

# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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## Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

## National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar holds meeting 1/2023



Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing puts forward wide-ranging clarifications to the meeting 1/2023 of the National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 January 2023.

**T**HE National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar held a meeting 1/2023 at the meeting hall of the State Administration Council Chairman's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

It was attended by Pro Tem

President U Myint Swe, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Union Minister for Defence

General Mya Tun Oo, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, special invitees SAC Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe, Joint-Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, and

Union Minister for Legal Affairs and Attorney-General of the Union Dr Thida Oo. Vice-President U Henry Van Thio submitted a leave of absence to the meeting due to a health condition.

First, the Senior General widely explained voting fraud in the 2020 multiparty democracy

general election, and situation on declaration for the state of emergency across the nation due to forcibly seizing the State power without solving the voting fraud by officials, formation of new Union Election Commission to check voter lists and findings

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## National Objectives for 76<sup>th</sup> 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

### Republic of the Union of Myanmar Announcement of Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

11<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe, 1384 ME  
31 January 2023

AS it is necessary to continuously control infection of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), it is hereby announced that public requests, orders, notifications and directives (except for easing the restrictions) released by the Union-level organizations and Union ministries up to 31 January 2023 have been extended until 28 February 2023 for prevention, control and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

## Maravijaya Buddha image combined with parts 1, 2 and 3 conveyed onto jewelled throne successfully

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

The process of lifting the Buddha image combined with parts 1, 2 and 3 to be placed on the jewelled throne by using a steel tower crane started from 8:10 am on 26 January. The image was lifted to 26° as well as the 31 feet high position from the reclining position on 26 January, 51° as well as the 52 feet high position on 27

January, 68° as well as the 63 feet high position on 28 January and 90° as well as the 75.5 feet high position at 9 am on 29 January. The whole lifting-up process took 72 hours and 50 minutes.

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

The 90° lifted Buddha image combined with parts 1, 2 and 3, which was conveyed near the jewelled throne, was lifted to 9 inches in height to be placed on the jewelled throne at 1:35 am on 31 January and it was successfully placed on the throne at 11:34 am on the same day. The process took about nine hours and 59 minutes.

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

Although the Myanmar engi-

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

Eight cranes from the steel tower successfully lifted the steel basket carrying the Buddha image combined with three parts and the image weighing 2,367.5 tonnes and placed the image on the jewelled throne. All the construction tasks and lifting tasks aim to enable the people to peacefully pay homage to the Buddha image, take meditation and view Tri Pitaka treatises preached by the Lord Buddha. — MNA/KTZH



The Maravijaya Buddha image is successfully conveyed and placed on the jewelled throne on 31 January 2023.

## It is beneficial for restoring peace of the nation and development of all regions

UNDERSTANDING the armed conflicts and disagreements which cannot shape development of the nation, and plans to restore peace for undertaking development tasks, plans to discuss shaping the peace progress beneficial for restoring peace of the nation and development of all regions,

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

### Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council

## Law Amending the Nay Pyi Taw Development Law State Administration Council Law No 16/2023

11<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe 1384 ME  
31 January 2023

The State Administration Council Law has hereby enacted this law under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar:

1. This law shall be called the Law Amending the Nay Pyi Taw Development Law.
2. Section 10 of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Law —
  - (a) Sub-section (p) and (q) shall be added after Sub-section (o) as follows: —

“(p) taking action against those who hinder and disturb duties of the body entrusted by the committee for its duties with authority, body members, officers and staff

(q) managing incomes, tax and revenue, fines for management and fines of court related to development measures
  - (b) Original Sub-section (p) shall be designated as Sub-section (r).
3. The words mentioned in Section 24 of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Law “the fine not exceeding K200,000” shall be substituted with the words “the fine not exceeding K700,000”.
4. The words mentioned in Section 26 of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Law “the imprisonment not exceeding three months” shall be substituted with the words “the imprisonment not exceeding six months” and the words “the fine not exceeding K100,000” with the words “the fine not exceeding K500,000” respectively.
5. Section 33-a shall be added after Section 33 of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Law as follows: —

“33-a. The committee shall levy debt of tax without fail if one is absent to pay the debt of tax.”
6. Section 37-a shall be added after Section 37 of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Law as follows: —

“37-a. The committee can set a percentage of cash reward for relevant departments over the fines punished against those who break vehicle and traffic rules mentioned in the bylaws, disciplines, notifications, orders and directives issued under this law.”

I hereby signed this law under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar:

Sd/ Min Aung Hlaing  
Senior General  
Chairman  
State Administration Council

## UEC Chairman signs Political Parties Registration Rules

THE Union Election Commission Management Committee held a meeting at the commission's meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

First, UEC Chairman U Thein Soe made an opening speech and the commission members reported on the

drafted “Political Parties Registration Rules” to approve and sign. Then, the UEC chairman approved and signed it.

Commission members also presented electoral sectors and the UEC chairman coordinated the discussion. — MNA/KTZH



## UEC releases Rules for Political Parties Registration

THE Union Election Commission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar released “Political Parties Registration Rules” under Notification No 10/2023 on 31 January 2023, 11<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe, 1384 ME.

The rules will be published in daily papers as supplements and can be downloaded at the UEC website [www.uec.gov.mm](http://www.uec.gov.mm). — MNA/KTZH

## National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar holds meeting 1/2023

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related to the implementation of five-point roadmap of the State Administration Council, taking action against those responsible for the voting fraud, direct and indirect pressure posed by the chair of NLD and the ex-president, prevention, treatment and vaccination for Covid-19 pan-

demic, endeavours for the development of the State economy and efforts for the restoration of perpetual peace, amnesty for punishments and relieving the punishment, undertakings for ensuring correct voter lists for the coming election, seizures of narcotic drugs, deaths and injuries of innocent people and loss and damage of State-owned

and private-owned property in terror acts by CRPH, NUG and their subordinate PDF terrorists, and their attempts to seize the State power by using insurgent, mobbed and terror ways.

The council members and special invitees discussed the clarifications of the Senior General.

All attendees including the

*Pro Tem* President discussed the situations of killing innocent people, blowing up public places, posing armed intimidation and coercion on the people committed by CRPH, NUG and their subordinate PDF terrorist groups aiming to cause utter devastation to the State although the State Administration Council is striving for ensuring

peace and stability of the State and development in all sectors, and the unusual circumstances of the country that they are making attempts to seize the State power in insurgent and terror ways. It was reported that the National Defence and Security Council will release the necessary statement on 1 February 2023. — MNA/TTA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Union Election Commission  
Announcement No 1/2023

11<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe 1384 ME  
31 January 2023

Announcement on Political Parties Registration Rules

The Union Election Commission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued the “Political Parties Registration Rules” under Notification No 10/2023 dated 11<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe, 1384 Myanmar Era, 31 January 2023.

Sd/ Thein Soe  
Chairman  
Union Election Commission

Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Union Election Commission  
Announcement No 2/2023

11<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe 1384 ME  
31 January 2023

Entitlements for establishment of political parties and registration

1. The State Administration Council has issued the Political Parties Registration Law as the State Administration Council Law No 15/2023 on 26 January 2023 under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to form political parties which aim to uphold the non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty, believe in the practice of the genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system and are loyal to the gratitude of the State.
2. The Union Election Commission issued the Political Parties Registration Rules under Notification No 10/2023 dated 31 January 2023.
3. Those wishing to form political parties may apply for the formation of political parties in accord with prescribed law and rules at the Union Election Commission, Office No 22, Nay Pyi Taw, during office hours starting from the date when this announcement was issued.

Sd/ Thein Soe  
Chairman  
Union Election Commission

Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Union Election Commission  
Announcement No 3/2023

11<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe 1384 ME  
31 January 2023

Entitlements for continuity of political parties and registration

1. The State Administration Council has issued the Political Parties Registration Law as the State Administration Council Law No 15/2023 on 26 January 2023 under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to form political parties which aim to uphold the non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty, believe in the practice of the genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system and are loyal to the gratitude of the State.
2. The Union Election Commission issued the Political Parties Registration Rules under Notification No 10/2023 dated 31 January 2023.
3. If political parties in line with Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Law wish to continuously stand as political parties, they shall submit the application to the Union Election Commission Office, Office No 22, Nay Pyi Taw, during office hours starting from the date when this announcement was issued.

