

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. IX, No. 280, 1st Waxing of Tabodwe 1384 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Saturday, 21 January 2023

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.

8th High-Level Committee Meeting between Myanmar and Thai armed forces held

MYANMAR hosted the 8th High-Level Committee Meeting between Myanmar and Thai armed forces at Jasmine Ngapali Resort in Thandwe of Rakhine State yesterday morning.

Before the meeting, State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Chief of the Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces General Chalermphon Srisawasdi separately held a meeting on future plans of the two armed forces.

The 8th High-Level Committee Meeting was attended by the Senior General, the Thai General together with Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung, and senior military officers as well as military attachés of both countries.

In his speech, the Senior General, Joint Chairman of the 8th High-Level Committee Meeting on the Myanmar side, expressed his pleasure in hosting the 8th High-Level Committee Meeting between Myanmar and Thai armed forces. Myanmar and Thailand, the neighbouring

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State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Chief of the Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces General Chalermphon Srisawasdi sign and exchange the approval for agreements of the meeting in Thandwe of Rakhine State on 20 January 2023.

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SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife host dinner in honour of Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces and wife

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla hosted a dinner in honour of Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces General Chalermphon Srisawasdi and wife Madame Budsakorn Srisawasdi and party which attended the 8th High-Level Committee Meeting hosted by Myanmar at Jasmine Ngapali Resort of the Ngapali beach in Thandwe of Rakhine State yesterday evening

The Senior General and wife warmly welcomed the delegation led by the Thai General and party.

The Senior General and wife together with the Thai General and wife released the hot-air balloons to mark the successful completion of the 8th High-Level Committee Meeting between two armed forces.

The Senior General and the Thai General reciprocally extended greetings and had dinner together with those present.

Also present at the dinner were Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye and wife, Commander-in-Chief (Navy)



with artistes from states presented songs and dances.

After the dinner, fireworks were launched in commemoration of the 8th High-Level Committee Meeting between the two armed forces.

The Senior General and wife, and the Thai General and wife exchanged commemorative gifts. They presented the flower basket and cash awards to artistes and posed for documentary photos. — MNA/ TTA

The Senior General hosts the dinner for the Thai General and the delegation.

Admiral Moe Aung and wife, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung and wife, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and their wives, Thai senior military officers and their wives, military attachés of both countries and their wives, and officials.

Before and during the dinner, vocalists and artistes from the Myawady entertainment troupe under the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare the Fine Arts Department and the Myanmar Radio and Television together



The wife of the Senior General and the wife of the Thai General are pictured releasing the hot air balloon at the dinner.

Delegation led by wife of Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces visit eminent pagodas, landmarks in Thandwe

A delegation led by Madame Budsakorn Srisawasdi, wife of the Chief of Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, together with Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, and wives of senior military officers, visited eminent pagodas and significant sites in Thandwe of Rakhine State yesterday.

The wife of the Thai General and party yesterday morning offered oil lights, flowers, water and fruits to Shweandaw Pagoda and donated cash to the all-round renovation of the pagoda through members of the pagoda board of trustees. They then paid homage to Shwenandaw



The delegation led by wife of the Chief of the Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces enjoy Rakhine's traditional dance and songs at the Amazing Ngapali Resort yesterday.

Pagoda.

In the afternoon, they together with wife of the Senior General and wives of sen-

ior military officers visited the Amazing Ngapali Resort where they viewed round Rakhine traditional weaving and

traditional handicrafts. They enjoyed Rakhine's traditional dance and songs presented by the resort.

They presented cash awards to the traditional dance troupe and posed for documentary photos. — MNA/TTA

Peace processes unwaveringly base on nationwide ceasefire agreement-NCA and Constitution (2008)

WE would have two basic factors for the continuation of implementing the peace process. These are: to firmly stand for the nationwide ceasefire agreement-NCA and firmly stand for the Constitution (2008).

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

8th High-Level Committee Meeting between Myanmar and Thai armed forces held



The Eighth High-Level Committee Meeting between Myanmar and Thai armed forces is in progress in Thandwe, Rakhine State yesterday.

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countries, have built friendly relations since yore. The high-level meetings started in 2013 with the aim of further cementing friendly relations between the two armed forces. Both armed forces could not hold the exchange of visits between senior military officers of two armed forces, army, navy and air force meetings, border committee meetings and sports games in 2020 and 2021 because of Covid-19. Some meetings only were held through videoconferencing.

The Senior General expressed his firm belief that the high-level meeting will contribute to further cementing mutual trust, mutual understanding and friendly ties between the two armed forces. It is necessary to strive for accelerating the relations and cooperation between two countries and two armed forces.

The Thai General, Joint Chairman of the meeting, delivered an opening speech. He expressed thanks to the Myanmar Tatmadaw for its warm welcome to himself and his delegation. Although joint meetings could not be held in the



The Senior General and the Thai General take the documentary group photo at the meeting.

last two years due to Covid-19, he said he always prioritizes the cooperation measures with Myanmar Tatmadaw. During the high season of Covid-19, the Royal Thai Armed Forces conducted medical cooperation with its Myanmar counterpart.

Holding the high-level meeting between the Myanmar and Thai armed forces will help in adopting plans for cooperation routes and ways

between the two armed forces. As a result, troops in the border region will have the chance to continue cooperation measures under the plans. The Thai General expressed his firm belief that it will affect security for life and property and development for the peoples of border regions in both countries.

The Thai General pledged to perpetually stand for existing relations and partnership

relations between Thailand and Myanmar and will strive for ensuring the perpetual existence of good friendship between Thai and Myanmar armed forces.

The Senior General and the Thai General approved the meeting agenda.

Lt-Gen Khin Hlaing of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) reported on the results of the 34th Myanmar-Thai border committee

meeting and the master of ceremonies on discussions in cooperation between the armed forces of both countries.

Chief of Military Affairs Security Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo reported on topics to be discussed in the 8th High-Level Committee Meeting.

The Senior General and the Thai General signed the approval for agreements of the meeting.

They exchanged emblems and delivered concluding remarks.

The Senior General and the Thai General cordially greeted senior military officers of both countries and posed for documentary photos together with meeting attendees.

The high-level committee meeting focused on friendly ties between two armed forces of two countries, peace and stability for peoples of border areas in both countries, prevention of natural disasters, drug eradication and preventive measures with positive attitudes.

After the meeting, the Senior General and wife hosted lunch for the Thai General, wife and party. — MNA/TTA

Hoteliers are to strive for securing success in their business so as to contribute to the economic development of the State: Senior General



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets business people of the hotels and tourism sector in Thandwe, Rakhine State yesterday.

THE government will adopt necessary policy and provide assistance to all as much as possible, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at a meeting with hotels and tourism entrepreneurs at Pristine Mermaid Resort in Thandwe of Rakhine State yesterday afternoon.

Reports on operating hotels and tourism services and requirements

Departmental officials and hoteliers reported on the issuance of licences to hotels and lodges in Thandwe district, the creation of beach tours, the implementation of the guest list management system, the prospect of upgrading Thandwe airport to the international one for more arrivals of travellers, requirements for improvement of Yangon-Ngapali road, electrification, need for the establishment of a fishery zone to be developed together with the tourism sector and control for sand extraction not to cause deterioration of the beach.

Instructions to reports

The Senior General discussed that those from the tourism industry and aviation services need to coordinate the running of flights. The government pledged to upgrade the Ngapali airport to be an inter-



The Senior General inspects the expansion of the runway at Thandwe Airport.

national airport. Arrangements are being made to resume the Thahtay hydropower project. Currently, electrification will be relied on solar power, paddy husk-fired gasifiers and wind power. Fish farming must be undertaken systematically.

The tourism industry needs to efficiently utilize the natural resources of regions

In his speech, the Senior General said that the tourism industry is included in the micro, small and medium-scale enterprises, and the government is encouraging the operation of MSME businesses. Travellers and tourism service providers are to initiate mutual cooperation in a systematic manner. As Ngapali beach is very beautiful, it is necessary to utilize the advantages of the beach in order to

attract travellers. Good human resources must be turned out to operate the hotels and tourism services. To have developed human resources, it is necessary to encourage the education sector without fail for turning out educated persons in the region.

