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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

Only when the commission obtains correct data across the nation will the voter lists be correct: Senior General



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the SAC Meeting 1/2023 in Nay Pyi Taw on 23 January 2023.

THE Union Election Commission should allow the political parties for registration but these parties must not violate the constitution, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the SAC Meeting 1/2023 at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Needs for amending the Political Parties Registration Law

In his opening speech, the

Senior General said that as eighty-eight out of more than 90 political parties participated in the 2020 multiparty democracy general election, representatives from 19 parties only were elected and two representatives won in the election as independent representatives. It can be reviewed that although there are many political parties in the country, they are weak in representing the people. Actually, they have to represent the people with united strength.

According to the experi-

ences in previous multiparty democracy general elections, a few numbers of political parties could grasp the chance to participate in the Hluttaw despite many political parties. Many numbers of political parties could do their functions as a member group. If such a group is small, it will not enable to do organizational tasks in large areas. The Senior General noted that all political parties have to systematically organize themselves in a compact manner.

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National Objectives for 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023

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



Public Notice for elimination of violence

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

Paletwa-Zorampur road construction under Kaladan River Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project restarts



The photo shows a section of the Paletwa-Zorampur road under implementation.

THE Kaladan River Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project — the India-Myanmar friendship project in Paletwa Township, Chin State — and the road construction projects from Paletwa Township, Chin State, to Zorampur, were suspended in

2020 due to various reasons. However, the construction of the Paletwa-Zorampur road resumed on 25 December 2022.

The Paletwa-Zorampur road will be 27 feet wide and 109 kilometres long from the Paletwa Township to the Indian border. The companies that have won the tender for the road construction project — the K & DL Company, Su Htoo San Company, Shwe Mann Company, Future Creator Group Construction Company and Htet Shine Linn Company — will complete the construction of the road within five years. — Township IPRD/CT

Three MoH representatives leave for Thailand to attend AAAH conference

DR Tin Tun, Chairman of Asia-Pacific Action Alliance on Human Resources for Health-AAAHA and Director-General of the Department of Human Resources for Health under the Ministry of Health, Professor Dr Myo Thet Tin, Rector of the University of Medicine (Mandalay) and Dr Paing Thitsa, Assistant Director of the Department of Human Resources for Health under the Ministry of Health, left Yangon for Thailand yesterday morning to attend the 12th Asia-Pacific Action Alliance on Human Resources for Health Conference and central executive committee meetings to be held in Bangkok from 23 to 25 January.

The conference aims to develop human resources for health in the Asia-Pacific region by learning from the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthening the health workforce and health system resilience. —MNA/KZW



Three delegates from the Ministry of Health are seen before departing for Thailand.

4 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 January, total figure rises to 633,805

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,805** after **four** new cases were reported on 23 January 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,255**, including **10** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to **19,490** on 23-1-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.— MNA

Mottos for 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023

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

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

Existing Constitution provides ethnic rights

OUR country is formed with eight major national races and more than 130 ethnic nationals. All ethnic nationals have an equal term of rights. The existing Constitution mentions the rights of ethnic affairs. Our government will continue efforts for enabling ethnic people to have deserved rights and entitlements.

(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)

Only when the commission obtains correct data across the nation will the voter lists be correct: Senior General

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It is necessary to review the Political Parties Registration Law to make amendments if necessary.

Discussions for amending the Political Parties Registration Law

The Union Election Commission Chairman reported on preparations to amend the law. The SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister, the SAC secretary, the joint secretary, Council members, and attendees discussed matters related to amending the law.

The Senior General gave necessary supplementary guidance.

In conclusion, the Senior General said that as the country is exercising the democratic system, it is necessary to strive for holding a free and fair election whatever it may be. All the people are to cast votes without fail. As the government has agreed with EAOs in cementing the multiparty democratic



The Vice-Senior General joins the discussion.

system and building the Union system based on democracy and federalism in principle, it is necessary to focus on holding the election across the nation and creating the chance for the entire people to freely cast votes

without threats and coercion. It is important to enact the Political Parties Registration Law. The Union Election Commission should allow the political parties to register but these parties must not violate



The UEC Chairman reports on preparations to amend the law.

the constitution. The Senior General stressed the need to open all election sub-commission offices. Preparations must be made for compiling the correct voter list. Only when the commission obtains correct

data across the nation will the voter lists be correct. A free and fair election must be held in all places with the participation of the people, and such an election must be systematic and justified. — MNA/TTA

Press Release on reconstitution of Special Court of Inquiry

1. A Special Court of Inquiry led by Maj-Gen Myat Kyaw was established to investigate terror attacks of ARSA extremists at the Chut Pyin and Maung Nu villages in Buthidaung-Maungtau region of Rakhine State in 2017. Although the court completed the investigation processes of the Maung Nu village case, the Chut Pyin village case investigation was withdrawn temporarily as residents who were involved in the cases no longer resided in Chut Pyin village or in its vicinity areas and due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions.
2. Maj-Gen Myat Kyaw, who was assigned as Chairperson of the Court of Inquiry regarding the Chut Pyin village case, retired from Tatmadaw and so it is here announced that the Special Court of Inquiry is reconstituted with the following members to conduct investigations: —

- (a) Brig-Gen Soe Tint (Chairman)
- (b) Colonel Than Hlaing (member)
- (c) Colonel Myo Aung (member)

Tatmadaw Information Team

2 special civil appeal cases passed judgements; 1 special criminal, 2 special civil appeal cases heard

A special appeal tribunal consisting of Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo and Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union U Myo Tint, Daw Khin May Yi, U Thaug Naing and U Thein Ko Ko was convened yesterday morning at the Supreme Court and passed judgements for two special civil appeal cases No 48/2020

(Sagaing) and No 49/2020 (Sagaing).

In addition, a total of three special appeal cases – one special criminal appeal case No 11/2022 (Mandalay) and two special civil appeal cases No 28/2020 (Shan) and No 18/2021 (Mandalay) – were heard following COVID-19 prevention and control guidelines. — MNA

MoI Union Minister gives directives to IPRD for 2023

THE Information and Public Relations Department organized a ceremony to seek directives for 2023 from the Union Minister of Information yesterday.

Speaking at the event, Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn said it should highlight the duties and attitudes of region/state/district and township IPRD heads in 2023 and carry out the duties by applying the skills in unification based on their own stance. They are also required to have proper opinions regarding political, social, economic and international outlook.



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn provides working guidance for the Information and Public Relations Department in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The region/state/district and township IPRD Heads have already achieved experiences in accordance with their age groups and should know their main objective. They should recognize themselves as reliable moderators for the country and the public. They should think about

the measures that should be done in the interest of the country knowing the history and political situation of the country. They also should keep learning about the international situation and serve the youth and public by providing true news and information.

Then, the Director-General of IPRD reported on the activities of the department launched in 2022 and other officials coordinated the discussion.

The Union minister concluded the discussion after giving proper instructions. — MNA/KTZH

Tender invited for cooperation of private entrepreneurs in State-owned tyre factory

A tender has been invited for private entrepreneurs to operate the No 21 Heavy Industry (Tyre Factory – Thaton) near the Kyarban village on Thaton-Hpa-an road in Thaton Township, Mon State, under public-private partnership-PPP scheme. The deadline for submitting the tender will be 10 February.

The Thaton tyre factory was established with Czech technology and started operating in 1985,

producing bias tyres with inner tubes.

According to the No 2 Heavy Industries Enterprise, the tender is being called for the production of tyres and rubber products as well as other industrial products. Interested domestic investors can submit tender forms to Office No 41 of the No 2 Heavy Industries Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, not later than 10 February. — TWA/CT



The entrance to a tyre factory in Thaton.

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions

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

Yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, and relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 210 people from twenty-six townships in Ayeyawady Region, and 2,655 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region, respectively.

Similarly, on that day healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 660 students from Kengtung Township in Shan State (East), 1,350 students



A student from Kangyidaunt Township in Ayeyawady Region gets jabbed against COVID-19 on 23 January 2023.

from twenty-six townships in Ayeyawady Region, and 8,982 students from seven districts in Mandalay Region.

Commanders and officials

from relevant Military Commands visited and encouraged such services and coordinated the necessary services, it is learnt. — MNA

Daily newspapers available online

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

MoHT Union Minister highlights necessary measures to attract domestic/foreign tourists

UNION Minister Dr Htay Aung of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism met the directors-general of the ministry and staff, the Myanmar Tourism Federation president, chairpersons and members of relevant associations, chairs, secretaries and joint secretaries of hotel zones and tourism associations from states and regions in the hybrid system yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Union minister pointed out that the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of tourism development and gave guidance at State-level meetings and ceremonies. Furthermore, the Prime Minister directed 14 points to be implemented jointly by the government and private organizations individually and as a group for the development of destination areas, while meet-

ing hoteliers on 20 January in Ngapali. All stakeholders should lay emphasis on these 14 points as their working directives, the Union minister elaborated.

