrated their big 5-0 win at the final whistle. In addition, Yangon United striker Win Naing Tun became the first player to score a hat trick in the 2023 Myanmar National League.

After the game, Yangon United's head coach U Kyaw Dun said, "Today's step is the first step. We can see that they are playing hard because they know that today is the first step. "We won because we tried to reach the direction we wanted to go, just like we tried on the training pitch,"

he said. — KZL

Yangon United players celebrate their victory after beating GFA FC 5-0 in their opening match of the Myanmar National League 2023. PHOTO: YUFC

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Twelve 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 prioritize 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.
- (d) To ensure peace, stability, rule of law, and the safe and smooth functioning of transport networks across the Union.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance development based on agriculture and livestock using modern production techniques and to 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 assure support for the sustainability of Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) that prioritize import substitution, export production, and the use of domestically produced raw materials, in order to increase domestic production and generate employment opportunities.
- (d) To advance the socioeconomic life of the people, in order to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.

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 people and preserve and safeguard their faiths, beliefs, culture, and characteristics of patriotic nationalism.
- (c) To strengthen basic health care in order to achieve the emergence of a health system that enhances the longevity and health of the entire nation.
- (d) To comprehensively promote the education sector to make it capable of producing the human resources necessary for building a modern, developed, and progressive democratic nation.

Southampton appoint Ruben Selles as manager until end of season

PREMIER League strugglers Southampton on Friday named Ruben Selles as their manager until the end of the season.

The appointment of the 39-year-old Spaniard follows the sacking earlier this month of Nathan Jones, who was in charge for just three months. Southampton are bottom of the English top flight, with five wins in their 23 league games so far this season.

The club issued a brief statement saying: "Southampton Football Club can today confirm that Ruben Selles has been appointed as men's first team manager until the end of the 2022/23 season."

Former Luton boss Jones endured a torrid time after taking over at St Mary's in November following the dismissal of Ralph Hasenhuettl.

Selles was a first-team coach at the club and took charge as interim manager as Southampton beat Chelsea last weekend, a result that left the club three points from safety. He is now preparing the team to face second-bottom Leeds at Elland Road on Saturday.

Selles's appointment comes after Southampton failed to agree a deal with former Leeds boss Jesse Marsch, who was sacked from his job earlier this month.—AFP

Pickford agrees new contract to stay at Everton



England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford has agreed a new contract with Everton to end speculation over a move to a Premier League rival. PHOTO: AFP

ENGLAND goalkeeper Jordan Pickford has agreed a new contract with Everton to end speculation over a move to a Premier League rival.

The 28-year-old, approaching the last 12 months of his contract, had been linked with a move to Tottenham among other clubs but has agreed to stay at Goodison Park, even though the contract has not yet been signed. Pickford — a £30 million (\$36 million) signing from Sunderland in 2017 — has made more than 200 appearances for Everton and new manager Sean Dyche believes he can continue to improve.

"He's a very, very good player, a good servant to this football club so far and he's going to continue to be that

for sure," said Dyche, whose side are 16th in the table, just one point clear of the relegation zone. "I think it's a sign that he's enjoying our new regime and he's accepting of what we're looking to offer. He's been a fantastic player, so we want that to continue."

Dyche has won both of his home games in charge so far, either side of defeat in the Merseyside derby at Liverpool, and will look to make it three in a row when Aston Villa visit on Saturday.

But neither of the wins over Arsenal and Leeds were seen first-hand by the club's hierarchy, who have stayed away from Goodison in recent weeks following what the club described as credible threats to their safety.—AFP