A pleasant house can catch the attention of guests

The Senior General stressed the need for local authorities and local peoples to beautify ancient heritages and religious edifices which need preservation and keep all environs and roads neat and tidy. It is necessary to create green zones for the pleasantness of travellers. Only when a larger number of travellers to the regions contributes to the proper flow of currency in the region will relevant regions develop. A pleasant house can catch the attention

of the guests.

If local authorities are absent to warn against unlawful acts, it will be terrible impacts on the interests of the region and the country in the future. Officials need to supervise the Ngapali region to have systematic road facilities and direction signboards along roads and squats in road areas.

The success of hotels and tourism will help create market opportunities for domestic textile industries which will help develop the State economy. The government will adopt the necessary policy and provide assistance to all as much as possible. Hoteliers are to strive for securing success in their business so as to contribute to the economic development of the State.

The Senior General inspected the construction of Aung Sit

Thi resort (Linthar) in Thandwe and gave necessary instructions.

At Thandwe Airport, the deputy minister for Transport and Communications reported on the expansion of the runway of the airport and plans to upgrade the runway and the airport.

In his response, the Senior General said that upgrading the Thandwe airport to an international facility can help increase arrivals of tourists to the region, further export domestic products to the markets at home and abroad, directly send marine products to foreign markets as well as contribute a great deal to the regional development. The Senior General then instructed officials to expand the runway of the airport in phases.

The Senior General viewed the runway and conditions to upgrade the airport. — MNA/TTA

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SAC Vice-Chair Dy PM Vice-Senior General Soe Win attends 1st coordination meeting of Central Census Commission

PATRON of the 2024 Population and Housing Census, Central Census Commission Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win attended and addressed the first commission meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present at the meeting were Chairman of Central Census Commission Union Minister U Myint Kyaing, Vice Chairman Union Minister U Win Shein, deputy ministers and officials.

In his speech, the Vice-Senior General said the development of a nation can be known with their socioeconomic statistics and so the exact figures play a key role for that sector. The statistics are also described as the mirror of a country as it reflects its development. The population figures which is used in drafting the policies and projects to ensure the proportionate development in social, economy and management sectors of a nation can be received only from the census.

One unique feature of a census is that it can provide information down to the lowest administrative level. Such information is vital for planning and evidence-based decision-making at every level.

Additional data uses include allocation of national resources; budget; the review of administrative boundaries; the positioning of social infrastructures such as schools, health facilities and roads; and research. The census is also



State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win addresses the first coordination meeting of the Central Census Commission in Nay Pyi Taw on 20 January 2023.

essential thing to the country to collect the data set by UN-FPA regarding the individual to family, wards and villages, urban city, state and region to State level.

The Vice-Senior General also highlighted the census history which took in Myanmar for eight times – in 1872, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1941, still using census data, 1881 census report and other census collected in the country, weaknesses for using socioeconomic data including population based on 1983 records while the country could not conduct census collection for 30 years after 1983, 2014 Population and Housing Census conducted in the term of Former President U Thein Sein and 2019 Interim Census.

The Vice-Senior General

also added that most of the international countries conduct census collection once every ten years for high expenses. The annual world population record depending on the average population increase and decrease can offer certain statistics of political, economy, defence and social although there is no exact population of some countries in the world. Therefore, it was estimated that the world population would be about 7 billion in 2011 and about 8 billion in 2022-2023 from about 6 billion of population in 1999. Therefore, collecting census is a must and the population will be collected in 2024 after 10 years of 2014 Census.

The Central Census Commission was also formed with Notification No 115/2022 on 27-

6-2022 in accord with 2013 Population and Housing Census Law to conduct nation-wide population and housing census collection in 2024.

For the emergence of a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system and Union based on democracy and federal system, especially, the census is a must to achieve exact population and socioeconomic situation to the lowest administrative level. Moreover, it is needed to draft the recovery plans and review the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the SAC permitted to collect population and housing census in 2024 and it should be carried out as a national task.

He then stressed the objectives of collecting population and housing census in 2024

and called on the departmental organizations and citizens to participate in that processes as it is concerned with the government, ministries, regions/states governments and all people of the country.

Then, the Commission Chairman Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Myint Kyaing explained the processes of 2024 population and housing census.

Afterwards, Secretary (1) and Vice-Chairman of Commission, deputy ministers and officials discussed their respective sectors for collecting 2024 population and housing census.

The Vice-Senior General stressed the necessary things after the Director-General of Population Department sought the approvals for decisions. — MNA/KTZH

Public Notice for elimination of violence

1. SO called "CRPH", "NUG" and "PDF" terrorist groups are unlawfully committing killings of monks, teachers, civil servants and general people and looting under the pretext of saying "for the people".
2. Not rendering of encouragement, support and assistance to the "CRPH", "NUG" and "PDF" terrorists that are committing intimidations, killings and destructive activities could be construed as protecting lives and property of general public.
3. Giving information secretly relating to bearing of their arms, ammunition and terrorists to authorities could be tantamount to protecting lives and property of innocent people.

6 cases of COVID-19 reported on 20 January, total figure reaches 633,791

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases reached **633,791** after **six** new cases were reported on 20 January 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,232**, including **two** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to **19,490** on 20-1-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.—Ministry of Health

CURRENT AFFAIRS

New embossed number plates to be installed before 31 March

THE Department of Road Transport Administration has issued a notification regarding the installation of new embossed number plates.

State-owned departmental vehicles, highway vehicles, city buses, taxis and trucks must have embossed number plates before 31 March.

It is suggested that the new embossed number plates should be changed and installed by contacting the relevant offices of the Department of Road Transport Administration.

In addition, private vehicle owners are also urged to contact the relevant RTAD offices

and have new number plates fitted at the time of the vehicle licence renewal or before.

RTAD added that new licence plates with descriptions representing different townships and car brands have been installed on all kinds of vehicles starting on 1 July 2021. — TWA/KZW



Vehicles are seen lining up to get new embossed number plates at the Road Transport Administration Department.

Rice, paddy prices take bumpy ride at new paddy harvest season

THE market sees unprecedented price hikes this month when the newly harvested paddy (both low-grade and high-grade) cultivated in the monsoon 2022 is entering the market, the market data showed.

On 17 January 2023, the price of high-grade Pawsan paddy from the Shwebo area rose tremendously by K300,000 per 100 baskets within 15 days, according to the non-governmental organization Shwebo Pawsan Paddy Planters Association.

New Pawsan rice wholesale prices touched the highest of K60,000-K66,000 per bag on 2 January and continued to climb at K68,000-K74,000 per bag on 17 January. The wholesale prices of old Pawsan rice also jumped to K92,000-K97,000 per bag from K86,000-K92,000 per bag.

Meanwhile, the prices of sticky rice also hit a high of K85,000-K98,000 per bag depending on the producing areas and different varieties.

Last year, glutinous rice

entered the market at K78,000 per bag in the last week of October and the prices peaked at K100,000 per bag in mid-November. Shortly thereafter, the prices moved down and reached a low of K85,000 per bag.

Yet the prevailing price bounced back to K98,000 per bag. Similarly, the price of broken rice increased above K40,000 per bag on 17 January.

Likewise, the prices of low-grade rice moved in the range between K44,000-K50,000 per bag (Thuka rice, rice grown under intercropping system and short matured rice price (90 days)).

The price of paddy moved up to K1.35 million per 100 baskets on 17 January 2023 from K1.31 million at the end of December 2022, said a rice miller from the Wakema area.

At present, the new Pawsan rice varieties were K62,000-K80,000 per bag depending on producing areas, while old ones fetched K70,000-K105,000 per bag. The prices of low-grade rice increased to K49,000-K54,000

per bag.