Sd/ Thein Soe  
Chairman  
Union Election Commission

### MIFER Union Minister receives Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation vice-president

UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw met a delegation led by Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov, Vice-President of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

They discussed the strengthening of economic cooperation between the two countries and more cooperation in various fields. Both sides exchanged views on identifying new areas of potential cooperation and increasing investments.

High-ranking officials and relevant officials from the ministry were also present on the occasion. — MNA/TS



Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw meets Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov, Vice-President of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation yesterday.

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

UNION Minister for Commerce U Aung Naing Oo received a delegation led by Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov, Vice-President of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

They discussed relevant matters of a potential increase

in bilateral trade and investments, business and trade procedures, and facilitation of visits by business enterprises from Russia to Myanmar.

The directors-general and officials from the Department of Trade under the Ministry of Commerce were also present at the meeting.

— MNA/TS

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# MoE Union Minister receives vice-president of Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation

UNION Energy Minister U Myo Myint Oo received the delegation led by Vice-President Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation in the guest hall of the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The Union minister said that he was glad to have such a meeting on the occasion of the diamond jubilee diplomatic relations between Russia and

Myanmar and discussed matters relating to increasing bilateral energy sector cooperation.

The meeting was attended by the deputy minister, the permanent secretary, the directors-general, managing directors, officials from the Myanmar Economic Corporation, responsible personnel and representatives from the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation. — MNA/KZW



Union Minister U Myo Myint Oo meets Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov, vice-president of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation yesterday.

# Tatmadaw performs second day of second liver transplant

THE second day of the second liver transplant operation was done at the special treatment centre of Tatmadaw General Hospital (1000-bed) in Mingaladon township in Yangon.

The operation was carried out on U Thaug Win.

The liver extraction from U Phy Aung Zin, the donor patient, started at 9:30 am and the extracted liver was transplanted at 3:30 pm and the operation took about 11 hours.

Director of the Directorate of Medical Services Maj-

Gen Ko Ko Lwin and officials watched the operation.

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



The second-day operation of the second liver transplant is underway yesterday.

# Myanmar hosts 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of ASEAN Health Cluster 1: Promoting Healthy Lifestyle



THE opening ceremony of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of ASEAN Health Cluster 1: Promoting Healthy Lifestyle was held at the meeting room of the Ministry of Health yesterday morning via a hybrid system.

The ASEAN Senior Officials' meeting on Health Development (SOMHD) Chairperson of Myanmar Director-General of the Department of Public Health Dr Myint Myint Than gave a greeting speech. She said that Myanmar is implementing strategic plans and work plans for the ASEAN Health Cluster 1 and that measures have to be taken to achieve a healthy living system within the ASEAN community according to the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda-APHDA.

Afterwards, the chairmanship for the ASEAN Health Clus-

ter 1 was handed over from Malaysia to Myanmar for 2023 and 2024. Then, Myanmar chaired the meeting and the Philippines acted as co-chair.

At the meeting, they discussed the prevention and suppression of non-communicable diseases, control of smoking and tobacco use, control of drinking, prevention of occupational hazards, mental health, occupational health, elderly health, nutrition development and healthy food choices. The meeting will be held from 31 January to 2 February.

The ASEAN Health Cluster 1 officials from Myanmar's Ministry of Health, representatives from ASEAN member countries, officials from the office of the secretary-general of ASEAN, and officials from partner organizations attended the meeting. — MNA/KZW

## Mottos for 76<sup>th</sup> 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

## One new case of COVID-19 reported on 31 January, total figure reaches 633,820

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases recorded 633,820 after one new case was reported on 31 January 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached 614,299, including 17 new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to 19,490 on 31-1-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.— MNA

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## NEWS DIARY

### January 2023 insights with key events

*THIS diary contributes to newsworthy events that happened in January 2023, highlighting key events across the country, social improvement and performances and notices of the departments concerned.*

■ To mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day (Diamond Jubilee) falling on 4 January, new designs of 1 tical and 0.5 tical gold coins were announced on 2 January.

■ Steps are required to develop plans to encourage digital payments for municipal services, tax payments and utility bills such as meter bills, and water bills collected by the government across the country. said Daw Than Than Swe, governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM).

■ She remarked at the coordination meeting on digital payment enhancement and strengthening digital payment in Nay Pyi Taw, held on 3 January 2023 in Nay Pyi Taw.

■ Yangon Cambodia Express (YCX) service that links

■ On the same day, the Sino-Myanmar Shweli (Ruili) border and the Kyalgaung Nantaw border resumed their trade activity and border crossing permits were granted for the people and goods on both sides. Yangon Stock Exchange released an annual report on 6 January that K7,424.29 million worth of stocks were traded on the exchange in 2022.

■ On 7 January, thousands of Myanmar migrant workers were reportedly standing in long queues near the Myanmar Embassy in Thailand to receive tokens for passport renewal. On that day, under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, illicit goods seized in border and shipping routes were put for bidding and auction bid forms

also encouraged formal and informal international cooperation that is integral during the interrogation of cross-border money-laundering cases.

■ The authorities concerned inspected matters regarding gold market manipulation to control the price and legal actions will be taken against those unscrupulous brokers, Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association released a statement on 12 January 2023.

■ Myawady-Maesot Friendship Bridge I was reopened on 12 January and people are allowed to pass it by presenting a one-day border pass between 6 am and 6 pm.

■ A fire broke out at the Grand Royal liquor factory on 13 January and the level-3 fire was successfully put out after

on May Bank headquartered in Malaysia to cooperate in foreign salary remittance of Myanmar migrant workers in Malaysia on 14 January.

■ On 15 January, the Supreme Court published the Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027) implemented with the motto "Providing Justice By All" to ensure fair and impartial justice and the Year One Action Plan 2023 in Myanmar and English languages.

■ On 16 January, those operating money changer businesses are required to attend the regulatory compliance training courses regarding Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT), the CBM's governor Daw Than Than Swe said. Myanmar Embassy to Thai-

resumed and the immigration office started to issue border passes.

■ A three-day Myanmar Travel Fair 2023 took place at the Secretariat from 25 to 29 January, intending to promote Myanmar tourism. Tourism companies, airlines, hotels and restaurants, hospitals, insurance companies, other tourism-dependent businesses and local products businesses showcased their products and services with 50 stalls.

■ A gala ceremony to convey the Maravijaya Buddha Image being carved for public obeisance in Buddha Park onto a jewelled throne took place in the precinct of Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory on 26 January.



Myanmar and Cambodia to Singapore and Malaysia was launched on 3 January 2023.

■ Under the supervision of the Yangon Region Transport Committee, Sanwayla Public Co Ltd has started operating four YBS city buses to Kungyangon, Kawhmu, Twantay and Dala townships since early January.

■ The Myawady-Kawkareik Asian Highway in Kayin State was closed down for 20 days due to armed clashes on 22 December 2022 and was reopened on 4 January. The traders with perishable goods were battered by the temporary closure.

■ On 5 January, in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day, 7,012 prisoners across the country were released.

were sold.

■ Denmark has pledged to contribute K2 billion for Myanmar's Small and Medium Enterprises and the Responsible Business Fund (RBF) announced the 6<sup>th</sup> call for proposals by 9 January 2023.

■ China Embassy to Myanmar announced that a 48-hour covid negative test is required to enter the country through the Ruili border on 9 January and health code registration is no longer needed.

■ The rules to curb 'hundi', an informal money transfer system, will come into force, said Daw Than Than Swe, governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, highlighting that at a meeting of the Anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing task force. She

16 hours of firefighting. Some members of the fire police force and volunteers were injured in this case. A total of 550 firefighters including 450 fire brigade members and 100 auxiliary members extinguished the fire with the use of 60 fire engines. The Fire Brigade reports said that inspection for the cause of the fire and calculation of loss was under investigation.

■ The Ministry of Commerce also released a list of goods that can be paid in both Yuan and dollars in border trade settlements. The pulses, corn, sesame and peanuts can be paid in both currencies while rice, broken rice, other agricultural products and fishery products (eel and crabs) can be transacted in Yuan.

■ The CBM's governor called

land provided contributions and compensations to the beneficiary (family members) of seven Myanmar workers who died and two were injured in an oil tanker (Smooch Sea C22) explosion on 17 January when it was docked for maintenance in one of the tributaries of Mekong River in Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand.

■ Chinese carrier Ruili Airlines resumed its service for the Mandalay-Mangshi direct route every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday on 21 January. Myanma Railway resumed Yangon-Bagan Express Train to facilitate homegrown visitors on 23 January, running two times a week.