The ministry is implementing short-term and long-term projects for the systematic and sustainable development of Myanmar's tourism in cooperation with international and regional organizations, hotels and tourism associations so that businesspeople must make efforts to make their businesses successful, he urged.

From January to December 2022, the arrival of foreign tourists increased by 78 per cent year on year. Main visitors were from China, Thailand, India, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, the United States, Britain and Russia. The Union minister stressed



Union Minister Dr Htay Aung addresses the tourism meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

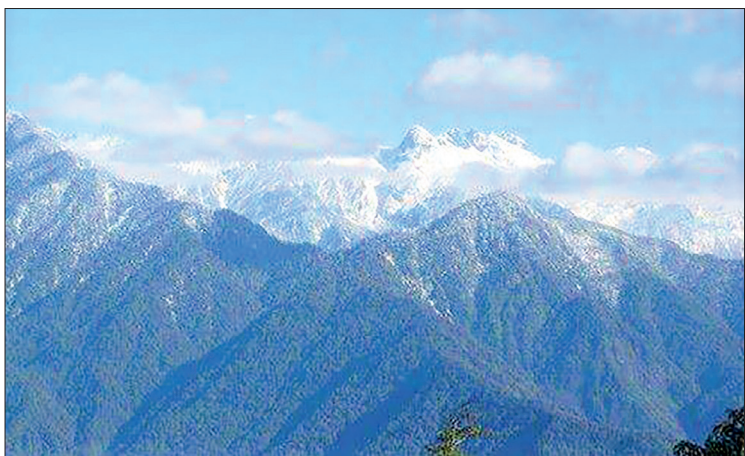
emphasized that exerted and collaborative efforts are needed from tourism associations and business persons as the ministry is planning to take necessary

measures so as to attract both domestic and international travellers.

After the attendees discussed the ministry's measures

and put forward future implementation plans, Union Minister Dr Htay Aung coordinated the requirements.—MNA/TS

Wildlife conservation activities conducted at Hponkanrazi to sustain biodiversity



General view of the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary. PHOTOS: KANU

IN order to keep the sustainability of biodiversity, wildlife conservation activities are being carried out in the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary, the centre of the world's ecosystem, which is located in Machanbaw, Putao and Nagmon Townships, Kachin State where the N Mai Kha (or) Maykha and Mali (or) Malikha Rivers originate.

The Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary has been a vital glacial region of the global ecosystem among ASEAN countries since various biodiversity — glacial animals, indigenous birds, ice fishes, medicinal herbs, varieties of orchids and hibernating birds — are inhabiting it.

The Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary contiguous with the Hkakaborazi National Park is a grazing place for the world's rare water-birds, black-necked cranes. They come from Mon-

the world and Mongolia.

Biodiversity conservation activities are being done at the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary as in the Hkakaborazi National Park. It is known that there are difficulties in restoring wildlife habitats, due to being short-staffed and budget requirements. The fruits of the long-term development of the nation's Hkakaborazi National Park and Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary will be enjoyed by posterity, by holding awareness talks to residents, doing maintenance by patrolling,



Black-necked cranes.

golia to the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary in October and November and stay and rest there for about a fortnight or a month to replenish food and water. Then, they move on to the Hukawng Valley, Indawgyi Lake, Inlay Lake, Moeyungyi Wetland and other natural lakes in Myanmar to hibernate. Then again, they rest in the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary in March and April and fly on to the North Pole of

regularly collecting species and populations of birds, mammals and ice fishes, carrying out research activities and conservation activities for medicinal herbs and wild animals.

“Hibernating birds are not there (the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary) anymore. They are now resting in the lakes of Myanmar. Takin, clouded leopard, red goral, red panda, Asiatic black bear, western hoolock gibbon, jer-

don's minivet and monal are rare species. Hornbills live in healthy forests, so we can predict the natural state of the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary. Wildlife conservation activities are being conducted by the existing staff. The beauty of the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary will last forever if we cooperate with the locals and preserve it for generations,” said Warden U Thein Htay of the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary.

There are 36 mammals, 370 bird species, 360 butterfly species, 82 amphibians and reptiles, and 42 local fish species in the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary. Myanmar collaborated with scholars from the United States, South Korea and Nepal on plant and biological conservation, and research activities. After 2021, activities were temporarily suspended due to the global pan-

demic. As Nepal is an ice-covered region, the cooperation with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development- ICI-MOD in Nepal contributed a lot to research activities on global climate change and mutations in wild animals and plants.

If more domestic and foreign tourists enter the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary and the Hkakaborazi National Park, which are located in the far north of Myanmar, it will further develop tourism and support the socio-economic development of the residents. As it is the peak season for the ice mountains in Putao, local tourists and mountaineering teams flock to visit. Therefore, efforts are being made to sustain biodiversity in the Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary, the centre of the global ecosystem.—Nyein Thu (MNA)/CT



Fritillaria Cirrhosa



Black Orchid



Shepadi-Ophiocordyceps sinensis



Aconitum nagarum flora

CURRENT AFFAIRS



Kaba Aye Pagoda.

71st Kaba Aye Pagoda Buddha Pujaniya Festival to be held

THE 71st Kaba Aye Pagoda Buddha Pujaniya festival will be held starting from 12th waxing day of Tabodwe in Mayangon Township, according to the Pagoda Board of Trustees.

At the pagoda festival, the Pathana reciting ceremony will be held from the 12th waxing day of Tabodwe to the 1st waning day of Tabodwe. The traditional “Htamane” making festival will also be organized at 8 am on the 12th waxing day of Tabodwe and the 13th waxing day.

Alms will be offered to the Buddha on the morning of the full moon day. In addition, the Buddha Anekaja (consecrating a Buddha's image) and merit sharing ceremonies will be held with 11 members of Sayadaws led by Vice-Chairpersons of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee at 9 am on the 1st waning day of Tabodwe. — TWA/MKKS

Yangon zoological garden to celebrate its 117th anniversary

THE 117th anniversary of Yangon Zoological Garden will be celebrated from 27 to 29 January.

The garden was opened in Mingala Taungnyunt Township on 25 January 1906. Now, it turned 117 years old on 25 January 2023.

“We have made all the necessary arrangements for the public to be able to relax. Game shows, quizzes and performances of tame animals will be included for



Children are seen on puzzles (above) and posing for the picture with birds (below).



children. I would like to invite the people to visit the gardens on the day of its 117th anniversary,” zoological garden warden U Than Myint Tun told The GNLN.

The Yangon Zoological Garden covers an area of 58.16 acres and has about 1,400 animals with 132 species.

The Yangon Zoological Garden was run under the Ministry of Forestry but from 1 April 2011, Htoo Company has been running it with a long-term contract. — TWA/KZW

Monsoon onion price hits five-year record high at end-Jan 2023

THE price of monsoon onion hit the highest in the last week of January 2023 from the corresponding period in the past five years. Moreover, there is a great prospect for the summer onions that will be harvested in the upcoming summer to jump to the highest compared to the same period in the five years.

The price of summer onions stood around K800 per viss. This year, it is likely to rise above K1,000.

On 23 January, Yangon's Bayintnaung Wholesale Market saw a bulk supply of over 250,000 visses of onions during the post-Chinese New Year Festival and half of them are from the Myittha area, said a trader Ko Swe.

The onions are primarily supplied from Myingyan, Seikphyu, Taungtha, Monywa, Sinphyukyun and Minbu areas. Those from Pakokku, Meiktila,

Kyaukpadaung, Minhla, Pyawbwe and Mahlaing areas also flow into markets. The monsoon onions are forecast to continue to enter Yangon markets.

On 23 January 2023, the onion prices stood at K1,800-1,900 per viss from Myingyan,



Trucks loaded with onions are seen entering the Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre while a worker carrying a sack of onions is passing by.

K1,650-K1,900 from Seikphyu and K2,000-K2,400 from the Myittha area.

During the same periods in the past years, the highest prices were K675-K1,000 per viss in 2022, K475 in 2021, K1,100-K1,300 in 2020 and

K600-K1,100 in 2019 respectively.

Between 6 December 2022 and 23 January 2023, a total of 6.5 million visses of monsoon onions from various regions flowed into Yangon markets.

The new onions cultivated in winter are soon to arrive in the markets, said an onion warehouse owner.