While the new high-grade Shwebo Pawsan paddy was worth K2 million per 100 baskets, the one from the delta region was valued at K1.65 million per 100 baskets. The prices of paddy from the delta region are forecast to keep high following the high price of rice. The social media posts of price data raised the public's concerns. That being so, the consumers might panic buying them.

The wholesale prices of Pawsan in the Yangon market are K6,000-K8,000 higher than those of the regions outside Yangon. The retail price will be too high for sure.

The commodity prices (rice, edible oil, garlic, onion, chilli pepper, sugar, jaggery and pulses) inflated in 2022 except for tamarind, hitting a new peak in history.

In early 2023, the prices of those commodities dipped from record highs. Yet, the price of rice headed for a record high in mid-January 2023. — TWA/EMM

Chinese potato, Kyukok garlic prices decline ahead of Chinese New Year

THE majority of the trade activity in the Sino-Myanmar border was temporarily stopped as Chinese traders returned home to celebrate the Chinese New Year falling on 22 January 2023. Consequently, the fruit market including watermelon was slow-moving for now.

Nonetheless, imported Chinese potatoes and garlic are flooding the market ahead of the Chinese New Year festival. The price is therefore moving down, said a trader engaged in potato and garlic depot.

A low supply of potatoes in early January pushed up the price to K2,150-K2,400 per viss on 9 January 2023. The bulk of demand outstripped demand in mid-January and brought down the price to K2,000-2,100 per viss.

Regardless of the decrease in prices of Chinese potatoes, local potatoes from Shan State hovered unchanged at K1,750-K2,100 per viss.

Last year, the price of potatoes did not reach an unprecedented record high, unlike other commodities. Similarly, the price of Kyukok garlic imported via the border trade channels stayed calm despite the price increase of Shan garlic.

The garlic from Shan State (large size) was worth K6,000 per viss in the wholesale market, whereas the Kyukok garlic stayed low only at K3,700 per viss on 19 January 2023.

In the corresponding period last year, the prices stood at K3,400-K3,500 per viss of Kyukok garlic and K1,500-3,000 per viss of Shan garlic.

Next, Kyukok garlic price touched a high of K6,800-K7,000 per viss on 8 March 2022 during the harvest time of Shan garlic, which was priced at only K2,700-K4,000 per viss at that time. In early September 2022, Kyukok garlic price was around K5,000 per viss, while the prices of Shan garlic were estimated at K2,700-K4,200 per viss.

In the second week of December, Shan garlic prices were K2,900-K3,900 per viss and Kyukok garlic fetched K3,100-K3,200.

The border trade sees at least a week's halt ahead of the Lunar New year. However, the prices of imported potatoes and garlic remain low and save the consumers' food costs.

The market observers shared their opinions that efforts need to expand potato and garlic acreages as there is strong market competition with Chinese potatoes and garlic. — TWA/EMM



The picture shows a pile of potato bags entering the Bayintnaung wholesale hub.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Pigeon pea sets three-week high in domestic market

THE price of pigeon peas (tur) increased by K60,000 per tonne in the past three weeks, pulses market data indicated.

On 1 January 2023, the pigeon pea fetched K1.755 million per tonne in the domestic market and then, significantly rose to K1.81 million per tonne on 19 January 2023.

The fluctuation of the Kyat-Dollar exchange rate and the main buyer India's demand heavily influenced the prices of pigeon peas, traders said.

Kyat depreciated at K2,850 against the hard currency in the local forex market. When Kyat against the US dollar drastically fell to over K4,500 in August 2022, the price of pigeon pea hit a record high of K2.12 million per tonne.

Additionally, India notified on 28 December that the free import policy of black gram (urad) and pigeon pea (tur) extended up to March 2024, making the exports stagnant, traders pointed out.

The new pigeon peas are



On 1 January 2023, the pigeon pea fetched K1.755 million per tonne in the domestic market and then, significantly rose to K1.81 million per tonne on 19 January 2023.

entering the market at present.

Myanmar bagged over US\$900 million from more than 1.12 million tonnes of pulses exports over the past nine months

in the current financial year 2022-2023 (April-March). Of them, pigeon pea export earned \$88.299 million from 110,407.657 kilogrammes, the Ministry of

Commerce's statistics showed.

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 gram and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2022, 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 2025-2026FY. 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/EMM

YGEA reference price edges up to K2.276 mln per tical following global gold spot prices

YANGON Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association raised the reference price of pure gold to K2.276 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) tracking the increase in global gold spot prices, stated.

On 2 January 2023, global gold spot prices stood at US\$1,823 per ounce and YGEA's price was K2,147,500 per tical by the YGEA.

As the price rallied to \$1,932

in the international market, the reference price increased to K2,276,000 per tical.

The figures indicated an increase of \$109 per ounce and over K120,000 per tical.

Despite the YGEA's reference price, the pure gold spiked at K2,850,000 per tical in the unofficial market, showing a large gap of K550,000 per tical.

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 K2,850 in the unofficial forex market.

The price of gold in the domestic market is positively related to the global gold spot prices and dollar exchange rate.

The soaring dollar exchange at over K4,500 pushed up the pure gold price 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 in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw under the auction system.

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



Jewellery is seen at the gold outlet in Yangon.

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 20 January 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,200
Octane 95	K2,275
Diesel	K2,420
Premium Diesel	K2,500

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,276,000 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,825,000 per tical

Dollar Price

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

The above prices may change from time to time.

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OPINION

Eradicate illegal trade to boom legal trade

ALTHOUGH the government is encouraging the market economic system in the country, some businesspersons derail from the path paved by the government with selfishness for committing illegal trade processes aimed at evading necessary taxes to be paid to the State.

Illegal trade is a hindrance to the implementation of the economic objectives of the State. As such, the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was reconstituted on 10 December 2021 in conformity with the current situation of the State economy in order to take severe action against offenders.

The staff members assigned should take pride in serving their duties loyal to the State in seizing illegal commodities free from bribes for levying taxes deserved by the State. Only when illegal trade gradually declines will the legal trade boom day after day.

In this regard, illegal trade measures are based on government policy, supply and demand, transparency and trade, and customs environment. In eradicating the illegal process, commodities in illegal trade worth approximately K65.056 billion were seized in 4,232 cases from January to December 2022, compared to some K8.459 billion in 2,240 cases in the same period of 2021, exceeding K56.597 billion during the period.

Task forces checked commodities along the trade routes or at checkpoints in the past. Currently, those task forces raid the warehouses and buildings where illegal commodities might be stored acting on a tip-off and taking action against offenders under the law.

It is necessary to reduce the illegal gates which accepted the passing of illegal trade through bribes. If necessary, more legal posts and entrances must be allowed. Legal border trade camps must give services of a smooth process for trade, and on the other hand, severe action must be taken against those who use illegal routes and posts for tax avoidance. To do so, an emphasis must be placed on enforcing rule of law along border regions.

Moreover, staff members assigned at relevant posts and checkpoints should not be involved in bribery cases in illegal trade measures. They have to be free from taking any money and bribes in illegal trade. If not, severe action will be taken against those staff as a sample move. Likewise, it is necessary to continuously raise public awareness of the disadvantages of illegal trade.

In checking illegal trade, arms and ammunition and narcotic drugs were seized in addition to illegal commodities. Drug producers change the distribution of drugs in the form of foodstuffs targeting the youths. Hence, parents and family members need to verify foodstuffs based on their knowledge.

The staff members assigned should take pride in serving their duties loyal to the State in seizing illegal commodities free from bribes for levying taxes deserved by the State. Only when illegal trade gradually declines will the legal trade boom day after day.

Will H2 save the globe?

EXPECTATIONS OF NEW GENERATION ENERGY, HYDROGEN

SINCE the Russia-Ukraine conflict, energy policy around the world has been shaken. As oil and gas prices skyrocketed, all countries, developed and developing, began to struggle to secure a stable supply of energy. And many countries are increasingly beginning to seek energy that can be expected to have stable prices and easy procurement.