■ Nantaw and Sinphyu borders in Muse, Shan State linking the Chinese border were

■ More than 200 apartment units of Aung Myint Mo and Thilawa affordable housing complexes developed in the Yangon Region will be sold, according to the Ministry of Construction.

Between 27 and 29 January, the 117<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yangon Zoological Garden was held with fun activities and shopping festivals.

■ Myanmar labour attaché and delegation negotiated with Thailand's counterparts for 600 Myanmar citizens detained at IDC in Ranong, Thailand for protests and they are to be repatriated in February.

■ On 29 January, the Maravijaya Buddha image combined with parts 1,2 and 3 were lifted 90 degrees on the jewellery throne. —TWA/EM

# LOCAL BUSINESS

## Monthly market summary for January 2023

THE Global New Light of Myanmar's monthly market commentary for January 2023 provides insights on gold market movements, the resumption of cross-border posts and bridges and a key economic event regarding the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration's new policy on nominal directors.

### Gold market outlook

The pure gold price in early January 2023 hit over K2.7 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in the domestic markets. On 4 January, as a celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day (Diamond Jubilee), new designs of 1 tical and 0.5 tical gold coins have been on sale at the respective shops in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay of the MGE from 5 January 2023, along with other old coins.

The sales price is K2.5 million per tical. The 1 tical gold coin is valued at K2.58 million per tical, including making charges of K80,000. The final price of gold is K1.292 million per 0.5 tical with making charges of K42,000. For 0.25 tical, the market value is K647,000 including making charges of K22,000.

Afterwards, the global gold spot price rallied to above US\$1,940 per ounce in the second week of January. Consequently, the yellow metal price peaked at over K2.8 million per tical in the domestic market. As a result of this, the reference price set by Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) was raised to K2,287,000 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 K2,860 in the unofficial forex market.

There is a price difference of over K500,000 per tical between the YGEA's reference price and market price.

The YGEA released a statement on 11 January that the actual market price settled in gold transactions was below K2.7 million per tical. Those unscrupulous traders are manipulating the market with malicious rumours to drive the price higher

or lower for personal gains, as per the statement.

The market is quite slow-moving yet the price continues rising. The YGEA called for concerted efforts to control price fluctuation, as mentioned in the statement.

At the end of January 2023, global gold spot prices stood at US\$1,915 per ounce while YGEA set reference price at K2,256,500 per tical and pure gold price touched a high of K2,852,000 per tical in the domestic markets.

### Reopening of land borders and cross-border bridges

The bridges in border areas were shut down amid the COVID-19 negative consequences.

Operations at Myawady-Maesot Friendship Bridge I were resumed on 12 January 2023 after nearly three years of closure and the authorities from Thailand and Myanmar counterparts formally reopened the bridge at 8:30 am on 12 January 2023.

That bridge is the major border trading route between Myanmar and Thailand. The border crossing ceased amid the COVID-19 cases on 23 March 2020.

Efforts were made to reopen the bridge. However, it has been closed down for nearly three years amid coronavirus infections in both countries. The bridge has been reopened for now. It will bring about job opportunities for the local community and freight forwarders.

Therefore, people can enter the Maesot side by passing that bridge with the border pass as before.

For a border pass document, Myawady residents can apply for it by presenting a citizenship scrutiny card, household registration and three pictures of the licence photo size.

The licensed private cars are entitled to go over the bridge and the passengers need to present COVID-19 vaccination certificates. Furthermore, border crossings with passports are also allowed and Myanmar migrant workers can also return home via the bridge as before.

Similarly, Mang Weing linking to Muse border post, which is a major crossing point



Myanmar has opened five border trade zones with China—Muse, Lweje, Kampaiti, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung. Lorries laden with export cargoes are pictured on the Sino-Myanmar border.

between Myanmar and China, was reopened on 14 January (7 a.m.) 2023 in presence of the officials of the two countries after a nearly two-year hiatus from 30 March 2021.

However, only six-wheel trucks driven by Myanmar drivers are allowed to pass the Mang Wein crossing. Other trucks are still not given the green light. Passengers are not entitled to pass it as well.

Additionally, other goods except for agricultural products (watermelon, muskmelon), minerals and fisheries products are allowed to be sent to China through that border point. Meanwhile, China gives the go-ahead to the imports of construction goods, electrical appliances, medical devices, industrial equipment, consumer goods, household goods and food products only through that border post, U Min Thein elaborated.

Additionally, Nantaw and Sinphyu checkpoints at the Muse trade zone were reopened on 25 January 2023.

At present, those residents holding Muse's household registration are allowed to pass the border points by making a border pass at the district's immigration office. Those from other regions and states are still not entitled to pass the border points. Negotiations are still underway. The ban is yet to be lifted. Motorcycles and small vehicles are also given the go-

ahead to pass the Sinphyu border point.

### Alternate directors and shareholders not allowed

Alternate directors and shareholders will not be allowed, according to a notification released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) dated 17 January 2023.

By exercising the power conferred by Sub-section 462 (A) (II) of the Myanmar Companies Law, the DICA hereby notified that alternate directors and shareholders shall not be permitted.

According to Chapter 18 stipulated in the Myanmar Companies Law, regarding the rights of the directors and officials, those who direct corporate affairs are considered directors even if the position of the director is not appointed. Additionally, the appointment of alternate directors is allowed under the existing law. Electing alternate directors is not officially approved.

Furthermore, any person who holds the shares has to submit the registration to a registrar and make entries in the register of the participants of the companies, stipulated in the Myanmar Companies Law.

At present, some countries permit the registration of alternate shareholders and practice a system in which the beneficial owner is separately disclosed.

However, company registration with alternate shareholders is not allowed in Myanmar. Those registered persons and legal entities kept in the company file and registered with the registrar are considered actual beneficial proprietors.

Furthermore, the information of beneficial owners can be observed at a prescribed fee under Section 421 of the Myanmar Companies Law.

This notification has come into effect from 17 February 2023.

Following that notification, the owners of foreign companies have to stay in the country instead of the alternate director. Yet, it could pose problems and challenges to some foreign firms during the pandemic and in the state of political changes, Myanmar Enterprise Solutions indicated.

Under the Myanmar Companies Law, each company must have at least one director who must reside for more than 183 days in the State. Thus, foreign firms usually appoint Myanmar citizens or foreigners who stay more than 183 days in the country as alternate directors. Alternate directors are officially permitted in other foreign countries as well.

Myanmar Enterprise Solutions elaborated that it would be more appropriate if alternate directors are allowed and only alternate shareholders are unconstitutional. — NN/EM

## OPINION

### Encourage manufacturing iron and steel wares at home

**IN** ACCORD with the theme “industrial capacity to develop the nation”, improvement of the industrial capacity is a drive for shaping a modern, developed nation. As the industrial sector is essential for the development of Myanmar, both the government and the people are to join hands in improving all sectors and the socioeconomic status of the people based on good results of the industrial sector.

Actually, Myanmar is blessed with natural resources not only above and underground and above and underwater areas. Hence, it is necessary to combine the high capacity of citizens including capital, technologies and materials with better management of the government to utilize these natural resources for the sake of the nation.

The government is building the nation with the necessary infrastructure. In so doing, construction sites require various items of

Only when steel mills emerge in the nation will they manufacture iron and steel wares to be used in construction projects as well as public use. On the other hand, these mills will encourage the excavation of oar from the mines and the recycling of waste iron parts in society to be able to produce useful products.

steel and iron wares. As such, the country needs to establish iron and steel mills which can manufacture necessary iron and steel wares to be used at home. In this regard, the Steel Mill (Pinpet) which was suspended for more than four years due to various reasons will be operated in the future.

The mill was built in 2004 and it was operated for 72 hours in October 2016 without a computer control system. At that time, the test-running process secured success. Hence, the mill lost its possible benefits due to a lack of operation. For the time being, the machinery installed at the mill caused decayed.

The Steel Mill (2) in Pinpet aims to manufacture pig iron as a main product. In order to produce pig iron, the mill is formed with 22 workshops, 19 of which have been operated on the test without loads while three remaining workshops are being repaired by Russian and Myanmar experts as well as technicians for conducting the test-run process.

The steel production process is important for the nation. It is necessary to implement the steel mill projects under systematic schedules in order to timely complete these mills. As construction projects across the nation require a large volume of iron and steel parts, not only the government but the private sector need to encourage manufacturing iron and steel wares at home under the necessary disciplines.