Rocketing cultivation input prices hiked up the production cost to K2.5 million per acre. The yield rate is estimated at 4,000-6,000 viss per acre. There are approximately 100,000 acres of onions in the country, with a production capacity of 600 million visses.

Last year, adverse weather conditions and other circumstances scaled down the onion acreage by half. Thus, the price surged to the new peak of K5,100 per viss at the end of 2022. — TWA/EMM



The photo shows persons lining up to buy JLPT exam application forms.

2022 JLPT exam results announced on 23 January

MYANMAR Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA) said that the 2022 JLPT exam results were released on 23 January.

The Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA) suspended the selling of 2022 JLPT exam application forms for the exam to be held in December (N4 Level) in Yangon as over 5,000 people bought them in a scramble and announced that the application forms would be accepted through the online system. — TWA/MKKS

LOCAL BUSINESS

Rice prices skyrocket in domestic market

THE prices of new rice spiked in the domestic market, according to the Wadan Rice Wholesale Centre.

On 20 January 2023, new Pawsan rice prices moved in the range between K61,000 and K80,000 per bag depending on the producing areas (Shwebo, Myaungmya, Dedaye, Pyapon and, Pathein). Three days after, the prices moved up to K63,000-84,000 per bag.

Figures indicated an increase of K2,000-4,000 per bag within three days.

Similarly, the prices of low-grade rice stayed between K43,500-67,000 per bag depending on different varieties (Kyapyan, Emahta, Meedone, Ngasain) on 20 January. The prices touched a high of K45,500-70,000



On 20 January 2023, new Pawsan rice prices moved in the range between K61,000 and K80,000 per bag depending on the producing areas (Shwebo, Myaungmya, Dedaye, Pyapon and, Pathein). Three days after, the prices moved up to K63,000-84,000 per bag.

per bag on 23 January, showing a steep rise of K1,000-4,000 per bag depending on different varieties.

High demand for paddy in the market pushed up the rice prices.

Starting from 3 August 2022, Myanmar Rice Federation, Myanmar Rice Producers and

Planters Association, Myanmar Rice Millers Association, and traders and brokers engaged in Wadan Rice Wholesale Centre and Bayintnaung Rice Wholesale Centre have been working together to offer fair prices for Shwebo Pawsan from K75,000-77,000 per bag and other rice varieties to the consumers at the Wadan Wholesale Centre.

The offer prices are K52,000-55,000 per bag of Pawsan from the Ayeyawady area, K55,000-60,000 per bag of Kyapyan, and K35,000-37,000 per bag of short-mature rice varieties (90 days) at the Wadan Rice Wholesale Centre.

Each household can buy only one bag. Those traders and retailers are not entitled to buy them.—NN/EMM

More than 20,000 acres of chickpea planted in Pwintbyu Township

A total of 21,317 acres of chickpea were planted in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region, this winter crop growing season, aiming to develop the local pulse crop production sector and increase the income of local farmers, according to the Pwintbyu Township

Agriculture Department.

In Pwintbyu Township, 21,843 acres of chickpeas were targeted to be planted this year's winter crop season. Local farmers started cultivation in the first week of November 2022, and so far, 21,317 acres of chickpeas



A total of 21,317 acres of chickpea were planted in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region, this winter crop growing season.

have been sown. Farmers have been engaged in cultivation all year round since they get enough water for farming from the Mezali diversion weir. A total of 87,311 acres of cold season crops are being designated to grow in this season — 31,347 acres of oil crops such as peanut, sesame, sunflower and niger, 39,712 acres of pulses including chickpea, 4,073 acres of kitchen crops, 1,785 acres of corn, 10,074 acres of cattle feed plant and 320 acres of other crops. To date, 76,170 acres of various crops have been planted in the township, according to the Department of Agriculture in Pwintbyu Township. — Hlaing Win Lay (Pwintbyumyay)/CT

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 23 January 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,305
Octane 95	K2,385
Diesel	K2,480
Premium Diesel	K2,560

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,262,000 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,808,000 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.

Palm oil wholesale reference price remains unchanged at K4,440 per viss

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil in the Yangon market stays the same at K4,440 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilograms) like the previous week, according to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution.

The reference price was set at K4,440 per viss for a week ending 22 January, and the price remained unchanged for a week from 23 to 29 January.

The Supervisory Commit-

tee on edible oil import and distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia. With transport costs, tariffs and banking services being evaluated, the committee has been issuing the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil every week.

Regardless of the reference price, the current market price is way too high.

If those edible oil retailers and wholesalers are found overcharging, storing inventory intentionally and attempting unscrupulous action to manipulate the market, they will face legal action under the Essential Supplies and Service Act, MoC released a statement.

Additionally, the Ministry of Commerce is striving for consumers not to worry over the possible shortage of edible oil. The ministry is also trying to

secure edible oil sufficiency, supervise the market to offer reasonable prices to the consumers and maintain price stability.

At present, mobile market trucks operated by oil importing companies, in coordination with Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association, were back to business in some townships on 17 July to offer palm oil at a subsidized rate. They sell palm oil at K4,650 per viss to consumers directly. However, there are lim-

ited sources of supply although they directly sell palm oil at a reference rate depending on the volume quota.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at one million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the oil sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported through Malaysia and Indonesia.—NN/EMM

OPINION

Efficiently utilize freshwater sources for future consumption

TODAY'S world is facing the problem of losing water sources through droughts which are consequences of climate change. An increasing number of global population and improvement in the socioeconomic life of the people affects using a larger volume of water.

Some countries are weak in managing the use of freshwater due to lesser awareness of the people who face a waste of freshwater. As such, these countries gradually encounter a lessening of water sources. Consequently, burdens on shortages of freshwater fall on the people from these countries. To be able to avoid these incidents, all global people need to take care of the efficient use of freshwater.

In Myanmar, some areas face difficulty in drinking water in summer. So, they have to store rainwater for consumption. People from some areas collect the rainwater in monsoon for consumption the whole year. Hence, authorities of regions and states should implement water supply projects on their own plans. The entire people are to strive for ensuring water sufficiency as well as efficient use of agricultural water.

Myanmar possesses 16 per cent of water sources of total sources from South-east Asian countries and 12 per cent in the Asian region. But, increasing population, urban development, and environmental degradation of the country cause a larger deficiency of freshwater. As such, local authorities at different levels need to address the problems of freshwater deficiency in their respective regions.

Global countries including Myanmar are seeking ways and means to supply fresh water. But, millions of global peoples are still missing chances to consume clean and healthy water. So, relevant countries need to search for new water sources for the people and raise awareness of the people to efficiently use fresh water.

The World Health Organization-Who predicted that about half of global peoples are likely to suffer from diseases-based water as well as

waterborne diseases in 2025 and that various regions of developing countries would face shortages of freshwater in 2030. It is a sound of the bell rung by the WHO for all global peoples not to neglect the issue of climate change and global warming which trigger the shortages of freshwater.

As Myanmar is primarily engaged in agriculture and livestock farming businesses, all citizens need to take care of minimizing waste from freshwater and water sources. Only when public awareness should be raised for the people to comprehensively know the important role of freshwater will they all efficiently consume valuable freshwater from now onward.

Somerset Maugham's two visits to Burma nearly forty years apart

The famous writer, novelist and playwright Somerset Maugham (25 January 1874-16 December 1965) was born 149 years ago in January 1874. Maugham has had some Burmese connections in that he had visited Burma for several weeks first in the year 1923 (a hundred years ago) and for several days in January 1960.

The well-travelled (among others) travel writer on his first visit, for a few weeks, travelled to the obvious 'touristy' places such as Rangoon, Mandalay, Pagan, and Amarapura. He also visited not only Kengtung (Kyauing Tone) but remote parts of the Shan states by various means including riding on mules. In his travels, he used steamers, railways, mules and motorcars. An overwhelming majority of Burmese including those who lived in the Shan states all their lives and who continue to live there might not have visited the places Maugham had visited in his several weeks in Burma in the early 1920s. In *A Gentleman in the Parlour: A Record of the Journey from Rangoon to Haiphong* first published in 1930 he narrated his travels.

Maugham's first visit to Burma was in 1923 when he was about 49 years old. The second and final visit was in late January 1960 just after he turned 86. Maugham's second visit was covered on the front page of the 31 January 1960 issue of *The Nation* (Rangoon) newspaper. Of course, in January 1960 Maugham visited perhaps only then capital city of Rangoon and definitely not the remote parts of the Shan States which he visited nearly 40 years earlier.

Maugham's demise was reported on the front page of The Working People's Daily

Somerset Maugham's death was reported in the 17 December 1965 issue of *The Working People's Daily* (WPD) (predecessor to *The Global New Light of Myanmar*) on its front page. Just over four years later when Maugham's fellow

countryman (so to speak, when not travelling Maugham spent around half of his life in France) philosopher Bertrand Russell (18 May 1872-2 February 1970) died the WPD also reported the news in the front page in its 4 February 1970 issue.

I recall reading a *Newsweek* magazine obituary of Maugham where he was quoted as saying 'When my obituary finally appears in *The Times* (of London) people may say, oh I thought he died ages ago'. From my recall, the last sentence of the *Newsweek* obituary quoted Maugham stating that 'many people are not as lucky as him' but he did 'not want to repeat that fact'.

(Of) semi-autobiographical Of Human Bondage

Yours truly read, several decades ago, Maugham's classic and perhaps most well-known semi-autobiographical novel *Of Human Bondage* and was moved and affected by it. I do think though that in a few parts of it, as in the statement quoted in *Newsweek*, there is a 'tinge' of self-pity.

The main male protagonist of the novel Philip Carey's club-foot was an adaptation of Maugham's stammer and (later commentators) postulated Maugham's bisexuality with homosexuality being more 'dominant'.

Online sources indicate that the first edition of *Of Human Bondage* was published on 13 August 1915. On YouTube, there is a 21-minute video displaying the covers of some of the 451 editions of *Bondage* in 35 different languages published between 1915 and 2015! The translator (U) Tin Maung Myint translated *Bondage* (not the whole novel but perhaps only about 1/3 of it) but the 35 languages listed do not include the Burmese translation.

Time magazine's obituary of December 1965 stated that Maugham was unable to read his semi-autobiographical novel 'even years later without tears'. This fact was also stated in the biography by Ted Morgan titled *Maugham* (published 1980). Biographer Mor-

gan stated that several years or a few decades after Maugham published *Bondage*, he was scheduled to record the novel in his own voice (one uncharitably supposes that his stammer wouldn't affect his reading of his novel that much) but he broke down while narrating parts of his own story and had to abandon the project.

Time also stated that at least two Maugham characters Mildred Rogers in *Bondage* and Sadie Thompson in the short story *Rain* (first published April 1921 as 'Miss Thompson') had entered the contemporary literary canon.

'Identity' or 'composite' of Mildred Rogers in Bondage

As stated, Maugham's *Bondage* was semi-autobiographical. At least three persons in the novel were real persons: the protagonist Philip Carey's mother, his Uncle (in real-life the Vicar of Whitstable) and his wife Maugham's Aunt.

But who in *Bondage*'s name was Mildred Rogers Philip Carey's obsession in about half of the novel? Who represents 'Mildred Rogers' in the real life of Maugham? Maugham has stated that his novel was 'semi-autobiographical' and parts of it were fictional. Is it the case then that 'Mildred Rogers' has no real counterpart in Maugham's life?

Alternatively, assuming that 'Mildred Rogers' was not entirely fictional and was a 'composite' who was Mildred Rogers in Maugham's life?

In his analysis of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (first published 1847) in Maugham's *Ten Novels and their Authors* (first published 1948) Maugham opined that the hero-villain 'Heathcliff' of *Wuthering Heights* was a composite. (An edited version of *Wuthering Heights* was the Matriculation text from academic years 1986-87 to 1992-93). Maugham wrote that 'the primary model on which uncouth difficult men' portrayed in Emily Bronte and her sister Charlotte's novels (for Emily her character Heathcliff) was 'their father the Rev. Patrick Bronte'. The other composite of Heathcliff,

Bondage(s) of Somerset Maugham

By Dr Myint Zan

E T H I C A

Ordine Geometrico demonstrata,

E-T

In quinque Partes distincta,
in quibus agitur,

- I. De Deo.
- II. De Naturâ & Origine MENTIS.
- III. De Origine & Naturâ AFFECTUUM.
- IV. De SERVITUTE Humanâ, seu de AFFECTUUM VIRIBUS.
- V. De POTENTIA INTELLECTUS, seu de LIBERTATE Humanâ.

Maugham argued was the unrequited, frustrated lesbian attachment Emily Bronte probably had of another woman when she was the age of 19 while she was working as a governess and teacher. Maugham wrote that the 'unhappiness it caused her sufficed to implant the seed in the fruitful soil of her tortured sensibility which enabled her to create the strange book we know'. Maugham's assumption that *Wuthering Heights* and Heathcliff were arguably and partly prompted by Emily Bronte's unrequited lesbian love remains a projection (in both the Freudian and non-Freudian sense of the word) and perhaps more of a 'guess'.

There is a Burmese saying 'frying carp with carp oil' ငါးကြမ်းဆီနဲ့ ငါးကြမ်းငြင်းကြည့်. Maugham's 'queerness' (so to speak) was quite well-known. I have read from online sources that 'Mildred Rogers' in Maugham's real life might have been a male (or composite of males).

A few of Maugham's literary works are studied in English major courses in Universities in Burma/Myanmar?

Around October 1970 a statement made by the then Deputy Education Minister the late Dr Nyi Nyi (1930-2021) appeared on the front page of *The Guardian* (Rangoon) newspaper. Dr Nyi

Nyi stated that 'language, not literature' was to be the focus of the then inaugural English major course to where only (initially) 15 students were admitted. Those entering students had to obtain English paper in the Basic Education High School (Matriculation) examination. Fast forward from October 1970 to 25 August 1971. An editorial titled 'English Major Students' in *The Guardian* (Rangoon) (perhaps mainly written by the late 'Min Kyaw Min' who was to become Chief Editor of *The New Light of Myanmar*) states that '(English major) students should have read an immense lot of literature ranging from, let us say, Shakespeare to Solzhenitsyn, from Pope to Pasternak, from Dickens to Dostoevsky, from Maugham to Mishima'. (Emphases added). One can only say 'Wow!'. Forget the then 15 English major 'freshers' of 1971 (now well in their sixties) had the then Editor(s) themselves read even a few of the literary products of these eight personages four of whom can be read only in translation? Still, for our purposes (Somerset) Maugham was there on the Editors' list.

More than fifty-two years after Dr Nyi Nyi made that statement if not imprimatur much water has passed under the bridge. This writer understands that in

the postgraduate Masters (MA) and Doctoral (PhD) courses available for English majors at Yangon, Mandalay and Foreign Languages Universities there are two 'streams': the language stream (or specialization) and the literature stream. Be that as it may, a few short stories and excerpts of a few of Maugham's literary works may (or may not) be studied in English major courses. Still, the several short stories that Maugham wrote in relation to Burma (where most of the Burmese characters were Burmese women some of them cohabiting with British men) can be considered 'politically incorrect' a concept and term not in vogue in the 1920s and 1930s. There might be a touch of Orientalism in Maugham's depiction of Southeast Asia and the Pacific in some of his short stories.

Maugham wrote about 91 short stories. Only about two dozen or so short stories of Maugham were translated by the late writer (U) Kyaw Aung. Inevitably the translation included 'Rain' and 'The Verger' (a story about an illiterate person becoming a millionaire and his statement at the end of the short story that had he been literate he would not have become a millionaire, sounds familiar?). But from my recall, U Kyaw Aung did not translate what can be considered culturally insensitive and somewhat macabre short stories

the most notorious being 'The Book Bag' where Maugham wrote about (brother-sister) (inclination for) incest. In a youtube video of a BBC interview with Maugham made in 1960, Maugham stated that 'The Book Bag' was the only short story his usual publisher *Cosmopolitan* magazine refused to publish.

The writer and translator Shwe U Daung (24 October 1889-10 August 1973) adapted the Sherlock Holmes detective short stories of Arthur Conan Doyle (22 May 1859-7 July 1930) into 'Maung San Shar' Burmese detective stories. Maugham wrote more short stories than Conan Doyle but relatively few short stories by Maugham have been translated into Burmese. This writer is aware of only one adaptation: Maugham's 'The Ant and the Grasshopper' by the late writer Maung Moe Thu and published in a Burmese magazine in 1986. Perhaps there are more cultural barriers to overcome in Maugham's short stories than in Conan Doyle's to produce reasonably effective adaptations.

'Of Human Bondage': A brief juxtaposition of Spinoza and Maugham

In the Preface to the 1963 Penguin edition of *Of Human Bondage* Maugham wrote that he had initially titled his novel *Beauty from Ashes*. But later he chanced upon a phrase in the book *Ethics* written by the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (24 November 1632-21 February 1677) published posthumously in the original Latin in 1677. In Latin the phrase reads *De servitute humana*.

In April 1988 the astrophysicist Stephen Hawking (8 January 1942-14 March 2018) published his phenomenal bestseller *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* the last sentence of which reads '... We would know the mind of God'. Hawking later wrote that before publication he considered 'cutting' that sentence but decided to keep it. A tad mischievously Hawking wrote that if he had left out the sentence

the sales of his book 'would have been halved'.

A counter-factual hypothetical is IF perchance Maugham had retained the original title *Beauty from Ashes* would his book garnered 451 editions in 35 languages 100 years after its publication? To be uncharitable (again) the fact that Maugham 'purloined' a phrase from the gentle philosopher Spinoza's landmark work as the title of his novel perhaps contributed to its popularity throughout the decades. Indeed, Maugham himself wrote that he was lucky to have chosen that title for his novel.

Commemorating the 250th anniversary of Spinoza's death *Time* magazine in its 7 March 1927 issue under the title '*Sub specie aeternitatis*' ('Aspect of eternity') stated that 'lenses found in his cabinet paid all his mortuary expenses'. In *Within Reason: A Life of Spinoza* (1998) biographer Margaret Gullan-Whur wrote that after his death Spinoza's half-sister initially made a claim to Spinoza's estate. When she discovered that all the assets Spinoza left were his bed where he was born, his books and a few lenses and grinding equipment the half-sister abandoned her claim.

Maugham, the author of the novel *Of Human Bondage* has had his own 'bondage(s)'. In his twilight years, Maugham unsuccessfully tried to disinherit his only daughter in prolonged litigation in favour of his Secretary and live-in lover Alan Searle (1905-1985). Despite the fact that they flourished three centuries apart Maugham lived more than twice as long as Spinoza (91 years, 10 months to 44 years 2 months). And 'money-wise' Maugham was almost immeasurably richer than Spinoza and Spinoza was almost infinitesimally poorer than Maugham. Still, both personages made, respectively, significant philosophical and literary contributions. But who, dear reader, was more enmeshed in or free from 'bondages' in the Spinozist sense and who should be admired more? ■

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

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



Acacia trees are pictured some 30 kilometres east of El-Obeid, the capital city of the central Sudanese wilayet (state) of North Kordofan, on 9 January 2023. Sudan is among the countries hardest hit by climate change, and in the central Kordofan region, the rise in recorded temperatures is double the world average, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization. **PHOTO: AFP**

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

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

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

"It's an important tree to fight desertification as it is

drought resistant — and also increases the soil fertility, essential to increasing crop production," said Fatma Ramly, coordinator of the Gum Arabic Farmers' Association, which counts seven million members. To harvest the amber-coloured resin, farmers must suffer the same climatic extremes as their trees.

"We work for hours on end under a burning sun," said Mohammed Moussa, who collects resin at the state-owned Demokaya research forest, about 30 kilometres (20 miles) from the North Kordofan state capital, El Obeid.

Moussa faces a constant struggle with the shortage of

water in largely desert Sudan. His earnings from the trees barely "provide enough money to buy water to cover us until the autumn" rainy season.

'Labourious'

Recorded temperatures in Sudan's Kordofan region have increased by almost two degrees Celsius in less than three decades, more than double the global average, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

"Water scarcity is one of the key challenges for people" living in the acacia zone, said Madani Ismail, of the state-run Agricultural Research Corporation.

Farmers also have to contend with wide fluctuations in the price of gum on world commodity markets.

Forty-five kilogrammes (100 pounds) of raw gum can fetch 22,000 to 25,000 Sudanese pounds (\$43), depending on the day's price.

The return barely covers the cost of production for Abdelbaqi Ahmed, 52, who owns a 28-hectare (70-acre) plot of acacia trees in Botei, North Kordofan.

He cultivates other crops to help boost his income from the trees, whose bark he cuts with a "sunki" — a sharp blade attached to a long wooden shaft able to reach up high in the tree.—AFP

UK wild camping campaigners rally in Dartmoor over court ruling

"NATURE is a human right!" declares 21-year-old Anya Wilding as she dons hiking boots and prepares to join the fight to "get it back" on Dartmoor in southwest England.

The photography student and thousands of others spent Saturday afternoon demonstrating for the right to camp in the open on a common within Dartmoor National Park.

The protest was sparked by a recent UK court order that any such wild camping within parts of the park owned by wealthy local landowners requires their consent.

The 13 January ruling has infuriated campaigners for better public access in rural areas. They say Dartmoor — where over half of the land is private — was the only remaining

place in England where wild camping without landowner consent was permitted.

Around 3,000 of them braved frigid temperatures to gather in the small village of Cornwood for a march to Stall Moor, a vast common owned by Alexander Darwall, who is now seeking to outlaw the pastime there.

"Everyone deserves the same access, it's a fundamental right and they're taking that away from us and I'm here today to get it back," explains Wilding.

"It was the only place it was legal so (the ruling) is like a kick in the teeth," she adds of wild camping on Dartmoor, which has also long been popular with walkers for its rugged beauty.—AFP



People walk up to Haytor Rocks in the Dartmoor National Park, near Exeter, south-west England, on 12 August 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

Cyprus issues first-ever fines for poisoning wild birds

CYPRriot authorities have for the first time issued fines for the killing of rare wild birds using poison baits, conservationists on the Mediterranean island said Monday.

Fines of 21,000 euros (almost \$23,000) were last week ordered for an individual after three birds of prey were found dead at a rural property in the island's southern Limassol district, animal protection group BirdLife Cyprus said in a statement.

The punishment "represents a big step forward that will hopefully have a strong deterrent effect on similar ille-



Wildlife vet Constantinos Antoniou is assisted by a district officer in the Game and Fauna Service of the Cyprus government to restrain a Griffon vulture inside a holding pen before it is taken out to have a GPS tracker attached, in the village of Korfi in the highlands of Limassol district in southern Cyprus on 26 September 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

gal actions", BirdLife's project coordinator Melpo Apostolidou said in the statement.

"It is the first time in Cyprus the crime of using poison baits and killing wild birds with the use of poison has been prosecuted," she added.

The offences occurred in December 2021, when two rare Bonelli's eagles and one long-legged buzzard were found dead near Dierona village, after a GPS transmitter fitted to one of the eagles led authorities to the discovery.

Evidence collected linked the birds' death to the suspect who was found to have inten-

tionally killed the animals.

Under Cypriot law, courts can impose prison sentences of up to three years or fines of up to 20,000 euros, or a combination of both for each offence.

BirdLife described the use of poison baits in the countryside as a wildlife crime, saying it has driven iconic species, like the griffon vulture, to the brink of extinction in Cyprus.

Once a common sight over Cyprus — in the 1950s there were several hundred of the large scavengers across the island — there are now thought to be only nine griffon vultures left.—AFP

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

‘Not afraid of the virus’: Wuhan turns page on Covid, three years on

RESIDENTS of China’s Wuhan said Monday they were hopeful for the future and no longer afraid of Covid-19, three years after the city was locked down over what was then a mysterious virus.

Since Beijing ordered Wuhan sealed off in a bid to suffocate the outbreak in January 2020, Covid has devastated the planet, killing millions and plunging the global economy into turmoil.

But life is now back to normal for many across the globe and after almost three years of gruelling lockdowns and mandatory mass testing, Beijing last month lifted its hardline zero-Covid policy.

As China celebrated Lunar New Year this week, Wuhan was unrecognizable compared to the apocalyptic scenes that gripped the city of 11 million in early 2020.

Locals crowded into busy



People burn incense sticks at the Guiyuan Buddhist temple in Wuhan, in China’s central Hubei province on 23 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

markets and families — some not wearing masks — bought

toys and threw stones along the Yangtze River.

Many flocked to Guiyuan Temple, one of Wuhan’s most

famed sites — opened for a Lunar New Year holiday for the first time in three years.

Others enjoyed snacks and local specialties on Hubu Alley, a popular historic thoroughfare bustling with stalls and small restaurants.

Some told AFP they were elated that life was returning to normal.

“The new year will of course be better,” Yan Dongju, a cleaner in her sixties, told AFP.

“We are not afraid of the virus anymore... we don’t have that fear in our heart anymore, as long as we protect ourselves and wear our masks,” she added.

“Now that we have opened up, everyone is quite happy,” said delivery driver Liang Feicheng, wearing glasses and a black face-mask to keep warm.

“A lot of our worries and depression have all slowly been resolved,” he added.—AFP

Namibia blames COVID-19 for poor 2022 high school academic results

COVID-19 is blamed as one of the causes of the poor results of the 2022 senior secondary certificate ordinary level and senior secondary certificate advanced subsidiary in Namibia due to the loss of face-to-face teaching and learning time at the pandemic’s peak.

Out of more than 38,000 students who sat for the 2022 high school examinations, just about 5,000 passed.

President Hage Geingob summoned the Education, Arts

and Culture Minister Anna Nghipondoka on 13 January to brief him about the poor performance.

The Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary level is a two-year course taken by students after the junior secondary phase is completed, and the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Advanced Subsidiary is a one-year course a student takes after completing the senior secondary advanced certificate ordinary level. —Xinhua



A student wearing a mask has her hands sanitized at a school in Windhoek, capital of Namibia, on 26 January 2021. **PHOTO: NDALIMPINGA IITA/XINHUA**

Billions still exposed to toxic trans fat: WHO

EFFORTS to eliminate industrially-produced fat have a long way to go with five billion people exposed to toxic fat added to many food products, the UN health agency said Monday.

The World Health Organization called in 2018 for harmful trans fatty acids to be wiped out by 2023.

They are thought to be responsible for around 500,000 premature deaths from coronary heart disease each year.

Although 43 countries with combined populations of 2.8 billion people have now implemented best-practice policies, most of the world remains unprotected, it said.

WHO acknowledged in an annual progress report that the goal was still out of sight.

Industrially-produced trans fat is often used in packaged foods, baked goods, cooking oils and spreads.

“Trans fat has no known benefit, and huge health risks that incur huge costs for health systems,” WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

“By contrast, eliminating trans fat is cost effective and has enormous benefits for health,” he said.



French fried potatoes cooked in trans fat-free soybean oil are ready to serve 28 June 2007 at Katz’s Delicatessen on the Lower East Side of New York. **PHOTO: STAN HONDA / AFP**

“Put simply, trans fat is a toxic chemical that kills, and should have no place in food. It’s time to get rid of it once and for all.”

The WHO said that nine of the 16 countries with the highest estimated proportion of coronary heart disease deaths caused by trans fat intake were not implementing best-practice policies.

They include Australia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Ecuador, Egypt, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and South Korea.

Francesco Branca, the WHO’s nutrition and food safety

director, told reporters that trans fat elimination policies were in place in 60 countries, covering 3.4 billion people or 43 per cent of the world’s population.

Of those countries, 43 are implementing best practice standards.

Best practice means either a mandatory national limit of two grammes of industrially-produced trans fat per 100 grammes of total fat in all foods; or a national ban on the production or use of partially-hydrogenated oils, which are a major source of trans fat.—AFP

ECONOMY WORLD



Tomoko Yoshino, head of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, addresses a meeting with the top business lobby Japan Business Federation on 23 January 2023, in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Japan wage talks begin with unions, business agreeing raises needed

THE heads of Japan's largest labour group and top business lobby met Monday to discuss the country's labour market as the annual union-management negotiations began, with both parties agreeing on the need for significant pay hikes to offset the impact of high inflation.

Tomoko Yoshino, the head of Rengo, or the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, called for pay hikes including base salary increases to ease the pain related to the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic and recent rapid inflation. She said this year "should be a turning point to change our future" through sus-

tained pay raises at companies of all sizes across the country.

Masakazu Tokura, the chairman of the Japan Business Federation, better known as Keidanren, agreed at the two organizations' meeting on the importance of pay increases to overcome economic challenges.

"We are calling for (corporate managers') to make aggressive responses by giving due consideration to prices and fulfilling their social responsibility of sustaining or even strengthening the momentum of wage hikes," Tokura said.

Core consumer prices in the country rose 4.0 per cent

in December from a year earlier, the highest level since 1981, while Japan's real wages declined for the eighth straight month in November, according to the latest available government data.

Rengo has already said it will target a pay increase of around five per cent in this year's so-called shunto spring negotiations, the highest increase demanded by the group in 28 years. It wants more than half of that increase to come from a basic pay hike with the remainder from a regular annual raise based on seniority. —Kyodo

Lao govt to take stronger action to revitalize stagnating economy

THE Lao government has outlined the 2023 work plan, vowing to take stronger action to revitalize the stagnating economy, notably by stabilizing currency exchange rates, curbing inflation, and amassing more revenue to boost its spending power.

The pledge is part of the government's continuing efforts to fulfil the goals of its two national agendas, which aim to ease the country's economic and financial difficulties and stem the rising tide of drug trafficking.

The government will absolutely not allow the country to default on its debts, government spokesperson Thippakone Chanthavongsa was quoted by the Lao national TV as saying on Monday after a two-day meeting.

Chaired by Lao Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone and attended by cabinet members, provincial governors and representatives of various state agencies, the meeting discussed ways to minimize the vulnerability of the country's macro-economy to external shocks.

Meeting participants agreed to speed up the digitalization of revenue collection and create new sources of revenue while working harder to minimize financial leaks.

A greater focus will also be placed on repaying money owed by the government to private companies that carried out state-funded development projects. The repayment of these debts would give these compa-

nies greater liquidity so they have sufficient capital to finance more development schemes.

In addition, the government will not launch any non-essential state-funded projects, but will instead concentrate on poverty reduction programmes.

Another priority on the programme for 2023 is the continued reform of state-owned enterprises, improvement of the investment climate, and a push for further progress in approved foreign-funded development projects.

It was essential to promote productivity, as well as the processing of agricultural produce for export, while also reducing imports, according to the report.—Xinhua

Ecuador says trade talks with Mexico at a 'dead end'

ECUADORAN President Guillermo Lasso said on Sunday that negotiations for his nation to reach a free-trade accord with Mexico are at a "dead end".

Such a free-trade deal would have been a stepping stone for Ecuador to enter the Pacific Alliance, a broader trade bloc.

But Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador "has told me that the banana and shrimp producers in Mexico don't want shrimp and plantains or bananas from Ecuador arriving there", Lasso said. "We are at a dead end."

Ecuador warned in December that it would be "impossible" to sign a free-trade accord with Mexico unless a deal included

shrimp and bananas, its major exports after petroleum.

Lasso, speaking to a local reporter in an interview later released by his government, said that the failure to get a trade accord with Mexico "is not so serious" since Ecuador has expanded and intensified trade talks elsewhere.

Mexico is one of the founding members of the Pacific Alliance, which also includes Chile, Colombia and Peru.

Lasso said Ecuador sought entry to the Pacific Alliance "in order to access Asian markets" but that "today we are doing so directly," noting that Ecuador is expected to sign a free-trade accord with China imminently.—AFP

Japan's TEPCO seeks to raise household electricity prices by 30%

TOKYO Electric Power Company Holdings Inc (TEPCO) said Monday that it has applied to the Japanese government to raise its regulated electricity rates for households by around 30 per cent from June in response to surging energy prices and the yen's weakening.

The rate hike application, following five other major power companies which have already

filed for the Japanese government's approval to raise prices by between 28 per cent and 46 per cent from April, reflects a deteriorating business performance due to soaring prices of fossil fuels such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) and thermal coal for power generation.

Japan's industry ministry will examine details of TEPCO's cost reduction measures

and decide on the actual rate increase.

Tomoaki Kobayakawa, president of TEPCO, told a press conference that the company would have problems ensuring stable supplies of electricity if it leaves the situation as it is. "We don't want to place a burden on our customers, but we've made the tough decision," he said.—Xinhua



Staff members visit the multi-nuclide removal system of the Tokyo Electric Power Company's (TEPCO) Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, in Okuma of Fukushima prefecture on 20 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Stock markets rise, dollar struggles on US rates outlook

STOCK markets headed higher Monday and the dollar lost some ground as investors eyed less aggressive US interest rate hikes this year with inflation starting to cool from sky-high levels.

Tokyo was the standout performer, rallying more than one per cent following a blockbuster pre-weekend performance on Wall Street as tech shares rallied.

Comments from top Federal Reserve officials provided support to equities after they indicated the bank could lift rates at a slower pace compared with 2022.

The euro on Monday reached the highest level since April last year, at \$1.0927, before slipping back.

“Investor confidence has surged into the Lunar New Year after China lifted its drastic Covid restrictions and hopes have risen that the end to interest rate hikes may finally be in sight,” noted Susannah Streeter, senior investment and markets analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown.

“There have been signs economies may prove more resilient in the downturn,” she added.

Philadelphia Fed boss Patrick Harker has again called for slower US rate increases, while Kansas City Fed boss Esther George said she was optimistic the world’s top economy could still achieve a soft landing despite worries that a series of big borrowing-cost hikes last year would tip it into recession.

In Asia, trading was then with a number of stock markets closed for the Lunar New Year holiday.

“Although most Asian markets are closed for Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations, Japanese and Australian stocks are picking up on the better mood from US investors and on expectations of China’s economy returning to some semblance of a pre-pandemic trend,” said SPI Asset Management’s Stephen Innes.

Crude oil futures extended their strong start to the year.

“Oil prices are trading higher on diminishing recession risks while easing inflation pressure suggests the days of outsized hikes are behind us, broadly supporting risky assets,” Innes added.—AFP

Chinese enterprises embrace new opportunities after overseas trade activities

AFTER a 10-day business trip to the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan, Tang Wensheng, general manager of the Wuhu branch of the Muchen International Electronic Commerce Co Ltd, is busy organizing factories to produce products to fulfil new orders.

“We sell smart home appliances, including floor-sweeping robots and vacuum cleaners, to many countries. During this trip, we visited new and old clients and obtained orders worth 60 million US dollars,” said Tang.

Tang is among the business delegation in east China’s Anhui Province that took a chartered plane to the ROK and Japan to expand business opportunities and seek new coop-



A training activity is held as a warm-up before the local enterprises start their overseas trips to seek business opportunities with government support in Hefei, east China’s Anhui Province, 14 December 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA

eration in late December 2022.

The trip turned out to be fruitful. The total value

of the orders reached 2.24 billion yuan (about 330.86 million US dollars), and 22 foreign investment projects

were concluded in new energy vehicles, overseas warehouses, and cultural exchanges.—Xinhua

Nepal ready to welcome Chinese tourists: official



Performers dance and play music while waiting for the arrival of tourists during the celebrations to mark the ‘World Tourism Day’ at the airport in Pokhara 27 September 2022. PHOTO: AFP

NEPAL is ready to welcome Chinese tourists

back as a popular destination, a Nepali official said.

Nepal “is all prepared with added facilities, amenities, properties and products to welcome valued tourists from China in the days and years to come,” Suresh Adhikari, secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, wrote in a recent message to the Chinese embassy.

The secretary referred to the “age-long” cultural and economic relations between Nepal and China and described his country as a “popular destination” for tourists.

He extended “hearty greetings and best wishes” to the Chinese government and people on the auspicious occasion of the Chinese New Year, which fell on Sunday.

The Nepali government has reportedly prepared a Strategic Action Plan for Visit Nepal Decade (2023-2032) with a view to bringing in 3.5 million tourists and creating one million additional jobs in the tourism sector battered by the COVID-19 pandemic.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY.NO. (771N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY.NO. (771N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-1-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

Notice of passing special resolution for reduction of share capital by Strides Toyotsu Alliance Company Limited (the “Company”)

Notice is hereby given as required by Section 116 (i) of the Myanmar Companies Law that the Company incorporated in Myanmar with Certificate of Incorporation No. 106573220 and having its registered office at Pyay Road, No. 631, Kamayut Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar 11041 had passed a special resolution for reduction of share capital of the Company (“**Special Resolution**”).

The summary details of the reduction of share capital (“**Capital Reduction**”) are as follows:

- (1) Capital Reduction is equal reduction.
- (2) Share capital of USD 174,000 previously paid up by Strides Myanmar Pte Ltd will be cancelled and returned to Strides Myanmar Pte Ltd in cash.
- (3) Share capital of USD 58,000 previously paid up by Alliance Urban Transports Company Limited will be cancelled and returned to Alliance Urban Transports Company Limited in cash.
- (4) Share capital of USD 58,000 previously paid up by Toyota Tsusho Asia Pacific Pte Limited will be cancelled and returned to Toyota Tsusho Asia Pacific Pte Limited in cash.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Russian parliament leader warns of “global catastrophe” following offensive arms supply to Ukraine



In this image from video provided by the Russian Defence Ministry, the Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile blasts off during a test launch from the Plesetsk launch pad in northwestern Russia, 30 March 2018. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

DELIVERIES of offensive weapons to Ukraine will lead to a “global catastrophe”, said Vyacheslav Volodin, chairman of the Russian State Duma, on Sunday.

“If Washington and NATO countries supply weapons that will be used to strike civilian cities and attempt to seize our territories, as they threaten, this will lead to retaliatory measures using more powerful weapons,” Volodin said on Telegram.

Members of the US Congress, the German Bundestag, the National Assembly

of France and other European parliaments “must realize their responsibility to humanity”, he said.

“With their decisions, Washington and Brussels are leading the world to a terrible war: to a completely different military action from today, when strikes are carried out exclusively on the military and critical infrastructure used by Kyiv,” Volodin said.

“Given the technological superiority of Russian weapons, foreign politicians making such decisions need to understand that this could end in a global

tragedy that will destroy their countries,” he said.

On Friday, defence leaders from Western countries attended a meeting at the Ramstein Air Base in Germany, where they pledged further military support to Ukraine but failed to iron out divisions on sending battle tanks.

At the meeting, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged defence leaders attending the meeting to speed up the supply of weapons to Ukraine, the presidential press service reported.—Xinhua

Türkiye’s Erdogan announces elections for 14 May

PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdogan has announced that Türkiye’s elections will be held on 14 May — a month earlier than scheduled — as the opposition still searches for a unified candidate to stand against him.

This could prove to be the most challenging election in Erdogan’s two-decade rule; which has seen economic booms, giant development projects as well as disputes with neighbours, wars and a failed coup.

“I will use my authority ... (to) bring the election date forward to 14 May,” Erdogan said in a video from his meeting with young people in northwestern city of Bursa this weekend.

Türkiye’s next general election was officially due on 18 June.

“This is not an early election but bringing it forward,” Erdogan said during the video broadcast shared by his office.

The Turkish leader said that they had agreed on an adjustment to the timetable with its junior right-wing coalition partner to avoid disrupting the school exam schedules.

The election campaign is due to start on 10 March, which would give the Turkish opposition even less time to prepare.

They have been trying for months to agree on a single candidate to challenge Erdogan at the polls.

While Türkiye’s high inflation and weakening currency could help their cause, internal disagreements play to Erdogan’s advantage.—AFP

UK ambulance workers strike again as unions call for talks

THOUSANDS of ambulance workers held another strike across England and Wales on Monday, in escalating industrial action as unions called the government to hold talks on improving pay and conditions.

Ambulance workers began strike action on 21 December last year and further dates are planned for February.

Nurses have also launched unprecedented strike action, reflecting widespread discontent in the state-funded National Health Service whose staff are struggling with soaring living costs.

Monday’s industrial action comes ahead of mass simultaneous strikes planned for 6 February by unions represent-



Ambulance workers hold cardboard signs and flags of the UK’s trade union UNISON as they take part in a rally at a picket line outside the Docklands Emergency Operating Centre, Newham Dockside, in London on 11 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

ing both nurses and ambulance staff.

Monday’s strike involves

members of three unions — Unison, Unite and GMB — in England and Wales.—AFP

California Lunar New Year mass shooter dead, motive unclear: police

THE motive for a shooting that killed 10 people celebrating Lunar New Year in California remained unclear Monday, the day after the alleged gunman shot himself dead as police moved to arrest him.

An intensive manhunt began late Saturday after a man opened fire inside a dance studio and club in Monterey Park, a city near Los Angeles with a large Asian community.

Witnesses said he had shot indiscriminately, and appeared to have a lot of ammunition.



People mourn for victims of a mass shooting in front of the city hall of Monterey Park, California, the United States, 22 January 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Five men and five women were killed, most in their 50s or 60s, police said, with around 10 others being injured.

The suspect, identified by police as 72-year-old Huu Can Tran, then went to another dance venue a short distance away but was tackled and disarmed by people at the club before fleeing.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said over the following hours police tracked a wanted van, which was later reported in Torrance, several miles (kilometres) south.

When officers approached, they heard one gunshot from within.

“The suspect sustained a self-inflicted gunshot wound and was pronounced dead at the scene,” Luna said.

“I can confirm that there are no outstanding suspects from the mass shooting incident.”

Luna said the reason behind the horrific attack, which came as Asian communities around the world celebrated the Lunar New Year holiday, remained a mystery.—AFP

Pakistan nationwide power outage continues into night

A massive power breakdown across Pakistan continued after night fell on Monday, affecting most of the country's 220 million residents, including in the mega cities of Karachi and Lahore.

Pakistan's national power system is a complex and delicate web where problems can quickly cascade.

The breakdown was caused by a fault in the national grid at around 7:30 am (0230 GMT), plunging much of the country into darkness.

"We hope that the electric-

ity will be restored throughout the country by tonight," Energy Minister Khurram Dastagir Khan said in a video statement.

The cut was caused by a variation in frequency on the national grid as power generation units were turned on early in the morning.

The units had been temporarily switched off at night to save fuel, Khan earlier told the media.

Localized power cuts are common in Pakistan and hospitals, factories and government institutions are often kept run-



A shopkeeper uses his mobile phone's torch light at a market during a nationwide power outage in Rawalpindi on 23 January 2023. PHOTO: AFP

ning by private generators. The machines are, however, beyond the means of most citizens and small businesses.