In addition, the 2016 Paris Agreement obliges all countries to restrain CO2 emissions as a way to combat global warming. Is there a solution to the two major propositions of energy security and global warming countermeasures?

The use of hydrogen energy is attracting attention as a solution to the two current issues. Moreover, hydrogen is a promising next-generation energy source, and it is said that by 2050 it will become a huge market of 2.5 trillion dollars.

The lightest gas and most abundant on earth

In order to utilize hydro-

gen as energy, it is necessary to go through the processes of “producing”, “transporting”, “storing”, and “using”, which requires technology and equipment on each. And it is necessary to stimulate demand to increase the number of users. Currently, industrialized countries are working to develop technology and increase their demand.

First, let's talk about the characteristics of hydrogen.

Hydrogen is a colourless, odourless, lightest gas on earth, and exists in large quantities on earth as a compound with other elements such as water. Therefore, hydrogen can be extracted from various substances (compounds) by various methods.

For example, hydrogen can be produced from hydrocarbons such as natural gas, LPG, naphtha and petroleum residues. Industrial processes such as petroleum refining processes and coke oven gas also produce by-product gases that contain a large amount of hydrogen. Hydrogen can be produced by refining these gases (called grey

hydrogen).

Hydrogen can be produced by adding a certain catalyst to biomass such as natural gas, methanol or methane gas (called blue hydrogen).

Hydrogen produced by decomposing natural energy sources such as the sun and wind into water and electricity is called green hydrogen and can be produced using a mechanism that does not emit carbon dioxide. Green hydrogen has the greatest environmental effect. In this way, it can be extracted from existing resources.

Carrying, Storing H2

The extracted hydrogen must be stored underground until it is transported to the user. There are not many suitable places on earth where carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) is possible, and it must be a stratum with an appropriate storage tank and cap and no faults. Currently, there are nearly 40 in North America, Northern Europe, East Asia, and Australia (please see the map).



CCS (carbon dioxide capture and storage) demonstration experiment started in Tomakomai City, Hokkaido in 2012 agency for Natural Resources and Energy

By Suzuka Yoshida

Hydrogen can also be liquid at minus 252.6. Being in liquid form makes it portable. Japanese ship “Suiso Frontier” is the only means of transporting hydrogen over long distances. In February 2022, this ship succeeded in demonstrating that hydrogen made from brown coal in Australia was liquefied and transported to Kobe, Japan.

Recently, it has become possible to liquefy at room temperature and transport it. The technique was developed by a Japanese company, Chiyoda Corporation. In this way, hydrogen is being established as a clean energy that can be transported and does not generate carbon dioxide when burned.

It may be possible to use untapped energy such as lignite and crude oil-associated gas from overseas, as well as renewable energy from Japan and overseas in the future. It is also expected that primary energy sources will be procured inexpensively from areas with low geopolitical risk.

Japan formulated a basic hydrogen policy in 2017

Five years before the skyrocketing energy prices that began last year, the Japanese government formulated its basic hydrogen policy in 2017. The policy is to realize a hydrogen society, and the goal is to make it carbon-neutral by 2050.

Positioning hydrogen as a new carbon-free energy option, the government as a whole made a plan to develop measures. Technology, capital, bases (places), and demand are needed to realize the processes of “producing”, “transporting”, “storing”, and “using”.

According to the “White Paper on Basic Hydrogen” issued by the government in 2015, Japan aims to realize a CO2-free

society in three phases.

Phase 1: Dramatic Expansion of Hydrogen Use (after the present). Japan will lead the world by greatly expanding the use of stationary fuel cells and FCVs (Fuel Cell Vehicles), which are currently being realized. Wish to capture the global market in the hydrogen and fuel cell field.

Phase 2: Full-scale introduction of hydrogen power generation/establishment of a large-scale hydrogen supply system (to be realized in the second half of the 2020s). It will establish a new secondary energy structure by adding “hydrogen” to “electricity and heat”.

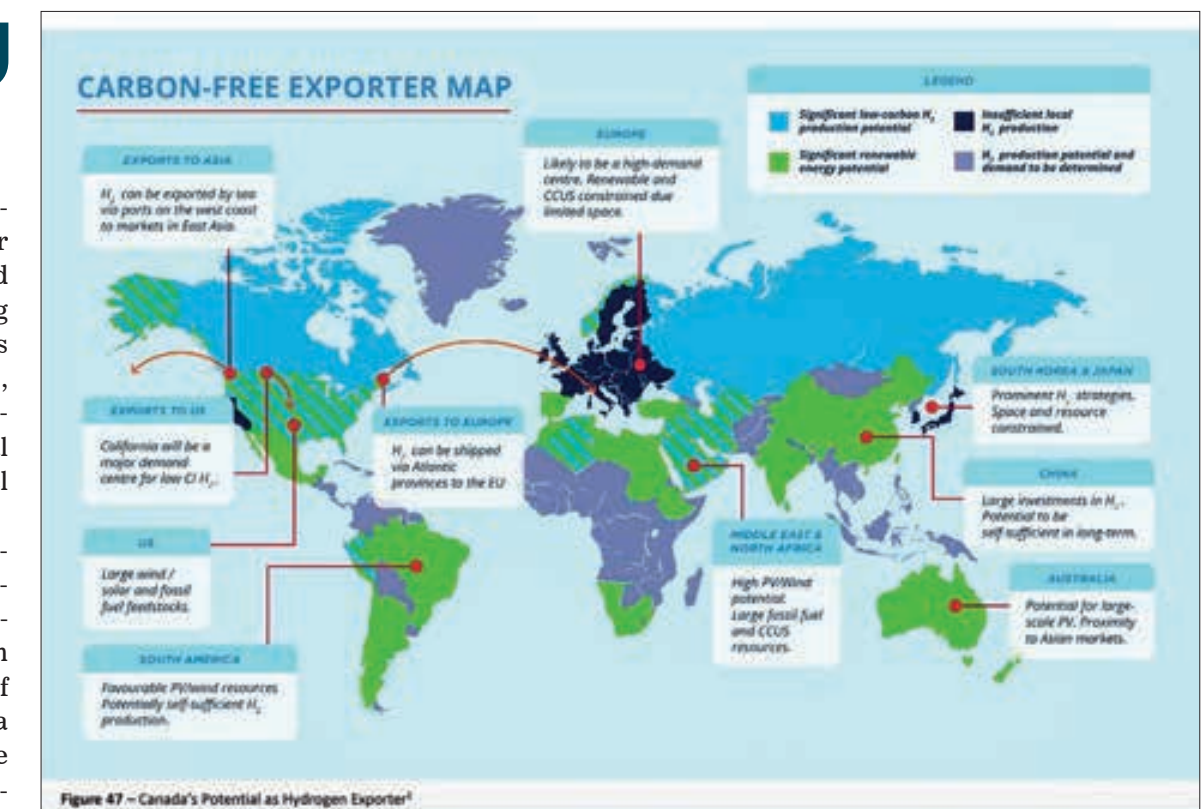
Phase 3: Establishment of a total CO2-free hydrogen supply system (to be realized around 2040).



Few customers are seen at the H2 station in Tokyo so far.

Reduce dependence on limited resources such as oil and gas

From a user perspective, the most likely areas of hydrogen energy use will be in the mobility sector, such as cars and trains. Japan's transportation sector accounts for about 20 per cent of Japan's energy consumption, and



Regions and countries where the sun shines for long hours, such as the Middle East and Australia, are rich in green hydrogen. Source: Hydrogen Strategy for Canada, Based on data and maps from BloombergNEF Hydrogen Economy Outlook, March 2020 https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/sites/nrcan/files/environment/hydrogen/NRCan_Hydrogen-Strategy-Canada-na-en-v3.pdf (p.91)

ciency compared to conventional gasoline vehicles.