Only when steel mills emerge in the nation will they manufacture iron and steel wares to be used in construction projects as well as public use. On the other hand, these mills will encourage the excavation of oar from the mines and the recycling of waste iron parts in society to be able to produce useful products.

**I** REMEMBERED some words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in one of his poems. Please let me mention them.

*“Oh, Sleep! It is a gentle thing,  
Beloved from pole to pole”*

I like them a lot. Moreover, I think you all will agree with my idea about it because everyone across the world likes to sleep. However, there will be scarce people who will completely know how sleeping positions and health are associated with each other.

Everyone sleeps differently; there are loads of positions in bed to sleep in. Some people like sleeping on their sides on a waterbed, others prefer sleeping on their backs on a hard mattress – but we all do it. We spend about a third of our lives asleep, which is a lot! But what is the best position to sleep in?

Sleeping is very important for your body and mind; in a way, you're charging yourself. That's why sleep deprivation can have negative consequences; it can affect your memory, your concentration, your reaction time, your decisiveness, your emotions, and your physical well-being. So, sleeping is good for you. But not just that, your sleeping position can also have a positive or negative influence on your body.

Try to get at least six hours of sleep every night. Research has shown that sleeping less than six hours is just as bad for you as skipping a whole night's sleep. It is okay if this happens once in a while, but even after two weeks of sleeping too little, you will notice a

difference in your mind and body. You might think that you function normally after a rough night, but this is not the case.

There are several positions of sleep.

All people can be divided into roughly three categories: those who sleep on their stomachs, those who sleep on their backs, and those who sleep on their sides. Your sleeping position can be good for your mind and body, but it can also cause ailments.

Do you sleep on your back? Then you are in luck because this is the healthiest position to sleep in! Sleeping on your back is good for your spine, as it will be aligned nicely. This position causes little strain on the muscles in your back and neck. Moreover, this position is the best for your skin. Your face won't develop wrinkles and spots as quickly as those who sleep on their side or their stomach. This position is also good for women, as sleeping on their backs will prevent chest wrinkles as well as sagging breasts. The only disadvantage is that it worsens snoring.

Do you sleep on your side? You're not the only one, because this is the most common sleeping position. When you sleep on your side you can develop pain in your arms and legs because you are constantly lying on one side. Sleeping on your right side is also disadvantageous for your digestion and heartburn. An upside: sleeping on your side improves circulation and lessens snoring.

More than 60 per cent of people sleep on their sides, with men spending more time on their sides each night than women. As chil-

## Sleeping Positions

And

### One's Health

By Yin Nwe Ko



Tips and tricks (Jan 2023)

dren, we split our nights by sleeping in all positions equally, but by adulthood, a clear preference for side sleeping emerges. The flexibility of our spine decreases as we age, which may make the side sleeping position more comfortable for older adults

Sleeping on your side offers several benefits. It promotes healthy spinal alignment and is the sleep position least likely to result in back pain, especially when supported with pillows. Side sleeping also may reduce heartburn and snoring, making

it a better sleeping position for people with sleep apnea or acid reflux.

We have bad news for people who sleep on their stomachs. This position is the unhealthiest. You will develop neck complaints, since your head is completely

turned, and back issues. Your spine has to take on an awkward position, which will also cause you to toss and turn more. Because of this, your sleep will be disrupted more. Also, try sleeping on a full stomach, it will not be pleasant! It does lessen snoring, though, so you have got that going for you.

During sleep, your body works too. Your sleep position can either help or hinder that process, depending on how effectively it supports the natural curvature of your spine. It's also common for people to wake up with brand new aches and pains in the morning, sometimes due to sleep position. We spend a third of our lives asleep or resting as mentioned earlier, so it is important to choose a sleep position that assists your body with physical recovery. A proper sleep position can relieve stress on your spine, while an unhealthy position can increase pain or stiffness in the back, arms, or shoulders, all while contributing to lower-quality sleep.

The best sleep position is one that promotes healthy spinal alignment from your hips to your head. What looks like for you depends on your health situation and what you find comfortable. Having said that, some positions are considered healthier than others. Specifically, sleeping on the side or back is considered more beneficial than sleeping on the stomach. In either of these sleep positions, it is easier to keep your spine supported and balanced, which relieves pressure on the spinal tissues and enables your muscles to relax and recover.

However, if sleeping on your

stomach feels good to you, don't feel forced to change it. You can minimize your risk of pain and improve spinal alignment with the right mattress and pillow. Different sleep positions provide different benefits that may be helpful for you if you're dealing with back pain, pregnancy, allergies, acid reflux, or other health condition.

In these cases, it may be worth trying a new sleep position to enable more restful sleep. In one study, a group of adults with back pain was trained to sleep on their backs or their side. They experienced significant pain relief in just four weeks.

Adjusting to a new sleep position takes time, but it is possible. Be patient with yourself and use pillows to help train your body to the new position.

Experts recommend that those who are pregnant sleep on their sides with theirs. The side sleeping position relieves the pressure of a growing belly, enabling the heart to pump and blood to flow easily throughout the body. In particular, the left side is recommended because it prevents pressure on the liver and facilitates healthy blood flow to the fetus, uterus, kidneys, and heart. If you feel discomfort sleeping on your left side during pregnancy, you can switch to the right side now and then to relieve pressure on the left hip. You can also relieve tension by placing pillows under the belly, between the legs, and at the small back.

The best sleeping position is on your side with a pillow or blanket between the knees. Side sleeping can also relieve symp-

toms for those with neck or back pain. Choose a pillow with a loft, or thickness, that matches the distance between your neck and your shoulder. With a thicker pillow, your neck will stay aligned with your spine as you sleep on your side, preventing pain and soreness while maintaining proper alignment.

If you're already a side sleeper and want to go for that gold star, opt to sleep on your left instead of your right side. Sleeping on the right may increase pressure on your internal organs, which is why experts recommend the left for pregnant women and sleepers with acid reflux or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Sleeping on the right can also intensify symptoms of heartburn. Sleeping less symmetrically can increase your risk of pain symptoms upon waking up, so use pillows to achieve a side sleeping position that aligns your spine from your hips to your head. Put pillows on either side of your body to keep yourself in place, and place a small pillow between the knees to even out the hips.

You have already read the advantages and disadvantages of various sleeping positions which were mentioned as much as within my reach. Whether you have known them before or not, you sleep every night. However, when you learn more about them, you can weigh your current health and your knowledge of various sleeping positions, I assume.

Reference: *Tips and Tricks*

## China's pandemic strategy optimization “great boon” for Cambodia's tourism, economy: academics

**A** CADEMICs in Cambodia said Thursday that China's optimization of its COVID-19 strategy early this month is a “great boon” for Cambodia's tourism and economy.

Vun Phanith, a lecturer at the Institute for International Studies and Public Policy, a school of Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), foresaw that large numbers of tourists, business people and investors will return to the Southeast Asian nation, given close relationship

between the two countries.

“The comeback of Chinese travellers will be a great boon for our tourism and economy,” he said here during a round-table discussion on China's reopening.

“Their return will also help promote cultural exchanges and people-to-people connectivity between the two countries towards the building of a community with a shared future,” he added.

China was the biggest source of foreign tourists to Cambodia in the pre-COVID-19 pandemic era,

a Ministry of Tourism's report said, adding that the kingdom received 2.36 million Chinese tourists in 2019, generating about 1.8 billion US dollars in revenue.

The world's second largest economy is also the top foreign investor in Cambodia.

Lim Chhay, a programme manager for foreign affairs at the think tank, the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung Cambodia, said Chinese tourists, business people and investors have importantly contributed to socioeconomic

development in Cambodia.

“The opportunity from China's reopening is very clear, (and) we expect to welcome a huge influx of Chinese tourists and investors to Cambodia again, like it was before the pandemic,” he said. “Chinese tourists like to spend money for their holidays, so their return will give a boost to our tourism growth.”

Cheng Ousa, junior researcher from the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at RUPP, believed that Chinese tourists, business

people and investors will pour into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) including Cambodia after China's optimization of its COVID-19 strategy.

SOURCE: Xinhua

Tourists visit the Angkor Wat in the Angkor Archaeological Park in Siem Reap province, Cambodia, 17 December 2022.  
PHOTO: VAN POV/XINHUA





# SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

## China's Deep Space Exploration Lab eyes top global talents

CHINA'S Deep Space Exploration Lab (DSEL) said Monday that it is inviting top global talents to apply for the 2023 Overseas Outstanding Young Talents Programme, to promote the development of deep-space exploration.