In parts of northern Pakistan, temperatures were due to drop below freezing on Monday night with supplies of natural gas — the most common heating method — also unreliable due to load-shedding.

The economy is already hobbled by rampant inflation, a falling rupee, and severely low forex reserves, with the power cut piling extra pressure on small businesses.—AFP

Building collapse in war-damaged Syria city kills 16

A building collapsed Sunday in Syria's war-damaged second city of Aleppo, killing 16 people including children, with the search for survivors extending into the night.

Much of Aleppo was destroyed during Syria's conflict that began nearly 12 years ago and left many of the remaining structures in a decrepit state.

"The number of victims of the residential building collapse... has risen to 16 dead," said state news agency SANA. A war monitor said they were Syrians who had been displaced during the war.

Four people were rescued alive from the rubble, SANA reported, saying they were injured.

It gave earlier on Sunday an initial death toll of 10 people that increased throughout the day.

Dozens of rescue workers toiled at the site as darkness fell, an AFP correspondent said, and some used their bare hands to dig into the grey rubble.

Earth movers scooped up the pieces of building material, sending dust into the air, the correspondent added.

A Kurdish news agency reported five children were among the dead. One of them was an infant, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

According to the interior ministry, the five-storey building was home to seven families. Locals told AFP about 35 people

lived there.

Buildings in Aleppo, Syria's pre-war commercial hub, often collapse due to the dilapidated infrastructure as well as little oversight to ensure safety of new construction projects, some built illegally.

SANA quoted a police source as saying that the building, in the city's Sheikh Maksoud neighbourhood, had collapsed "due to a water leak" in the foundations.

The neighbourhood is predominantly inhabited by Syrian Kurds who are under the authority of the People's Protection Units (YPG) militia, part of the Kurdish authorities' de facto army.—AFP

Two children among 11 burned to death in Thai van crash

ELEVEN people, including two children, burned to death in a passenger van crash in central Thailand over the Lunar New Year holiday, police said Monday.

Traffic accidents are common in the kingdom, which has a notorious road safety record, particularly during busy public holidays.

The van carrying 12 people was travelling from northeastern Amnat Charoen province to Bangkok when it veered off the highway in central Nakhon Ratchasima province Saturday night, said Police Colonel Yingyos Poldej.

Yingyos told AFP that one man had been able to climb out a window, but the other

passengers were trapped and died in the blaze. The survivor, Thanachit Kingkaew, a 20-year-old student, said he was asleep when he was jolted awake after hearing someone scream.

"I woke up and the next thing I know, the van was upside down. I didn't see what happened," he said.

"After the crash, the fire started engulfing the whole van starting from the back."

"I started kicking the windows and managed to crawl through a small hole," he said.

"Soon after that, the van exploded." Nikhom Seaun, a volunteer with a local rescue team, said the van exploded just seconds after it was engulfed in flames.—AFP

Japan PM says tackling birth rate crisis 'cannot wait'



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (R-podium) delivers a policy speech at the Ordinary Diet session in Tokyo on 23 January 2023. PHOTO: AFP

JAPAN'S low birth rate and ageing population pose an urgent risk to society, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Monday, pledging to address the issue by establishing a new government agency.

Birth rates are declining in many developed countries, but in Japan the issue is particularly acute because it has the world's second-highest proportion of people aged 65 and over, after the tiny state of Monaco, according to World Bank data. "The number of births dropped below 800,000 last year, according to estimates," Kishida told lawmakers in a pol-

icy address marking the start of a new parliament session.

"Japan is standing on the verge of whether we can continue to function as a society," he said.

"Focusing attention on policies regarding children and child-rearing is an issue that cannot wait and cannot be postponed." The conservative leader said his policies — including launching the new Children and Families Agency in April — were designed to support parents and ensure the "sustainability" of the world's third-largest economy.

Kishida added that he even-

tually wants the government to double its spending on child-related programmes.

"We must build a child-first social economy to reverse the (low) birth rate," he said.

Japan has a population of 125 million and has long struggled with how to provide for its fast-growing number of elderly residents.

Birth rates are slowing in many countries including Japan's closest neighbours, due to factors including rising living costs, more women entering the workforce and people choosing to have children later.—AFP

Pakistan nationwide power outage continues into night

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SPORT

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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



Serbia's Novak Djokovic (L) embraces Australia's Alex De Minaur after their men's singles match on day eight of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on 23 January 2023. PHOTO: AFP

Ruthless Djokovic, Sabalenka sweep into Australian Open quarters

NOVAK Djokovic surged into the Australian Open quarter-finals in ominous fashion on Monday while Aryna Sabalenka was an equally ruthless winner.

After a series of shocks at Melbourne Park, normal order was more or less restored on day eight, except for fourth seed Caroline Garcia bowing out under the weight of expectation.

Djokovic demolished Alex

de Minaur for the loss of just five games to sweep into the last eight and step up his bid for a 10th Melbourne crown, and record-tying 22nd major title in all.

He will meet fifth seed Andrey Rublev for a semi-final berth after the Russian toppled Danish teenage talent Holger Rune in a thrilling five-set clash also at Rod Laver Arena.

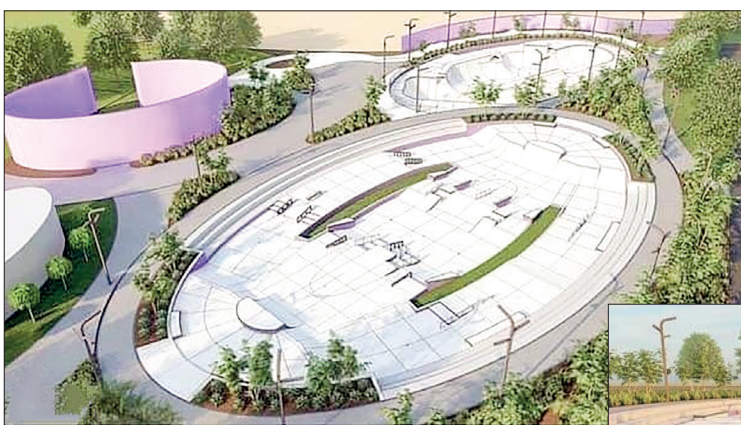
The Serb's 6-2, 6-1, 6-2 tri-

umph over 22nd-seeded home hope De Minaur was significant also because his troublesome left hamstring was much improved.

Asked afterwards how he had been so emphatic, Djokovic told the crowd: "Because I wanted to."

The 35-year-old called it his "best match of this year so far" and a "perfect match".—AFP

Myanmar skater Htet Myat Naing to compete in Street/Park Skateboarding World Championship 2023



Aljada Skate Park in Sharjah of the United Arab Emirates.

The World Olympic Council will bear all the expenses of Myanmar skater Htet Myat Naing. This competition is the second Olympic experience for the Myanmar Skateboarding Team and the related meetings of the competition will be attended by Ko Pyae



MYANMAR skater Htet Myat Naing will compete in the Street/Park Skateboarding World Championship 2023, according to officials.

According to the Olympic Solidarity Team's Youth Development Programme, the player with the most National and International Points in the Scholarship

Programme was selected as it was the opportunity to compete in the Street/Park Skateboarding World Championship 2023 held at Aljada Skate Park, Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates from 29 January to 6 February.

The competition will be held as a qualifier for the 2024 Olympics to be held in France.

Oo, head of the Skateboarding Department of World Skate, Myanmar, officials stated.

It is reported that two skaters representing Myanmar Ski Sports Team 2022 won four gold medals in the Melaka Open Speed Skating Challenge (MOSC)-2022 held in Melaka, Malaysia on 17 December. — Bala Soe/KZL

Arsenal silence doubters with statement win over Man Utd

PREMIER League leaders Arsenal have had their title credentials questioned all season but their last-gasp 3-2 win against Manchester United has silenced many of the remaining doubters.

Eddie Nketiah scored the winner in the dying moments of a pulsating match at the Emirates on Sunday as the home fans were infused with fresh belief that this could be their year.

The game against in-form United was seen as a critical test for the Gunners, especially after Manchester City closed the gap at the top of the table to just two points earlier in the day.

It was a challenge they did not fluff, hitting back hard after conceding the first goal, scored by Marcus Rashford, and staying calm after Lisandro Martinez cancelled out Bukayo Saka's strike in the second half.

Arsenal, who have made their best-ever start to an English top-flight season, now have 50 points after 19 games — five clear of defending champions City with a game in hand at the halfway point of the campaign. "I don't think it gets much better than that," said a buoyant Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta.—AFP



Arsenal's English striker Eddie Nketiah celebrates with teammates after scoring their third goal during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium in London on 22 January 2023. PHOTO: AFP