Hydrogen fuel cell technology is already well advanced. Cars and trains equipped with hydrogen batteries can travel longer distances than EVs that use electric energy and can be replenished in minutes, which is convenient. Japanese private companies are conducting research in this field and trying to stimulate demand by developing usability. The reason why each car manufacturer does not make FCV (hydrogen fuel cell vehicle) like BEV (the electric vehicle that runs only on battery power) so far is that the fuel cell to be installed is expensive and requires development costs. Also, there are conceivable reasons which are infrastructure problems such as expensive FCV, the inability to downsize the vehicle due to its too large size and the lack of hydrogen stations.

A future challenge is a cost of separating and capturing CO2 from other gases. Research is ongoing to develop methods of separation and recovery which

include chemical separation at a lower cost by using a liquid that absorbs CO2, and a method that separates only CO2 using a special membrane.

The Japanese government does not consider hydrogen as the only policy for carbon neutrality but also considers renewable energy such as nuclear power and solar power as options. Prime Minister Kishida suddenly declared the revival of nuclear power generation in late August last year, and the governor of Tokyo Ms Koike made it mandatory to install solar panels on newly constructed houses in the future. Having options can make us reduce risk.

Source: <https://hydrogencouncil.com/en/global-hydrogen-flows/> https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2020/1225_001.html <https://www.infosynergy.titech.ac.jp/en/> (InfoSynergy Consortium_Tokyo Institute of Technology)

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

NASA, Boeing team up to develop lower-emissions aircraft

THE US space agency NASA is teaming up with aviation giant Boeing to develop a next-generation commercial aircraft that emits less carbon.

NASA, whose purview also includes aeronautical research, will invest \$425 million over seven years in the “Sustainable Flight Demonstrator” (SFD) project while Boeing and its partners will spend an estimated \$725 million.

The goal is to produce future commercial airliners that are “more fuel efficient, with benefits to the environment, the commercial aviation industry,

and to passengers worldwide”, NASA chief Bill Nelson said.

“If we are successful, we may see these technologies in planes that the public takes to the skies in the 2030s,” Nelson said in a statement on Wednesday. The agreement calls for NASA and Boeing to build, test, and fly a full-scale single-aisle demonstrator aircraft.

“The technologies demonstrated and tested as part of the SFD programme will inform future designs and could lead to breakthrough aerodynamics and fuel efficiency gains,” Bo-

ing said.

Boeing chief engineer Greg Hyslop said it “has the potential to make a major contribution towards a sustainable future”.

Engineers will be seeking to design an aircraft with fuel consumption and emissions reductions of up to 30 per cent relative to today’s most efficient single-aisle aircraft, NASA said.

The agency plans to complete SFD testing by the late 2020s so the technologies and design can be applied to the next generation of single-aisle aircraft.—AFP



Employees work on Boeing 737 MAX aircraft at the Boeing Renton Factory in Renton, Washington, on 27 March 2019. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

China accelerates building of a green transport network: white paper

CHINA has accelerated the building of a green transport network, with optimizing the structure of energy consumption and improving the efficiency of organization as its priorities, according to a white paper released by the State Council Information Office on Thursday.

The country has accelerated the construction of special railway lines, promoted the shift of freight transport from road to railway and waterway, and encouraged intermodal transport, said the white paper titled “China’s Green Development in the New Era”.

In 2021, the railway and waterway freight volume accounted for 24.56 per cent of the total in China, an increase of 3.85 percentage points over 2012,



Hydrogen-fuelled vehicles used during the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics await refuelling at stations in Beijing’s Yanqing district in January. **PHOTO: CHINA DAILY**

according to the white paper.

China has also promoted the green transformation of transport vehicles. By the end of 2021, the number of China’s

registered new energy vehicles had reached 7.84 million, accounting for about half of the global figure, the white paper said.—Xinhua

Plastic pirouettes: Japan’s recycled bottle ballet

THE dancers’ futuristic headgear glints under the lights at a top ballet show, but just two months ago their plastic costumes were sticky bottles tossed into a Tokyo recycling bin.

“Plastic”, a new production by renowned Japanese company K-BALLET, aims to draw attention to a global pollution crisis through some unusual set and wardrobe design.

Tutus made from used bubble wrap, four huge recycled

bottle walls and 100 transparent umbrellas left behind in the Japanese capital all feature in the performance, which drew a full house to its first short run in Yokohama.

Resembling space-age creatures with hand-cleaned PET bottles strapped to their bodies, a troupe including US guest star Julian MacKay leaped and spun their way through a shifting labyrinth on stage.

Plastic waste has doubled

globally in 20 years and only nine per cent is successfully recycled, according to the OECD group of developed countries.

The United Nations says the volume of plastic entering the oceans will nearly triple by 2040.

MacKay, 25, told AFP that the “huge problem” of plastic waste “really hasn’t gotten that spotlight” in the dance world, and he believes performing arts can help inspire people to act.—AFP

Australian rangers find ‘monster’ 2.7 kg cane toad

AUSTRALIAN rangers have killed an invasive “monster” cane toad discovered in the wilds of a coastal park – a warty brown specimen as long as a human arm and weighing 2.7 kilogrammes (six pounds).

The toad was spotted after a snake slithering across a track forced wildlife workers to stop as they were driving in Queensland’s Conway National Park, the state government said.

“I reached down and grabbed the cane toad and couldn’t believe how big and heavy it was,” ranger Kylee Gray said, describing how she discovered the amphibian last week. “A cane toad that size will eat anything it can fit into

its mouth, and that includes insects, reptiles and small mammals,” she said.

The animal was taken away and euthanized.

Cane toads were introduced into Queensland in 1935 to control the cane beetle, with devastating consequences for other wildlife.

At 2.7 kilogrammes — nearly the weight of a newborn human baby — the toad may be a record breaker, the Queensland Department of Environment and Science said in a statement.

Describing it as a “monster”, the department said it could end up in the Queensland Museum.—AFP



A park ranger holds a cane toad weighing 2.7 kilogrammes discovered in Conway National Park in Australia’s state of Queensland. **PHOTO: QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND SCIENCE/AFP**

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

Kishida's speech to highlight child policy as investment for future



Annual births in Japan are likely to have fallen below 800,000 for the first time last year. A newborn baby in Tokyo wearing a face shield.

PHOTO: KYODO

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

a draft of the address showed Wednesday.

While the government has been criticized for lacking countermeasures that have an immediate effect, Kishida will underscore the need to enhance public support for child-rearing by describing such policies as "the most effective investment for the future".

Kishida will also apologize after four of his ministers stepped down due to scandals within the span of around two months last year, according to the draft of the speech, to be delivered Monday. On diplomacy,

he will reiterate Tokyo's intent to enhance its alliance with the United States amid China's increasing military and economic clout.

Annual births in Japan are likely to have fallen below 800,000 for the first time last year, according to a government estimate.

In a new year's news conference earlier this month, Kishida promised to focus on policies related to children this year. But it remains to be seen how the government will cover the costs of the policies. —Kyodo

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indian startup launches first content platform for mental health

METTA Media has announced the launch of MyndStories - India's first platform for verified, accurate mental health content exclusively for Indians. MyndStories offers comprehensive mental health content tailored to an Indian audience through features, news, interviews, podcasts, first-person essays, curated therapists, and support groups. The platform empowers Indians through their mental health journey with professionally vetted and fact-checked content providing guidance, advice, and insights.

All articles on MyndStories are reviewed by a mental health professional or therapist and fact-checked by an editorial board member with a healthcare background. MyndStories also has a growing number of facilitators and expert coaches for their community-led group therapy support circles called Spaces. The platform seeks to provide more conversations around mental health, given that:

- India has only 0.75 psychiatrists per 100,000 patients.
- As per recent surveys, almost 150 million Indians require mental health services, but stigma and lack of resources form big barriers to reaching out for support - less than 30 million people seek help. — ANI

Nearly one billion served by healthcare facilities without reliable electricity: Report

CLOSE to 1 billion people in low and lower-middle-income countries are served by healthcare facilities with unreliable electricity supply or with no electricity access at all, according to a new report from the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforAll).

Access to electricity is critical for quality healthcare provision, from delivering babies to managing emergencies like heart attacks, or offering lifesaving immunization.