According to the DSEL, the programme, funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China, aims to attract outstanding young scholars from overseas, who have made achievements in the natural sciences, engineering and technology, to come and

work in China.

Applicants are invited to take part in research on aerospace science and technology, space science and technology, planetary science, physics, astronomy, nuclear science and technology, biology, chemistry and materials science, electronic information and technology, mechanical engineering, artificial intelligence and other fields related to deep-space exploration, said the DSEL.

Co-established by the China National Space Administration, Anhui Province, and

the University of Science and Technology of China, the DSEL is headquartered in Hefei, the capital city of Anhui, and has a branch in Beijing. Since its establishment, the laboratory has conducted science and technology research focusing on major national projects in deep-space exploration.

The DSEL aims to promote the long-term development of deep-space exploration regarding the moon, planets, asteroids and the edge of the solar system. —Xinhua

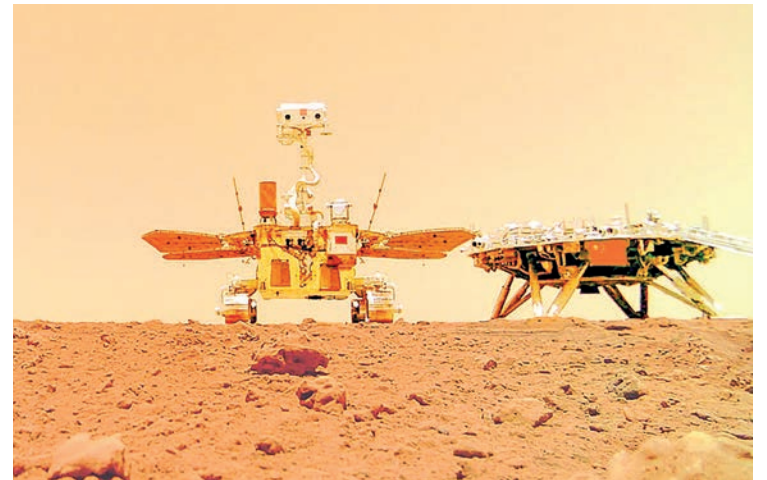


Photo released on 11 June 2021 by the China National Space Administration (CNSA) shows a selfie of China's first Mars rover Zhurong with the landing platform. **PHOTO: CNSA/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

## Climate disinfo surges in denial, conspiracy comeback

FALSE information about climate change flourished online over the past year, researchers say, with denialist social media posts and conspiracy theories surging after US environmental reforms and Elon Musk's Twitter takeover.

"What really surprised us this year was to see a resurgence in language that is reminiscent of the 1980s: phrases like 'climate hoax' and 'climate scam' that deny the phenomenon of

climate change," said Jennie King, head of civic action at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, a London-based digital research group. Popular topics included the false claims that CO2 does not cause climate change or that global warming is not caused by human activity, said Climate Action Against Disinformation (CAAD), a coalition of campaigners, in a report.

"Let me expose what the climate scam is actually all

about," read one of the most-shared tweets, cited in another survey by US non-profit Advance Democracy, Inc (ADI).

"It is a wealth transfer from you — to the global elite."

An analysis of Twitter messages — carried out for AFP by two computational social scientists at City, University of London — counted 1.1 million tweets or retweets using strong climate-sceptic terms in 2022. —AFP

## Germany vows millions for Amazon as Scholz meets Lula in Brazil



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (R) and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (L) gesture during a press conference at the Planalto Palace in Brasilia on 30 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

GERMANY on Monday outlined more than \$200 million in contributions for environmental projects in Brazil as Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited the South Ameri-

can giant reeling from Amazon destruction under ex-president Jair Bolsonaro.

The package includes a brand-new \$33.6 million in aid

for Brazilian states for rainforest protection, on top of another \$38 million already announced for an Amazon protection fund to which Germany and Norway had halted payments under climate-sceptic Bolsonaro.

Protection of the Amazon — a crucial sink for planet-warming carbon dioxide — was high on the agenda for talks between Scholz and Brazil's leftist new President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva that also aimed to "deepen the resumption of relations", according to the Brazilian presidency. Scholz was the first German chancellor to visit Brazil since 2015, and the first Western leader to meet Lula since he became president on 1 January after four years of frosty relations with Brazil under far-right Bolsonaro. —AFP

## Australia-led research splits seawater to produce green hydrogen

AN international research led by the University of Adelaide has successfully split seawater to produce green hydrogen.

In a study published on Tuesday, the team of scientists revealed they had found a way to electrolyze seawater into hydrogen fuel without pre-treatment.

The research was led by Qiao Shizhang and Zheng Yao from the School of Chemical Engineering at the University of Adelaide in collaboration with Tianjin University and

Nankai University in China and Kent State University in the United States. Clean hydrogen is produced by splitting water into oxygen and hydrogen — a process known as electrolysis. However, existing technologies require a feedstock of water of high purity, which is achieved with chemical additives. Tuesday's study proved that electrolysis can be achieved with seawater with microorganisms filtered out with a similar efficiency to highly purified water. —Xinhua

## Is there life on Mars? Maybe, and it could have dropped its teddy

YOGI, Paddington and Winnie the Pooh, move over. There's a new bear in town. Or on Mars, anyway.

The beaming face of a cute-looking teddy bear appears to have been carved into the surface of our nearest planetary neighbour, waiting for a passing satellite to discover it.

And when the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter passed over last month, carrying aboard the most powerful camera ever to venture into the Solar System, that's exactly what happened.

Scientists operating the HiRISE (High Resolution Im-

aging Science Experiment), which has been circling Mars since 2006, crunched the data that made it back to Earth, and have now published a picture of the face.

"There's a hill with a V-shaped collapse structure (the nose), two craters (the eyes), and a circular fracture pattern (the head)," said scientists at the University of Arizona, which operates the kit.

Each one of the features in the 2,000-metre (1.25-mile)-wide face has a possible explanation that hints at just how active the surface of the planet is. —AFP

# HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

## Schoolkids lost third of a year's learning to pandemic: study

SCHOOL-AGED students lost more than a third of a year's worth of learning early on in the pandemic and have still not caught up, posing "a real problem for this generation," researchers warned on Monday.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused one of history's greatest disruptions to education, with 95 per cent of students worldwide affected by school closures, and online teaching becoming far more common.

To find out how much this upheaval affected students, a European team carried out the largest review of research on the subject yet conducted.

They analysed 42 studies published between March 2020 and August 2022 across 15 countries, including several European and South American nations as well as the United States, South Africa and Australia.

The study found that children aged between five and 18 had lost the equivalent of 35 per cent of a normal year's worth of education.

Children from disadvan-



Student wear facemasks as they attend their first day in school after summer vacation at the St. Lawrence Catholic School in north of Miami, on 18 August 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

tagged backgrounds were disproportionately affected, as were those in poorer countries, according to the study in the journal *Nature Human Behaviour*.

"The learning crisis is an equality crisis," said the study's lead author Bastian Betthausen, a researcher at France's Sciences Po university.

The researchers also found larger "learning deficits" for maths than for reading.

"This may be due to parents being better able to help their children with reading compared to maths exercises," Betthausen told a press briefing.

Most of the learning deficits came during school closures at the start of the pandemic. Efforts by children, parents, schools and governments since may have prevented further losses but have not made up for the lost ground, the study said. —AFP

## WHO urges investment in neglected tropical diseases



Doctors stick up posters during a leprosy screening campaign in village of Djougbossou, near Adzope, on 25 January 2023. Listed by the WHO as one of the 20 neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), leprosy is transmitted from a sick person to healthy person. The microbe multiplies very slowly, and the incubation period can last up to 5 years. The first symptoms show spots, then gradually eat away at desensitized limbs. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE World Health Organization on Monday called for greater investment in combating neglected tropical diseases, which left more than 1.6 billion people, often in least-developed countries,

requiring treatment in 2021.

NTDs are a diverse group of conditions, found mainly in tropical regions, that include dengue, leprosy and rabies.

They are deemed neglected

diseases because they are largely overlooked and benefit from only limited funding.

The WHO said NTDs disproportionately affect the poorest, primarily in areas where water safety, sanitation and access to healthcare are inadequate.

Soce Fall, director of the WHO's NTDs department, said they had been neglected precisely because they did not affect developed countries. By comparison, he cited the funding plunged into Mpox last year once it began spreading outside Africa.

"The level of investment needed — we are far from reaching it," he told a press briefing.

"We need to protect people wherever they are, and whatever their social condition." In 2021, around 1.65 billion people were estimated to require treatment for at least one NTD, of which 857 million were in southeast Asia and 584 million in Africa. —AFP

## Guidelines created to prevent heart complications in children fighting cancer

AN Australian-led research group has created new international clinical guidelines to help prevent and treat heart complications in children during cancer treatment.

The guideline, which involves 11 domains of cardio-oncology care, was led by Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) and published in the *JACC: Advances* journal.

It defines the high-risk group of pediatric cancer patients who should have a heart check-up, formalizes a minimum standard of investigations required of a patient and provides recommendations to protect young hearts.

Management and surveillance of patients receiving different classes of drugs used to treat cancer were also included in the guideline.

"This is the first pediatric international guideline proposed to begin capturing pediatric cardio-oncology data and hence lead to further advances in the field," co-author and MCRI's Senior Research Officer Ben Felmingham told Xinhua on Monday.

Felmingham noted that some drugs used to treat cancer have an unwanted impact on the heart, while being very beneficial for treating cancer. —Xinhua

## WHO says Covid still an international emergency

THREE years to the day after the World Health Organization sounded the highest level of global alert over Covid-19, it said Monday the pandemic remains an international emergency.

The UN health agency's emergency committee on Covid-19 met last Friday for a 14th time since the start of the crisis.

Following that meeting, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus "concurs with the advice offered by the committee regarding the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and determines that the event continues to constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC)," the organization said in a statement.

Tedros, it said, "acknowledges the committee's views that the Covid-19 pandemic is probably at a transition point and appreciates the advice of the committee to navigate this transition carefully and mitigate the potential negative consequences". Even prior to the meeting, the WHO chief had suggested the emergency phase of the pandemic is not over, pointing to surging numbers of deaths and warning that the global response to the crisis "remains hobbled".

"As we enter the fourth year of the pandemic, we are certainly in a much better position now than we were a year ago, when the Omicron wave was at its peak, and more than 70,000 deaths were being reported to WHO each week," he told the committee at the start of Friday's meeting. —AFP



A health worker collects a nasal swab sample from a woman to test for the Covid-19 coronavirus at a hospital in Amritsar on 5 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

# ECONOMY WORLD

## Asian markets take fresh hit as nervous traders await Fed meeting

ASIAN markets sank Tuesday following a big selloff on Wall Street and ahead of a key Federal Reserve policy decision later in the week, while data showing a bounce in Chinese economic activity failed to lift the mood.

After spending most of January chalking up gains owing to easing concerns over inflation and interest rates, traders have this week taken a step back with recession talk still filling the air.

The Fed is due Wednesday to announce another rise in borrowing costs, with expectations for a 25 basis-point lift marking a further slowdown in its monetary tightening campaign.

The post-meeting statement and comments from bank boss Jerome Powell will be pored over for an idea about officials' thinking on future hikes.

Investors are already spec-

ulating that slowing inflation could allow for a possible rate cut towards the year's end, even though several policy board members have consistently pushed back against such a move, insisting they will not let up until prices are under control.

Decisions by the Bank of England and European Central Bank are also on the agenda this week.

All three main indexes on Wall Street tumbled, with the Nasdaq off two per cent and the less upbeat mood on trading floors saw Monday's apathetic trade continue in Asia.

Hong Kong, which has led gains so far this year, was one of the worst-hit dropping close to two per cent, while Tokyo, Shanghai, Sydney, Singapore, Taipei, Manila, Bangkok and Jakarta were also well in the red.

Seoul was dragged by a sharp fall in Samsung, which said fourth-quarter operating profits plunged nearly 70 per cent, the biggest drop in more than eight years, as electronics and chips sales tanked.

And another selloff in some of tycoon Gautam Adani's troubled firms weighed on Mumbai again.

"The January rally has hit a wall and probably won't have a chance of returning until we get beyond Wednesday's Fed press conference and Apple's results after the Thursday close," said OANDA's Edward Moya.

Traders shrugged at data showing China's factory activity expanded in January after four months of contraction as the economy reopened from years of strict zero-Covid curbs. —AFP

## Sudanese tighten belts as economic crisis grinds on



A customer chooses a food item at a grocery shop in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, on 19 January 2023. Sudan's spiralling economic crisis has forced many households to make fewer purchases amid a looming food crisis that left nearly one third of the 45-million-strong population facing acute hunger. **PHOTO: ASHRAF SHAZLY / AFP**

AS Sudan's economic crisis drags on, grocer Hassan Omar keeps busy cleaning packaged food items that have been gathering dust for months as his dwindling customer base make fewer purchases.

"People can no longer afford to buy all their needs," Omar, 43, told AFP at his grocery store in the capital Khartoum.

"Purchasing power has significantly declined over the past six months," he said, noting that his sales had plummeted from 500,000 Sudanese pounds (\$877) to 200,000 pounds (\$350) per day over that period. His plight reflects Sudan's spiralling economic crisis which has forced many households to tighten their belts as nearly one third

of the 45 million population face acute hunger. Some 65 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, according to a 2020 report by the United Nations.

The country's economic troubles stem from decades of government mismanagement, armed conflict and international sanctions against the government of president Omar al-Bashir, who was ousted in April 2019 following mass protests against his rule triggered by biting hardship.

The crisis further deepened following a 2021 military coup led by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, which upended a transition to civilian rule and triggered cuts to crucial international aid. — AFP

## Eye-watering onion prices make Philippine staple a luxury

EVEN before his onions are fully grown, Philippine farmer Luis Angeles races to harvest the crop and cash in on eye-watering prices for a vegetable that has become a luxury item in the country.

Onion prices have soared in recent months, reaching as high as 800 pesos (nearly \$15) a kilogramme in Manila supermarkets, making them more expensive than chicken or pork.

Some restaurants have stripped the staple ingredient from dishes, while many families already grappling with the highest inflation in 14 years have stopped eating them.

To meet demand and push retail prices back below 200 pesos, the government has approved the importation of 21,000 tonnes of onions and faces calls to crack down on traders suspected of hoarding.

But prices remain stubbornly high and onion farmers like Angeles have been harvesting earlier than usual to reap the windfall.

"What is happening is historic," said Angeles, 37, as his workers pulled undersized red and



This photo taken on 17 January 2023 shows farmers loading sacks of harvested onions onto a tricycle at a farm in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija province. **PHOTO: JAM STA ROSA / AFP**

white bulbs out of the soil near the northern town of Bongabon, the country's self-proclaimed "onion capital".

"This is the first time that prices have reached this level."

When he began harvesting last month, Angeles received as much as 250 pesos per kilogramme for his crop.

By the time his onions reached Manila supermarket shelves, the price had more than doubled, exceeding the daily min-

imum wage.

"I told my family, 'Let's just smell the onion instead of eating it,'" Candy Roasa, 56, said as she walked through a market in the capital where she has seen vendors selling bulbs the size of a small child's fist for as much as 80 pesos each.

As onion memes spread on social media, the humble vegetable has become a symbol of wealth in the poverty-afflicted country. — AFP

## S Korea's export volume keeps falling for 3<sup>rd</sup> month in December

SOUTH Korea's export volume kept falling for the third consecutive month last month due to lower global demand, central bank data showed Tuesday.

The export volume index declined 6.3 per cent in December from a year earlier, after sliding 3.2 per cent in October and 6.3 per cent in November, respectively, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK). The continued fall came as rapid interest rate hikes in major economies stoked worry about global economic slump.

The export value index slipped 12.2 per cent in December, marking the fastest decline in 31 months since May 2020.

The import volume index retreated 1.1 per cent in December from a year earlier, logging the first slide in six months, while the import value index dwindled 2.4 per cent.

The net terms-of-trade index for goods, which gauges the amount of import that can be bought with a unit-export proceed, went down 4.9 per cent in December on a yearly basis, keeping a downward trend for 21 months in a row.—Xinhua

## Bonza airline launches budget flights in Australia

A new Australian budget airline, Bonza, launched its first flight Tuesday, promising cheap tickets, onboard craft beer, snags (sausages) and a relaxed approach to crew uniforms.

Branding itself as a down-to-earth Aussie airline and the nation's only independent low-cost carrier, Bonza named its first three Boeing 737-8 MAX planes Shazza, Bazza and Sheila.

Tickets, which can only be booked on the airline's mobile app, are priced from Aus\$49-79 (US\$35-56) -- too cheap to be profitable according to one analyst.

The inaugural flight took off from Bonza's base in Queensland's Sunshine Coast to the Whitsunday Islands in the heart of the Great

Barrier Reef.

Bonza chief executive Tim Jordan marked the Sunshine Coast launch by addressing the media in sneakers, purple socks, dark shorts and a floral short-sleeve shirt. "We're about the many and not the few. We are about visiting friends and relatives and that's our focus," Jordan told Channel Nine news.

"That's good for stimulating competition across the country."

Bonza, brandishing a slogan "Here for All-Stralia" and backed by US investment firm 777 Partners, said it planned to serve 17 mostly regional destinations. It boasts a purple-themed mix-and-match crew uniform including sneakers, T-shirts, and shorts, and no rules on hairstyles, lipstick or tattoos.—AFP

## China factory output rebounds on zero-Covid relaxation

CHINA'S factory activity expanded in January after months of contraction, official data showed Tuesday, as the world's second-largest economy stirs back to life after Beijing ended strict Covid curbs.

The Asian giant posted just three per cent growth last year as its economy was hammered by stringent lockdowns and a deepening crisis in the key property sector.

But it is now showing signs of a rebound, with a key gauge of factory output rising this month and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) upgrading its 2023 growth forecast to 5.2 per cent. Pandemic prevention measures have "entered a new stage" that is allowing "a gradual return" to normal life, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) statistician Zhao Qinghe said in a statement. He added that the official manufacturing



This photo taken with a mobile phone shows employees working on the production line at Hefei Changan Automobile Co, Ltd in Hefei, east China's Anhui Province, 17 February 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA

purchasing managers' index (PMI) rose to 50.1 this month, from 47.0 in December -- the first time since September the index has been above the 50 point mark that indicates growth.

The non-manufactur-

ing PMI, which includes the services and construction sector, rose to 54.4 in January, well above the 52 points forecast by economists surveyed by Bloomberg.

Authorities have said the soaring virus case

numbers that accompanied China's reopening have now passed their peak, with a travel surge prompted by the country's biggest Lunar New Year holiday in years offering a much-needed boost to business.—AFP

## Japan's job availability in 2022 improves for 1<sup>st</sup> time in 4 years



Commuters wearing face masks head to work in front of JR Tokyo Station in the centre of Tokyo on 28 December 2022, their last working day for the year, while health authorities remain on high alert over increasing COVID-19 cases. PHOTO: KYODO

JAPAN'S average job availability in 2022 improved for the first time in four years as economic and social activities revived with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, government data showed Tuesday.

The job-to-applicant

ratio rose 0.15 point from the previous year to 1.28, thanks to a stronger hospitality sector, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare said. The figure has yet to reach the pre-pandemic level of 1.6 in 2019, indicating that a full recovery will

take time.

The ratio means there were 128 job openings for every 100 job seekers.

The pandemic pushed down the ratio to 1.18 in 2020 and 1.13 in the following year.

"There was a noticeable recovery, mainly among accommodation and restaurant businesses, which had been struggling due to the spread of COVID-19," a ministry official said.

"While difficulty is seen in some parts of the labour sector, such as with some industries experiencing a slow recovery in job openings, there is a mild recovery (in the situation)," labour minister Katsunobu Kato said at a press conference.—Kyodo

### PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of **Shandong Zhongxin Kenong Biological Technology Co.,Ltd** have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name "**Friends Helper Co.,Ltd**", to new distributor name "**Nawarat Myay Co.,Ltd**". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. **Nawarat Myay Co.,Ltd**. Ph-09401573814

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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.

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# GLOBAL AFFAIRS

## Pope visits conflict-ridden central Africa, first stop DR Congo

POPE Francis embarks on his fifth visit to Africa on Tuesday, flying to the Democratic Republic of Congo and then South Sudan to plead for peace in the two violence-plagued nations.

Thousands of well-wishers are expected at Kinshasa's Ndjili international airport to greet the 86-year-old pontiff's plane, which is due to land around 3:00 pm local time (1400 GMT).

It is the first time since 1985 that a pope has visited DRC, a desperately poor country of close to 100 million people, 40 per cent of whom are Catholic.

The six-day trip to DRC and South Sudan was originally planned for July 2022, but postponed due to the pontiff's knee

pain that has forced him in recent months to use a wheelchair.

Security concerns were also said to play a role, and the Vatican scrapped an original plan to visit Goma in DR Congo's east, where dozens of armed groups operate.

"I greet with affection those beloved peoples who await me," Pope Francis said after his Angelus prayer at St Peter's Square on Sunday.

"These lands, situated in the centre of the great African continent, have suffered greatly from lengthy conflicts."

He lamented "armed clashes and exploitation" in DR Congo, and said South Sudan, "wracked by years of war, longs



An airport assistant (L) greets Pope Francis prior to lift him on a platform to board his plane on 31 January 2023 at Rome's Fiumicino airport, heading to Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.

PHOTO: AFP

for an end to the constant violence".

Despite its vast mineral wealth, some two-thirds of

DRC's population live on less than \$2.15 a day, while violence plagues the eastern provinces.

The Tutsi-led armed group M23, which Kinshasa alleges is backed by neighbouring Rwanda, has been conquering large swaths of territory in North Kivu province. The region has also seen a wave of deadly attacks blamed on the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a group the Islamic State claims as an affiliate, including a bomb blast at a Pentecostal church this month that killed 14 people.

Following a welcome ceremony at the Kinshasa airport, Francis will be received at the presidential palace by President Felix Tshisekedi. — AFP

## New French protests, strikes target Macron pensions plan

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday faced a new wave of anger over his plan to reform pensions, with nationwide strikes and protests causing widespread disruption in transport, schools and other public services.

Union-led protesters came out for mass demonstrations for the second time in less than two weeks, hoping to force Macron to drop his plan to raise the age of retirement from 62 to 64, a flagship reform of his second mandate in power.

A police source said the authorities were bracing for up to 1.2 million people to take to the streets across the country.

If confirmed, the number could exceed the 1.1 million who came out on 19 January against the proposed shake-up — already the largest protests since the last major round of pension reform in 2010.

"We hope to be at least that many again," the boss of the hard-left CGT union, Philippe Martinez, told media Tuesday, adding there would be 250 protest marches. But Macron has shown no sign of stepping back, insisting on Monday that the reform is "essential" to "save our system" of pensions distribution.

Some 11,000 police were mobilized, with 4,000 deployed in Paris where several hundred extremist troublemakers were expected, according to the interior ministry. — AFP



French CRS riot police brandish their batons in front of protesters as clashes erupt during a rally on a second day of nationwide strikes and protests over the government's proposed pension reform, in Nantes on 31 January 2023. PHOTO: AFP

## UK court to examine legality of resuming Saudi arms sales

LONDON'S High Court will on Tuesday examine the legality of a UK government decision to renew selling arms to Saudi Arabia that could be used in the war in Yemen. A UK-based NGO, Campaign Against Arms Trade

(CAAT), has brought the legal action, accusing the government of contributing to breaches of international law and the world's largest humanitarian disaster, which has claimed tens of thousands of lives. The judicial review

is expected to last until the end of the week.

The NGO brought the legal challenge after Britain announced in summer 2020 that it was resuming arms sales to Saudi Arabia. — AFP

## Three injured in knife attack near EU Brussels headquarters

THREE people were injured, one seriously, in a knife attack Monday in a metro station near the European Union headquarters in Brussels, officials said, adding that the attacker had been arrested.

Brussels Mayor Philippe Close said the man was speedily detained due to coordinated police action at the Schuman metro station.

Police said one of the injured was in "critical condition".

The suspected attacker was known to police for "psy-

chiatric problems", a source close to the investigation said.

The attack took place at rush hour around 6:00 pm.

European Union chief Charles Michel, a former Belgian prime minister, thanked the police in a tweet and said his thoughts were with the victims.

An AFP journalist at the site said a woman told people not to enter the station, saying there was a man inside armed with a knife as police rushed in.

Traffic was interrupted on the line.—AFP

## Seventh Memphis officer suspended, three firefighters sacked, over fatal beating

MEMPHIS police said Monday a seventh officer has been suspended over the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols, a young Black man whose death shocked the United States and has seen five officers fired and charged with murder. The city's fire department also said it had terminated three firefighters who arrived at the scene but failed to provide adequate medical assistance to Nichols. "The Memphis Police Department began administra-

tive investigations on officers involved in the death of Tyre Nichols on 7 January 2023. On 8 January, seven officers including Officer Preston Hemphill were relieved of duty," the Memphis Police Department said in a statement. Hemphill, who joined the force in 2018 and who is white, is suspended "pending the outcome of the ongoing investigation," police spokeswoman Kim Elder said in a separate statement. — AFP

## US, S Korea to hold 'tabletop' exercises on nuclear threats



US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin (C) and his South Korean counterpart Lee Jong-sup (R) leave after a ceremonial welcome at the Defence Ministry in Seoul on 31 January 2023.

PHOTO: KIM HONG-JI / POOL / AFP

THE United States and South Korea will hold discussion-based exercises on addressing nuclear threats, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said Tuesday.

Washington and Seoul will conduct "increasingly complex

scenario-based tabletop exercises focused on nuclear threats on the peninsula," Austin wrote in an op-ed published by the Yonhap news agency, without specifying when this would occur.

Austin is visiting Seoul for

the third time as defence secretary, during which he is to meet with his South Korean counterpart Lee Jong-sup and President Yoon Suk-yeol.

His visit is aimed at deepening cooperation and discussing security challenges, as well as reaffirming "that the US extended deterrence commitment to the ROK (Republic of Korea) is ironclad," he wrote.

Military tensions on the Korean peninsula rose sharply last year as the North conducted sanctions-busting weapons tests nearly every month, including firing its most advanced inter-continental ballistic missile.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un also recently called for an "exponential" increase in Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal, and declared the North an "irreversible" nuclear state last year.—AFP

## S Africa's ANC calls for 'state of disaster' to end energy crisis

SOUTH Africa's governing ANC party has asked top officials to declare a national state of disaster to end severe electricity blackouts that have wreaked havoc on Africa's most industrialized nation, its secretary-general said Tuesday.

Declaring a national disaster would unlock additional funds and resources to "better manage the crisis," Fikile Mbalula told a news conference after the party's new executive committee met over the weekend.

The years-long crisis of intermittent power cuts has worsened in recent months, with the electricity network operated by the debt-laden state energy firm Eskom failing to keep pace with demand as it struggles to maintain its ageing coal-powered infrastructure.

"We shouldn't be arrogant

and deny the fact that we have... a crisis," Mbalula told a news conference.

"We are responding to this crisis, and the president and the team in government have been given a clear instruction by the ANC," he said.

He said the move would speed up the response of President Cyril Ramaphosa's administration, with a target of ending the blackouts by year-end.

The scheduled blackouts, which can last from two hours to over 12 hours a day, have sparked widespread anger and taken a heavy toll on industrial production and businesses.

South Africa's economic growth is expected to slow to just 0.3 per cent this year because of the power shortages, after growth of 2.5 per cent last year.—AFP

## S Korea, Japan make little progress in talks on wartime labour issue

SOUTH Korea and Japan made scant progress in discussions on resolving a long-standing wartime labour issue in a meeting of their senior diplomats, a South Korean official said Monday.

Seo Min Jung, director general of the South Korean Foreign Ministry's Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau, discussed the issue of wartime labour compensation for Korean workers with her Japanese counterpart, Takehiro Funakoshi, in the meeting in Seoul, among other issues.

"As we discussed a broad range of topics, there was progress in some parts, but regarding the issues that many would be interested in, I would say we kind of fell short of making progress," a Foreign Ministry official told reporters after the meeting.

The latest meeting was held weeks after discussions between the two senior officials in Tokyo and phone talks between South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin and his Japanese counterpart, Yoshimasa Hayashi.

The series of meetings came after South Korean President

Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida vowed in November for an early settlement of wartime labour issues, which saw bilateral ties sink to their lowest point in decades.

Bilateral cooperation is becoming increasingly important in the face of threats from North Korea, which conducted missile tests at a record pace last year.

In 2018, South Korea's Supreme Court ordered Japanese firms to pay compensation to South Korean plaintiffs over forced labour during wartime. The Japanese government strongly opposed the ruling, saying that all the issues stemming from the colonial era were "completely and finally settled" under a bilateral treaty signed in 1965.—Kyodo



Takehiro Funakoshi, head of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, enters South Korea's Foreign Ministry in Seoul on 30 January 2023 PHOTO: KYODO

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### One pilot dead after Vietnamese military fighter jet crash

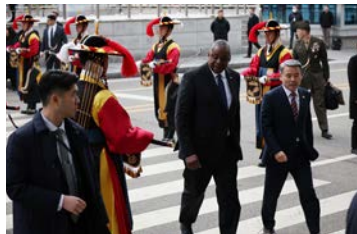
A pilot was killed after a military fighter jet crashed in northern Viet Nam during a training session on Tuesday, state media reported.

The plane — a Russian-made Sukhoi SU-22 belonging to the People's Army of Viet Nam air force — joined the training session around midday before crashing at a military airport in mountainous Yen Bai province, according to Vietnam News Agency.

"The pilot was ordered to parachute out of the jet but he tried to save the plane... and he died," a news report by Vietnam News Agency said, without stating the cause of the crash. Although Viet Nam's civilian aviation sector has a strong safety record, accidents involving military aircraft are more common. In October 2016, a military helicopter crashed in southern Ba Ria Vung Tau province, with three pilots onboard killed. There were three other accidents involving military aircraft earlier that year, killing 11 people.—AFP

#### India govt directs TV channels to show programmes on public themes

INDIA'S Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Monday issued fresh guidelines directing private broadcasters to undertake public service broadcasting for 30 minutes every day. According to the guidelines, the content needs not be of 30 minutes at a stretch and could be spread over smaller time slots and requires the broadcaster to submit a monthly report online. The theme for the broadcasting should comprise content of national importance and of social relevance, including education and spread of literacy, agriculture and rural development, health and family welfare, science and technology, and the welfare of women, among others.—Xinhua



## 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.

## Players selected for 2023 SEA Games Badminton Competition



Myanmar female badminton star Thet Htar Thuzar is seen in an international tournament.

THE Myanmar Badminton Federation has selected badminton players from 28 to 30 January to

compete in the Southeast Asian Games Badminton Tournament to be held in Cambodia from 7 to

15 May 2023.

Hein Htut was selected for Men's Single Competition, while Aung Myo Htoo and Arkar Bhone Myat were selected for Men's Double Competitions.

Thet Htar Thuzar, Twe Tar Oo, and Zun Myo Thet were selected for Women's Single Competitions.

Three male and three female players will compete in the Mixed Team Badminton Tournament to be held in Cambodia. Lao, Brunei, East Timor, Myanmar and the host team, Cambodia, will participate in the Badminton event.

Men's competition (individual), women's competition (individual), men's doubles competition, women's doubles competition and the men's + women's doubles competition will be held in three categories, and the winning team will be awarded the gold medal. — Bala Soe/KZL

## Real Madrid expected to continue European dominance of Club World Cup

ONE of the last Club World Cups in its current format begins on Wednesday in Morocco, where Real Madrid will be favourites to continue Europe's dominance of the much-maligned FIFA competition.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino announced on the sidelines of the World Cup in Qatar in December that an expanded Club

World Cup is planned from 2025.

The bigger competition, which would feature 32 teams, has been a controversial pet project of Infantino's for some time. A 24-team Club World Cup, involving eight European sides, had been due to take place in China in 2021 only to be put on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic.

World football's governing

body is yet to reveal any further details of the plans, but global players' union FIFPro has already complained of Infantino making the announcement "unilaterally without seriously consulting...with the players".

For now, the Club World Cup limps on with just seven teams, including the six continental champions. —AFP

## Mickelson 'at peace' if never plays PGA, Ryder Cup again

PHIL Mickelson says he will be "at peace" if he never plays in a PGA Tour event or Ryder Cup again, nearly one year after his explosive remarks about the Saudi-funded LIV golf series triggered uproar.

In an interview with Sports Illustrated published on Monday, the six-time major winner said he was not bothered about the possibility of being frozen out of PGA Tour events for good.

Mickelson was suspended by the PGA Tour last year

after being one of the earliest big names to defect to the controversial LIV circuit.

The 52-year-old embraced LIV despite telling a US journalist that the circuit's Saudi backers were "scary" with a "horrible" human rights record.

Mickelson said in June last year he hoped to play on the PGA Tour again.

However in his remarks to Sports Illustrated, the veteran said he was now indifferent to playing on the circuit again. —AFP



US golfer Phil Mickelson (R) looks on during the first round of the 2022 LIV Golf Invitational Miami at Trump National Doral Miami golf club in Miami, Florida, on 28 October 2022. PHOTO: AFP