Without reliable electricity in all healthcare facilities, Universal Health Coverage cannot be reached, the report notes, according to a WHO press statement. PHOTO: AFP

Without reliable electricity in all healthcare facilities, Universal Health Coverage cannot be reached, the report notes, according to a WHO press statement. The joint report, Energizing Health: Accelerating Electricity Access in Healthcare Facilities, presents the latest data on electrification of healthcare facilities in low- and middle-income countries. It also projects investments required to achieve adequate and reliable electrification in healthcare and identify key priority actions for governments and development partners.—ANI

Maldives welcomes Chinese flight, tourists with water cannon salute

THE Maldives has welcomed the first direct flight from China with a water cannon salute following the latter's recent optimization of COVID-19 strategy.

The Capital Airlines' flight with over 190 Chinese tourists aboard was received Wednesday by Chinese Ambassador Wang Lixin, Tourism Minister of the Maldives Abdulla Mausoom and other officials at the Velana International Airport. As tourism is the pillar industry of the

Maldives, the return of Chinese tourists will help economic recovery of the Maldives following the pandemic, and is also conducive to promoting cultural and people-to-people exchanges and enhancing bilateral ties, Wang said at the welcoming ceremony. Wang said the Chinese embassy welcomes Chinese tourists to the Maldives, hoping that they will come happily, have fun and return safely. Mausoom told Xinhua at the ceremony that the



Arriving Chinese tourists are welcomed at the Velana International Airport in the Maldives on 18 January 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA/CHE

Maldives earlier forecast 1.8 million tourists for this year, and at least 10 per cent increase is expected from the original fore-

cast as Chinese tourists who had contributed a lot to the tourism market of the Maldives, are arriving again.—Xinhua

Organic-Pharma industry emerges in Jammu and Kashmir

THE Brand Kashmir of the Make In India campaign has spread so far that one should not be surprised to find anything, from as small as a bottle of Lavender essential oil to Kashmiri carpets, in any corner of the world.

Earlier the edibles from the Valley were limited to fruits and dry fruits, mainly for the Gulf export. But today you will find the smallest shops in Germany and other European states stocking up on dried apricots, rose oil, herbs, etc from Kashmir.—ANI

ECONOMY WORLD

Wholesale energy dives but bills remain sky high

PLUNGING wholesale gas prices have sparked speculation of an end to Europe's energy crisis — but consumers' electricity and gas bills remain sky high, fuelling runaway inflation.

European benchmark Dutch TTF gas price has shed 18 per cent since the start of this year as unusually warm winter weather depresses demand and encourages stockpiling.

The price has fallen by more than 82 per cent since August, when it had spiked on fears over a lack of supplies from key producer Russia.

The Ukraine conflict highlighted Europe's dependence on



Russia has drastically reduced gas supplies to Europe in recent months.

PHOTO: ODD ANDERSEN / AFP

Russian gas, prompting a rush for alternative resources and improved efficiency measures as leaders sought to avert a costly

supply crunch.

Replenishing reserves

This approach, in tandem with mild winter temperatures,

enabled European nations to replenish reserves.

"An unusually mild winter has helped reduce heating demand, while record liquid natural gas imports and increased renewable capacity have boosted supplies," said Mirabaud analyst John Plassard.

Europe's gas stocks are hovering at about 82 per cent of capacity, up from 50 per cent one year ago and "well above" the seasonal norm of 70 per cent, he added.

TTF gas sank to a 16-month low this week and stood at 60 euros per megawatt hour on Wednesday, although this

was still more than double its pre-pandemic level.

In contrast, TTF gas had rocketed last March to a record 345 euros after Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whose nation is attempting to wean itself off Russian energy, declared Saturday that gas prices are now falling in Europe.

Yet that has thus far failed to translate into lower bills for businesses and individuals.

With Russia also slashing its gas deliveries to Europe over Ukraine tensions, Norway has become the continent's primary supplier.— AFP

NTT East to trial edible cricket farming using AI, other tech

JAPANESE telecommunications giant Nippon Telegraph and Telephone East Corp said Thursday it will trial the farming of edible crickets using artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies in collaboration with a firm that manufactures products containing the insects.

The trial, set to begin this month in cooperation with cricket product venture Gryllus Inc, will take place at an NTT East testing facility in western

Tokyo to address global food shortages amid predictions by the United Nations that the human population will reach 9.7 billion in 2050.

The project will utilize technologies aimed at reducing the need for manual operations, such as sensors that will optimize temperature and humidity to provide suitable conditions for the crickets to grow and AI screens that will monitor their health and check for abnormalities.—Kyodo



Photo taken in Chofu, western Tokyo, in January 2023 shows a cricket breeding facility set up by Nippon Telegraph and Telephone East Corp in collaboration with Gryllus Inc. **PHOTO: NIPPON TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE EAST CORP / KYODO**

EU to ready sovereignty fund, boost clean tech

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Tuesday announced the preparation of a "sovereignty fund" and a Net Zero Industry Act, both intended to defend Europe's industrial base from subsidised US and Chinese competitors.

The European Sovereignty Fund would come as "part of the mid-term review of our budget this year", Von der Leyen said in a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos. The Net Zero Industry Act is intended to boost clean technologies.

Von der Leyen launched the idea of the fund in September last year, saying it was necessary for Europe to "adapt to the new global realities".

Singling out areas "as varied as batteries, hydrogen, semiconductors and raw materials", Von der Leyen said the time had come "to take these efforts to the next level to increase Europe's strategic autonomy".



Several critical raw materials such as indium are needed to produce photovoltaic panels. The EU will need more critical raw materials such as lithium and cobalt to manufacture batteries and electric engines.

PHOTO: CHARLY TRIBALLEAU / AFP

European industries.

The Net Zero Industry Act would propose a series of clean technology objectives for 2030 and is aimed at competing with the US Inflation Reduction Act, a \$369 billion green subsidy package that the EU fears will damage

European industries.

"It is no secret that certain elements of the design of the Inflation Reduction Act raised a number of concerns in terms of some of the targeted incentives for companies," according to Von der Leyen.—AFP

N Korea touts 2022 economic achievement despite challenges

NORTH Korea touted unspecified economic achievement in 2022 despite unprecedented challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic during a recent session of its top legislature, which leader Kim Jong Un did not attend, according to state-run media reports Thursday. In a report to the

two-day Supreme People's Assembly session through Wednesday, Premier Kim Tok Hun said North Korean people "achieved remarkable successes in the struggle for economic construction" by overcoming "all sorts of unprecedented challenges and threats", the official Korean Cen-

tral News Agency said. The premier, however, did not elaborate on the economic achievement and said the Cabinet revealed "not a few shortcomings" in last year's struggle to implement the decisions of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea. Those shortcomings were not specified.—Kyodo

Finnish fur farm horror caught on video as industry fights ban

OBESE, infection-ridden foxes trapped in small cages; cubs feeding on their dead siblings: footage filmed by an animal rights group paints a shocking picture of fur farming in Finland.

With nearly a million pelts produced annually, Finland is Europe's leading producer of certified fox fur, second in the world

after China. But the new footage highlights the controversy over the Nordic country's fur industry, which is fighting calls to have it outlawed.

"Fur farming should have been banned in Finland by now and I think it is shameful that this has not yet been done", Left Alliance MP Mai Kivela told AFP. —AFP



The footage reveals the conditions in which the foxes live, trapped inside small, wire mesh cages. **PHOTO: OIKEUTTA ELAIMILLE /AFP**

US retail sales take nosedive in December

US retail sales in December fell to their lowest level in a year, weighed down by decreasing auto sales and many other products. US retail sales softened 1.1 per cent in December amid ongoing high inflation, according to data published by the Commerce Department on Wednesday. December's decline was the largest month-on-month drop since December 2021. Altogether, US restaurants and retailers clocked 677.1 billion US dollars in sales last month, a 1.1 per cent drop from November's revised 685 billion US dollars.—Xinhua

Japan posts record trade deficit of 19.97 trl yen in 2022

JAPAN ran its biggest annual trade deficit of 19.97 trillion yen (\$155.27 billion) in 2022, as higher energy and raw material prices along with the yen's precipitous fall boosted import costs, offsetting growth in exports as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic waned, government data showed Thursday.

The value of imports jumped 39.2 per cent to a record 118.16 trillion yen, led by crude oil, coal and liquefied natural gas, while exports grew 18.2 per cent to 98.19 trillion yen, also



Containers are loaded onto trucks from an international freighter at Tokyo port. **PHOTO: KYODO**

a record high, due to increased shipments of cars and steel, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary

report.

The annual deficit of 12.82 trillion yen reported in 2014 was previously the

country's largest. Comparable data became available in 1979.

The record red ink underscores the vulnerability of resource-scarce Japan, which has to rely on imports to meet domestic needs.

The depreciation of the yen, which plunged to its lowest level in over three decades against the US dollar, exacerbated the pain, cutting into national wealth. The dollar averaged 130.77 yen in 2022, 19.5 per cent higher than the year before.—Kyodo

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2302S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2302S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S BLPL SHIPPING

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V IAL 001 VOY.NO. (W142)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (W142)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S INTER ASIA LINES

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (38/2022-2023)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following item in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(1)	DMP/L-183(22-23)	Mud Chemical (3) Items	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from **20 January, 2023** at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications and Commercial Quotation with Original Bid Bond in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **12:00 pm on 3, February 2023**.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time – **3-2-2023, 12:00 pm**

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67 – 411206

Transferring Distributor for Registered Product

Distribution of following(1) Pesticides registered by Shanghai E-Tong Chemical Co.,Ltd. is transferring from Yonta Myanmar Co.,Ltd. to Wah Wah Agricultural Chemicals Trading Co.,Ltd. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within(7) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Retistration Type	Regisrtration No.
1	E-T Metanil 440SC	Chlorothalonil 40%+ Metalaxyl 4% SC	Full Registration	F2019-2079

Wah Wah Agricultural Chemicals Trading Co.,Ltd.
Contant No- 09-400 902 044, 09- 420 021 530

Transferring Distributor for Registered Product

Distribution of following(1) Pesticides registered by Zhejiang E-Tong Chemical Co.,Ltd. is transferring from Yonta Myanmar Co.,Ltd. to Wah Wah Agricultural Chemicals Trading Co.,Ltd. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within(7) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration Number
1	E-T Cyber 25EC	Cypermethrin 25% EC	Full Registration	F2017-1477

Wah Wah Agricultural Chemicals Trading Co.,Ltd.
Contant No- 09-400 902 044, 09- 420 021 530

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GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Only 8.5% of Western firms have left Russia: study

DESPITE widespread outrage over Moscow's war in Ukraine, only a small number of Western companies have deserted Russia, according to a Swiss study.

Researchers at the University of St Gallen and at the IMD institute in Lausanne have delved into how many companies based in the European Union and in G7 countries have actually divested from Russia since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine began last February.

Their findings reveal "a very limited retreat of EU and G7 firms from Russia, (and) challenge the narrative that

there is a vast exodus of Western firms leaving the market," St Gallen University said in a statement Thursday.

"In effect, many firms headquartered in these nations have resisted pressures from governments, the media, and NGOs to leave Russia since the invasion of Ukraine."

The study, which was published last month by the online Social Science Research Network (SSRN) — a publisher of "pre-print" studies not subjected to scientific peer-review — showed that only less than 10 per cent of EU and G7 companies with Russian subsidiaries had divested them.—AFP



Customers stand in front of a US Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) fast food kiosk in Evroreisky (European) shopping mall in Moscow on 7 March 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

S Korea evacuates 500 people over Gangnam slum fire

A massive fire broke out inside one of the last remaining slums in South Korea's capital on Friday, forcing 500 people to flee their homes ahead of the Lunar New Year holiday, authorities said.

Video posted online showed flames tearing through Guryong village, a shantytown in the shadows of high-rise luxury towers in Seoul's Gangnam district, which was made famous by rapper Psy's global hit "Gangnam Style".

The blaze, which began at around 6:30 am, is believed to have burned down around 60 homes, but was extinguished by around noon, according to authorities.

No casualties have been reported and the cause of the fire is still unknown, they added.

"We are thinking of carrying out an additional investigation into the case," Choi Jae-young, an official from the Seoul Metropolitan Fire and Disaster Headquarters, said. Residents said they were not surprised by the blaze.—AFP

S Africa says to stage joint naval drills with Russia, China

SOUTH Africa, which has resisted taking sides following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, announced Thursday it will next month stage 10-day joint military drills with Russia and China off its coast.

"As means to strengthen the already flourishing relations between South Africa, Russia and China, a multinational maritime exercise between these three countries ... will take place," the army said.

The exercises dubbed "Mosi", which translates to "smoke" in the local Tswana language, are scheduled for 17 to 27 February, off the coasts of the port city of Durban and Richards Bay, which is 180 kilometres (110 miles) away.

It will be the second such exercise involving the three naval forces, the South African National Defence Force said.

The first was held in November 2019 off Cape Town.



Russian soldiers on a military drill. More than 350 South African army personnel will take part in drills alongside their Russian and Chinese counterparts next month. **PHOTO: AFP**

More than 350 South African army personnel will take part in the drills "alongside the Russian and Chinese counterparts, with an aim of sharing operational skills and knowledge", the army said.

South Africa recently assumed the chairmanship of the BRICS, a grouping that brings

it together with Brazil, Russia, India and China to challenge the dominant US- and European-led global governance structures.

South Africa has refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a war which has triggered sweeping Western sanctions.—AFP

IS attacks still claim Iraqi lives five years after defeat

THE attack came after sunset in the quiet Iraqi village of Albu Bali when Islamic State group gunmen drove into town and unleashed fire with automatic rifles.

"I heard the shots, I went out and I saw my nephew lying on the ground," recalled Ali Menwar about the deadly violence that shattered the local calm on 19 December.

The group of Sunni Muslim extremists "arrived at about 8:15 pm and started firing randomly", said another local from the mainly Shiite village, Abbas Mazhar Hussein, 34.

As Menwar rushed inside, bullets smashed into the wall around him and two grazed his neck, which now bears angry red scars, before he could slam the gate shut behind him.

Others were less lucky in the village of 5,000 people, about 70 kilometres (40 miles) north of the capital Baghdad.

"My son, my grandson and



The surge of violence in Iraq spares no one and no place. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/AFP/FILE**

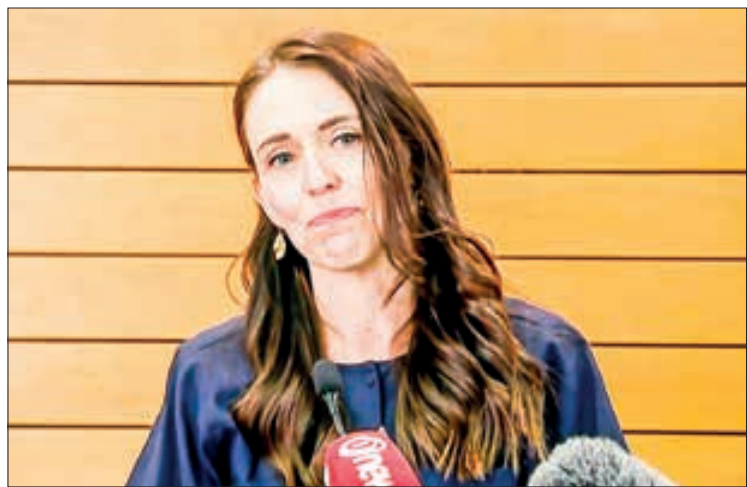
my cousins fell as martyrs," said Menwar's neighbour Jabbar Alwan, his eyes welling up with tears.

"It's very painful," said the elderly man, who lost four rel-

atives. "We didn't expect this." When it was all over, eight people lay dead and another six were wounded in Albu Bali.

None of the attackers have been caught.—AFP

Race on to replace Ardern as New Zealand PM



The race is on to replace New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern after her shock resignation. PHOTO: TVNZ/AFP/FILE

JACINDA Ardern's shock resignation sparked a push on Friday for New Zealand to choose its first Maori prime minister, as a small pack of candidates emerged for the top job.

Ardern, a global figurehead for progressive politics, stunned New Zealand on Thursday by announcing her abrupt exit from office, less than three years after securing a second term in a landslide election win.

The 42-year-old — who steered the country through natural disasters, the Covid pan-

demic, and its worst-ever terror attack — said she no longer had “enough in the tank”.

Ardern resigned with no clear successor, and her ruling Labour Party is now scrambling to settle on a replacement.

Labour members of parliament will try to elect the next prime minister on Sunday — with the winning candidate needing two-thirds of the vote.

If that does not happen, it will become a drawn-out contest involving rank-and-file party members and affiliated unions.

Chris Hipkins, 44, is the early frontrunner after Ardern's deputy Grant Robertson swiftly ruled himself out of the race.

Other names in the mix are Justice Minister Kiri Allan, one of Labour's senior Maori MPs, and Immigration Minister Michael Wood.

None of the three has so far confirmed they will contest the ballot. The high-profile Hipkins has handled the tough portfolios of Covid-19 response, police and education, and is seen as a safe pair of hands. —AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

UK police 'looking into' video of Sunak sans seatbelt

BRITISH police will be “looking into” a video in which Prime Minister Rishi Sunak can be seen riding in a car without a seatbelt — an “error of judgment” for which he has apologized, according to Downing Street.

In yesterday's video, produced for distribution on Sunak's social media channels, the seatbeltless Conservative leader speaks from the back seat of a moving car about his policies for boosting growth during a trip to Lancashire in England's north.

Failing to wear a seatbelt is punishable by a fine of up to £500 (RM2,649).—AFP

Brazil's Lula vows to defeat 'fanatical far right'

BRAZIL President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva spoke on Thursday of his desire to defeat the “new monster” that is the “fanatical far right”, not just in his country but throughout the whole world.

Leftist former trade unionist Lula took over at the beginning of this month from far right former president Jair Bolsonaro after defeating his bitter rival in last October's election.

At 77, Lula is now serving his third term as president having previously led Latin America's largest economy from 2003-10.—AFP

Swedish intel agent gets life for spying for Russia

A judge on Thursday handed a life sentence to a former Swedish intelligence official convicted of spying for Russia for a decade and jailed his brother for 10 years.

A Stockholm court found 42-year-old Peyman Kia, who served in Sweden's intelligence service Sapo and military intelligence units, and his brother Payam, 35, guilty of “aggravated espionage”.

It is considered one of Sweden's most serious espionage affairs in history given Peyman Kia's access to highly classified information, which he is convicted of gathering for Russian military intelligence from 2011 to 2021. The brothers, Swedish citizens of Iranian origin, “illegally and for the benefit of Russia and the GRU, acquired, transmitted and disclosed information whose disclosure to a foreign power



Judge Mans Wigen handed Peyman Kia a life sentence for espionage. PHOTO: AFP

could harm Sweden's security”, the court ruled.

It found Peyman Kia guilty of gathering some 90 classified documents, some of which he did not have security clearance to access. His brother was found guilty of planning the crime and

managing contacts with the GRU, passing on about 45 of the classified documents.

They were arrested in 2021, several years after Sapo first suspected a mole and counter-intelligence began investigating Peyman Kia.—AFP



Mali has turned away from colonial power France, in favour of Russia. PHOTO: OUSMANE MAKAVELI/AFP

Mali gets more warplanes, helicopters from Russia

MALI'S military rulers received more warplanes and helicopters from Russia Thursday, an AFP correspondent noted, the latest in a series of deliveries from its new top military and political ally.

AFP counted eight planes and two helicopters at a ceremony attended by Russian ambassador Igor Gromyko and the head of Mali's junta, Colonel

Assimi Goita. Mali's military said the shipment included Sukhoi Su-25 attack planes designed to support ground troops; and the Czech-designed Albatros L-39.

L-39s, while initially designed for training purposes, have also been used as attack aircraft. Bamako also received Mi-8s, a Soviet-designed Russian transport helicopter that,

as well as transporting troops and equipment, can be fitted with weapons to defend ground troops.

Malian officials did not give a detailed breakdown of how many of each aircraft had been delivered, and while they say they purchased the weapons, they have released no details of the transactions.—AFP



Aung La N Sang signs for next ONE Championship fight



MYANMAR MMA star Aung La N Sang has announced via social media that he has signed for an upcoming fight for ONE Championship.

He is now close to challenging for the ONE Middleweight World Championship after winning his last two bouts and will be eligible for a regular or title challenge, as the ONE Championship organization will announce soon.

Aung La informed all of his having already signed for the upcoming bout, but the exact date and fixtures will be announced by the ONE Championship organization.

Aung La N Sang is aiming to regain his middleweight world title before retiring as he defeated Japan's Okami in an MMA challenge on 19 November and won the Brazilian Galvao by stoppage in the first round on 14 January.

Aung La N Sang is a former two-weight world champion of the ONE Championship and was the middleweight world champion from 30 June 2017 to 30 October 2020. He was able to stand as the light heavyweight world champion from 23 February 2018 to 28 April 2021 and lost both championship belts to Dutchman De Ridder.

He is only aiming to regain the middleweight world title after losing both of his world championship belts. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Former two-division ONE World Champion Aung La N Sang. PHOTO: AUNG LA N SANG'S FB

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.

'This is nothing': Ronaldo v Messi just the start for Saudis

A showdown between two of the world's greatest footballers provided an entertaining spectacle in Riyadh but deep-pocketed Saudi Arabia will not stop there in its drive to burnish its image through sport.

Deafening fireworks closed Thursday's exhibition between Lionel Messi's Paris Saint-Germain and a composite team led by Saudi Pro League new arrival Cristiano Ronaldo, won 5-4 by the visitors. The friendly had all the trimmings of a major fixture, complete with VAR, flame-throwers, tickertape and a medal presentation in front of more than 60,000 fans at the venerable King Fahd Stadium. But the desert kingdom is already promising more with a World Cup and Summer Olympics, perhaps even a Winter Olympics, already in its sights, together with a swathe of other major events.

"This is a big match but... this is nothing (compared to) what will happen with Vision 2030," said Turki Al Sheikh, head of the General Entertainment Authority, referring to Saudi Arabia's ambitious development plan. Just five years after allowing its first non-Muslim tourists and letting women drive, Saudi Arabia is attempting to open up its conservative, long-cloistered society to the world. The world's biggest oil exporter has thrown hundreds of millions at sports deals including Ronaldo's capture, F1 in Jeddah and the lucrative LIV Golf tour, drawing frequent claims it is "sportswashing" its human rights record.—AFP

Myanmar National League clubs recruit local star players



The Yangon United sign the contract with Myanmar national team defender Zaw Ye Tun. PHOTO: YUFC

MYANMAR National League clubs such as Yangon and Shan Uniteds have recruited Myanmar national team players.

The Yangon United signed a contract with Myanmar national team defender Zaw Ye Tun from Yadanabon FC, while the Shan

United team recruited Myanmar national team winger Ye Yint Aung from Yadanabon FC during the pre-season transfer period.

During the transfer period, the Yangon team had seven players. Shan United has already recruited six players. Before recruiting Zaw Ye Tun, team Yangon has already signed talented players including Hlaing Bo Bo, Yan Kyaw Htwe, Okkar Naing, Kaung Htet Soe, and foreign players Sella and Marli Harbia.

Shan United is recruiting only local players and has also signed contracts with Kyaw Ko Ko, Lin Htet Soe, Khin Kyaw Win, Htet Phyto Wai, and Aung Wunna Soe. The pre-season transfer window is open until 31 January, and the rest of the teams are expected to announce their signings soon. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL