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

1. Priority will be given to fully realizing peace, stability and rule of law throughout the Union to safeguard the socioeconomic life of the people.
2. People-centred development work that enhances socioeconomic well-being will be undertaken to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.
3. Processes will further continue to consolidate a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and build a Union based on democracy and federalism.
4. Priority will be accorded to work aligned with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, in order to achieve enduring peace for the entire nation.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

SAC Chairman PM gives guidance on Road Map of State Administration Council

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing gave guidance on the SAC Road Map at the guidance meeting at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Laying down Five-Point Road Map

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister gave guidance that it was the first meeting for all responsible persons to consider development undertakings during the expanded period.

Regarding the first point of the road map "Priority will be given to fully realizing peace, stability and rule of law throughout the Union to safeguard the socioeconomic life of the people", the countries exercising the democratic system allow staging protests under the law. But, Tatmadaw controlled the violent events beyond the protests under the law. Terrorists intentionally committed attacks on innocent people, non-military target administration buildings, private businesses, public service personnel and religious persons. At that time, hard cores from unrest were sent to the insurgent areas and they were formed as so-called PDF terrorist groups. In so doing, some EAOs participated in such activities. The arms and ammunition seized by the Tatmadaw



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing elaborates on the Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council at the guidance meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 9 February 2023.

comprised arms and ammunition used by EAOs and some illegally entered from foreign countries passing borders. Tatmadaw conducts military operations in the operation areas but performs terrorist suppression tasks in the non-operation areas under the law. Martial law orders were

released for the areas difficult to control. As a result, terrorist acts remarkably declined from April 2022.

In early 2023, some terror acts happened. It can be seen that terror acts indicated setting fire to relevant organizations and documents, blowing up mines

and posing intimidation and killing public service personnel and volunteers in order to disturb preparations for the election under the road map. At the meeting 1/2023 of the National Defence and Security Council, the Prime Minister recounted that he reported to the *Pro Tem*

President on performances and findings in the state of emergency of the country, and requirements to continue tasks for ensuring peace and stability of the nation at present. As such, the state of emergency was extended for six more months.

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National Objectives for 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023

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

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 18/2023

5th Waning of Tabodwe 1384 ME
9 February 2023

Duty Termination of Magway Region Advocate-General

MAGWAY Region Advocate-General U Win Myint is terminated from his duties under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Application for registration, political party establishment rights ongoing

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

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

Under Section 3 of the Political Parties Registration Law, the Union Democracy Party, which is desirous of organizing a political party, yesterday applied for permission to establish a political party under the law and rules, and the Union Election Commission is processing further verification. — MNA/KTZH

Special postage stamp worth K200 to be sold in honour of 76th Union Day

MYANMAR Post of the Ministry of Transport and Communications will sell one kind of special postage stamp worth K200 starting from 9:30 am on 12 February, 8th waning of Tabodwe 1384 ME (Sunday) at Nay Pyi Taw Central Post Office, Yangon Post Office, Mandalay Post Office, and post offices from respective states

and regions in commemoration of the 76th Union Day which falls on 12 February.

As a special programme, Nay Pyi Taw Central Post Office, Yangon Post Office and Mandalay Post Office will stamp the date on postage stamps purchased on 12 February. — MNA/KZL



Public Notice for Elimination of Violence

1. Declaring themselves to be “for the people”, the so-called CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorist groups are lawlessly killing Buddhist monks, civil servants including school-teachers, and members of the general public, as well as looting and robbing.
2. Not encouraging, supporting, or assisting “CRPH”, “NUG”, and “PDF” terrorists, who are intimidating and killing people and committing destructive activities, is to protect the lives and property of the general public.
3. Giving information secretly to the authorities on terrorists and on the possession and transport of weapons/ammunition is tantamount to protecting the lives and property of innocent people.

9 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 9 February, total figure rises to 633,859

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,859** after **nine** new cases were reported on 9 February 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,322**, including **one** new recovery.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to **19,490** on 9-2-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. — MNA

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Plan is underway to open agriculture institutes and livestock breeding institutes at BEHSs in each district

- During the period that we are taking the responsibilities, arrangements are being made to open agriculture institutes and livestock breeding institutes at basic education schools in each district.
- The opening agriculture institutes and livestock breeding institutes can cause turning out skilful human resources for agriculture, livestock breeding and industrial sectors.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with entrepreneurs from MSMEs in Pyay District on 4 October 2022)

Senior General sends sympathy message to President of Türkiye

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of sympathy to Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, on 7 February 2023 for the loss of life and property caused by the devastating earthquake which hit in the border of Türkiye and Syria on 6 February 2023.—MNA

Senior General sends sympathy message to President of Syria

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of sympathy to Dr Bashar Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 February 2023 for the loss of life and property caused by the devastating earthquake which hit in the border of Türkiye and Syria on 6 February 2023.—MNA

SAC Chairman PM gives guidance on Road Map of State Administration Council

FROM PAGE-1

Disturbance acts of terrorists caused terrible losses for the State and the private sector. Without counting ordinary losses, there were more than 4,900 losses and damage. Grenade, mines and homemade mine attacks amounted to more than 8,500 times. More than 9,700 times of attacks were committed. They set fires more than 1,230 times. In the events, more than 17,690 arms, 27,200 mines and bombs and a lot of ammunition were seized from terrorists.

It can be seen that terrorists commit disturbance acts to grab democracy through terror way. Concepts of ethnic armed organizations are different from the attitudes and stances of terrorists. The majority of EAOs signed the Nationwide Cease-fire Agreement-NCA. The armed groups which emerged after 2021 were based on controversies over democracy. Any country as well as any government does not allow armed violence in a democratic system. Those committing terror acts need to understand democracy.

In the second term of state of emergency, it is necessary to effectively tackle the terror acts, so martial law was imposed in important townships in order to lessen terror acts. The martial law administration was aimed

at crime breakers only, not for the people. People can live and travel under the disciplines. It is assumed that the peace and stability of these areas might improve in the coming six months.

If everybody reads presentations of Defence Services Personnel representatives, instructions and speeches of the Senior General and senior military officers in the previous Hluttaw, they can see the stance of Tatmadaw on the democratic system of the State. Tatmadaw accepts itself as a guardian organization to safeguard the State to have firm standing over the democratic system. After considering the road map, the Union Election Commission was reconstituted in line with the previous road map. Inspection and taking action on electoral measures were taken within two years. In this regard, appropriated action was taken for corruption cases.

With regard to trade, an outbreak of Covid-19 caused the decline of economy in 2021, affecting domestic manufacturing. The government encouraged domestic businesses, so the country did not face food insufficiency but suffered high prices of goods similar to other countries. Loans of foreign exchange borrowed by the previous government and new projects were not received after 2021. Although the coun-

try faced an economic crisis in 2021, improved manufacturing and opening of border trade in 2022 surged the State economy to +3 per cent of GDP. Businesspersons from regions and states expressed their reports on the progress of their tasks. Moreover, it can be believed that the State economic promotion fund will help achieve success in agricultural tasks.

In line with the motto: Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal, all need to strive for the development of the nation. If the per-acre yield of paddy increases, the country will have local food sufficiency and export surplus to foreign countries, raising the incomes of farmers and improving their socioeconomic life. The government needs to strive to secure success in agricultural tasks in order to contribute to the development of the State economy.

Concerning the prosperity and food sufficiency of the nation, the Prime Minister said: "As for the second point "People-centred development work that enhances socioeconomic well-being will be undertaken to ensure the country's prosperity and food security", all need to boom the economy. All regions and states manufacture agricultural produce and livestock products. All districts in Ayeyawady Region

can produce these products. I would like to give guidance that if we slightly push it, it will change the situation of our country. If so, the country will have prosperity. It is because the people have income, their socioeconomic life will improve. It is dead sure. Anyone cannot accept harming their socioeconomic life. They will go to the good approach, not the bad one. The best safeguarding the nation is to improve the economy. We have to do so. So, I insert such things into the second point. The 2022-2023 financial year will end in the coming March. Our efforts are included in the financial year. So, we have to accelerate the enhancement of the businesses. In so doing, we have to possess a transport system contributing to the businesses. We have to improve the roads without fail. So, I set plans to upgrade roads in the coming financial year."

The Prime Minister continued to say that school examinations will be held soon, and matriculation examination will end in the coming March. Students missed the chance to attend schools in some areas due to threats of terrorists. The government will strive for opening all schools across the nation in the coming academic year. To do so, martial law orders were declared in some areas. Only when the government strictly tackles the

disciplines will the school-age children not lose the chances. Difficulties of education staff are being solved as much as possible.

In the health sector, it is necessary to improve healthcare services for that people do not lose learning and labour due to weak health. In the coming year, the government will emphasize the improvement of the education and health sectors as well as economic and transport sectors, especially in the agriculture and livestock sectors. The State economic promotion fund allotted capital for oil milling businesses. If they make efforts for meeting the target production, the country will have local oil sufficiency and surplus volume. If so, the import of cooking oil can be reduced. Efforts must be made for the country to become an oil exporter from an oil importer.

The Senior General stressed the need to increase the per-acre yield of beans. Moreover, extreme capturing of natural fish resources may cause a loss of fish resources, so the government encourages systematic fish farming only.

The country imports some US\$100 million worth of dairy products per year. Hence, it is necessary to systematically breed cows, rather than traditional farming techniques.

SEE PAGE-4

SAC Chair PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses Union government meeting 2/2023



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing gives the speech at the Union government meeting 2/2023 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

STATE Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addressed the Union government meeting 2/2023 held at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present at the meeting were SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win and the Union ministers.

At the meeting, the Union ministers reported on their respective sectors.

In his concluding remarks, the Senior General highlighted that it should complete the work plans for the 2022-2023 FY in time. Regarding government-run businesses, certain businesses do not have a balance of income and expenditure. Therefore, it should operate to balance income and expenses. Some state-owned businesses were suspended due to the wrong management in former government terms. Although some businesses did

not run properly, the expenses were high for salary payments and maintenance costs.

The suspended factories are losses to the country and efforts should be made to resume them. In such doing, it should manage the best work correctly at least amount of cost without any unnecessary expenses. It can take action against those who do not work properly in a correct way. The leaders should know their duties and responsibilities and

set the correct directives. They also should serve their duties knowing in principle.

He also underscored that the transportation, education and health sectors will be prioritized in coming years, and the development of the electricity sector is a must. The ministries concerned should try hard for their respective sectors and cooperate in measures to join the vocational training after completing the KG+9 scheme.

He added that it needs to celebrate the religious and political ceremonies full of the essence as per the tradition and custom. The culture and religion of the country must be conserved not to disappear due to external destructive elements. The ministries should work together to ensure the state stability, rule of law and economic growth of the country. —MNA/KTZH

SAC Chairman PM gives guidance on Road Map ...

FROM PAGE-3

As for the third point of the road map “Processes will further continue to consolidate a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and build a Union based on democracy and federalism”, Tatmadaw is responsible for safeguarding the Constitution. Some provisions must be amended and the country must lead to the Hluttaw route as well as the Union based on democracy and federalism. The Political Parties Registration Law was enacted. Political objectives of parties are concepts to shape the nation. To implement such concepts, they have to join the Hluttaw. Activities of parties will be allowed under the law. After the parties were formed, preparations for the election will continue without fail.

The fourth point of the roadmap was adopted as Priority will be accorded to work aligned with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, in order to achieve enduring peace for the entire nation. Participants in the peace talks must hold discussions with open-mindedness. They have to solve the topics suitable for the State. All ethnics will have equal rights. Ethnic armed organizations need to focus on the Union’s interests only.

As for the last point “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 dem-

ocratic standards,” voter lists must be compiled for ensuring all eligible voters to have the chance to cast votes. There is no country with a cent per cent correct election across the world. But any country does not accept tremendous errors on voter lists. So, the government is responsible for all voters to cast votes. The government is striving for holding elections in all parts of the nation without vacancies and for all citizens to be free from unjustified acts. Not only the commission but all are to strive for holding the prestigious election.

With regard to international relations, Myanmar is a member of the UN, ASEAN and BIMSTEC, cementing relations with all under the five-point co-existence principles. Guests, those from international organ-

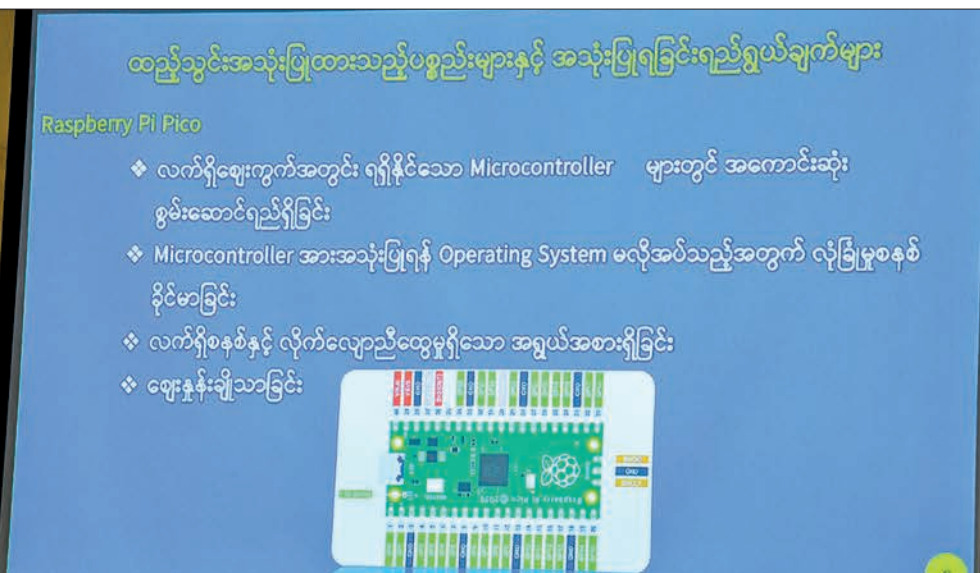
izations, diplomats and businesspersons expressed differences in their knowledge of the actual situation in Myanmar. Such wrong information was based on the biased expression of media and biased data from diplomats.

Regarding those who left Rakhine state, the government needs to protect ethnic people as well as citizens. Some Bengalis became citizens in Myanmar. They are given rights under the law. Bengalis live not only in Rakhine State but in other regions. Problems of accepting those persons are based in illegal residences. The government said that it will accept the expatriation in line with the agreements of both countries. The government does not refuse the process under the agreement. Those who

return home will have rights under the 1982 citizenship law.

The government is arranging a supply of electricity for a high percentage in 2025 to the nation. The supervisory teams are to systematically handle the arrangements for all to widely use quality electric vehicles. At present, charging stations are under construction on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway and Yangon-Mandalay Highway. Plans are underway to build more charging stations on Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay Highway, Lashio road, Mawlamyine road, and Kayin State. Ministries are to cooperate with each other in using electric vehicles on a wider scale. If the government strives for all sectors, it will contribute much to the State in the coming six months. — MNA/TTA

UEC explains Myanmar Electronic Voting Machine (MEVM) production to SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing hears reports on the Myanmar Electronic Voting Machine yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

THE Union Election Commission reported on the production of the Myanmar Electronic Voting Machine (MEVM) to State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the SAC Chairman office meeting hall yesterday evening.

The Senior General heard the reports together with SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, SAC Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe, SAC Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, SAC members General Mya Tun Oo, Admiral Tin Aung San and Lt-Gen Soe Htut, UEC Chairman

U Thein Soe and officials.

First, a UEC official explained the control unit, balloting unit-main, extension, verification unit, the ballot box and batteries, machines and aims of using, suggestions and preparations to produce large numbers of such machines.

Then, the Senior General and party inspected the test run of the MEVM and instructed the necessary things.—MNA/KTZH

The Senior General looks into the Myanmar Electronic Voting Machine.



MoBA Union Minister inspects IDP camps in Rakhine State

RAKHINE State Stability, Peace and Development Work Coordination Committee Chair Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung and Union ministers along with the Rakhine State chief minister and officials inspected the Bawdupha IDP camp in Sittway township on 8 February and coordinated with responsible personnel to fulfil the needs of the displaced persons at the camp.

The Union ministers and party inspected the construction of houses, arrangements for water, electricity and sewage system, construction of the clinic, the earthen road and the box culvert, construction of the village community hall and schools



Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung and Union ministers are pictured inspecting one of the IDP camps in Rakhine State.

at the place where Kyauktalon IDPs are to be relocated in Kyaukpyu and urged responsible

personnel to finish all the work at the end of March.

They also inspected the pro-

gress of the Kyaukpyu combined cycle power plant project.

At the Technical Training

School for National Youths in Border Areas in Kyaukpyu township, the Union ministers and the state chief minister viewed the conducting of electrical, construction, mechanic and mobile phone repair training courses.

Afterwards, they attended the meeting on socioeconomic development in Manaung township and met departmental officials, entrepreneurs and town elders.

Finally, the Union ministers viewed the local products displayed by MSME businesses and they had a discussion on the fulfilment of requirements for socioeconomic development in the region. — MNA/MKKS

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Mottos for 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023

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

Country Director of UNAIDS Myanmar presents his Credentials to MoFA Union Minister

DR Rangaiyan Gurumurthy, Country Director of the Office of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in Myanmar, paid a courtesy call and presented his Credentials to U Than Swe, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 4 pm in Nay Pyi Taw on 9 February 2023.

Also present at the meeting were senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—MNA



Union Minister U Than Swe greets the UNAIDS Country Director yesterday.

UDM (Yangon), India's SIMATS ink MoU



The MoU signing ceremony is in progress online.

THE signing of a five-year memorandum of understanding on cooperation in educational fields between the University of Dental Medicine (Yangon) of the Department of Human Resources for Health under the Ministry of Health and the Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical

Sciences (SIMATS) of India was conducted online yesterday.

Rector of the University of Dental Medicine (Yangon) Prof Dr Shwe Toe and India's SIMATS Dean Dr Lakshmi Thangavelu inked the MoU in the presence of Director-General Dr Tin Tun of the Department of Human

Resources for Health.

The MoU will implement reciprocal sending of faculty members and students between the two universities, promotion of learning opportunities and cooperation in research and other academic fields. — MNA/TS

High schools in 50 districts to open agriculture, livestock, technical, and industrial courses

FROM the next academic year, agriculture, livestock, technical and industrial courses will be opened in high schools from 50 districts across the country, said State Administration Council Chair Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

The Senior General said so during a meeting with responsible personnel, teachers and students of the Institute of

Fisheries (Twantay) in Twantay Township on 5 February.

He also elaborated that there are many places where fish farming can be carried out in the country, which has many rivers and lakes and a long sea coast, so plans are underway to open fisheries institute. Research can also be conducted to raise fish systemically and succeed in fish and shrimp farming. — TWA/KZW



The Institute of Fisheries (Twantay).

Chargers for BEVs arrive from China

CHARGERS for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) have arrived from China, said the Steering Committee on National-level Development of Electric Vehicles and Related Industries.

Five sets of 60 kW electric vehicle (EV) chargers and two sets of 200 kW EV chargers were imported from China and these chargers will be installed at charging stations at No (3) Toll-gate on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, the Phyu bus station and Nay Pyi Taw Junction

bus station.

Forty electric vehicles, which are China-made BYD E2 models, were imported and 10 electric vehicles will be used as taxis on a trial run at Yangon International Airport and another 10 at the Nay Pyi Taw Thabyay-gon Market.

BEVs can be introduced in the public transport system if adequate electricity can be produced so that fuel consumption can be greatly reduced, stressed State Administration Council

Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with chairpersons and members of industrial zones in Yangon Region.

In addition, State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing expressed that imported battery electric vehicles are allowed with reduced taxation and more and more battery charging stations will be built for EVs on public roads and in major cities. —TWA/MKKS

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

LOCAL BUSINESS

Pigeon pea price exceeds K2 mln per tonne in domestic market

THE price of pigeon peas rebounded to over K2 million per tonne in the domestic market.

On 1 February, the pigeon pea fetched K1,930,000 per tonne, whereas it climbed to K2,004,000 per tonne on 9 February.

The figures indicated an increase of 74,000 per tonne within ten days.

The price is positively related to the main buyer India's demand. The price regained on the back of strong demand.

Additionally, India notified on 28 December 2022 that the free import policy of black gram (urad) and pigeon pea (tur) extended up to March 2024, causing the price plunge, traders pointed out.

The Kyat value against the US dollar also weighs on the price of pigeon peas. The hard currency is exchanged at K2,860 in the unofficial market. Last August 2022, weakening Kyat to K4,500 against the US dollar drove the pigeon pea

price up to K2.12 million per tonne.

Myanmar bagged over US\$1 billion from more than 1.3 million tonnes of pulses exports over the past ten months in the current financial year 2022-2023 (April-March). Of them, pigeon pea export earned \$123.106 million from 157,130.802 kilogrammes, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

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

India has growing demand and consumption requirements for black grams and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2022, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from the



Pigeon pea crops are seen in the green lush field.

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

der that annual quota.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes of black gram and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas. Myanmar is the top producer of the

black gram that is primarily demanded by India, while pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are cultivated in Australia and African countries besides Myanmar. — NN/EM

Pure gold price rallies to K2.873 mln per tical in market

THE price of pure gold touched a high of K2.873 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in the domestic market.

Tracking the increase in the gold spot price, the gold price stayed on the high side. The gold spot price was \$1,880 per ounce.

Consequently, Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association's reference price edged up to K2,214,800.

The figures indicated a price difference of over K650,000 per tical between YGEA's price and the market price in the unofficial market.

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.

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.

The price of gold in the domestic market is highly correlated with the gold spot prices and

dollar exchange rate.

The soaring dollar exchanging at over K4,500 drove the pure gold price up to a record-high of K3.7 million per tical in late August 2022.

For the gold price to decline, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has been selling gold ingots in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw under the auction system. With an aim at reducing gold prices, the YGEA and Mandalay Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association sold gold bullion supplied by the executive members and the members as well.

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

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

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 9 February 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,195
Octane 95	K2,255
Diesel	K2,250
Premium Diesel	K2,330

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,214,800 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,873,000 per tical

Dollar Price

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market	K2,850 to K2,865

The above prices may change from time to time.

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OPINION

Beef up generating electricity for meeting public demand

ELECTRICITY is essential for operating various industries including heavy industries as well as micro, small and medium-scale enterprises to be able to manufacture products not only for exportation but for local consumption.

Currently, the government encourages the running of MSME businesses which plays a key role in the economic development of the nation. So also, the supply of electricity is essential for operating these businesses. In accord with the guidance of the Head of State, MSME businesses need to use domestic raw materials as part of relying on internal strengths. Hence, a sufficient supply of electricity will reflect the manufacturing of products at full capacity.

The government is implementing hydropower projects and solar power projects in appropriate sites of the nation so as to generate electricity to be sufficiently fed to the public residential areas as well as to the industries.

Some hydropower projects were delayed and halted in the previous period for various reasons. As such, the current generation capacity from the power plants cannot sufficiently electrify the nation. Hence, the current government resumed the hydropower projects to produce electricity for the whole nation.

On the other hand, creative efforts are being made to generate electricity from solar power plants while striving for initiating wind power for electrification. It aims to meet the electricity demand of the whole nation.

At present, various kinds of industries, as well as people, need a sufficient supply of electricity on a daily basis.

As power plants across the nation cannot generate sufficient electricity for all, manufacturing businesses and industries need to generate electricity for their own consumption through solar power as part of contributing to the electricity networks of the nation.

If the nation sufficiently consumes electricity, people will have a higher living standard as well as the nation will have developed based on a booming economy. If so, the country can reduce the consumption of fuel. At the same time, power stations can be built on public roads and in major cities for recharging electric cars which can be used in public transport services for convenient travelling of people.

In the world's history, electricity consumption changed a new era for the global people. Such an event contributed to the industrial revolutions of the world in respective eras. Hence, generating electricity in various methods at full capacity will meet the public demand for shaping the new era of Myanmar in line with the anticipation of the entire people.

A Good Listener

By Yin Nwe Ko

IHAVE got a few intimate friends with whom we have to discuss our mutual social affairs among us. When I say to them, they are listeners and when they say to me, I am again a listener. However, I strangely find there are two friends who do not want to listen to others' affairs. They are women. At the time I met them, I was just a listener. They can talk about their cases for a long time (I think it took about one and a half hours). I was annoyed and bored but I did not even show any sign of my boredom. When I would have to listen to their talks, I prepared my mind to be patient. A few years ago, I suffered from trouble with their talks many times. I think I was a good listener until I read the following article. After that, I was puzzled about whether I was a good listener or not.

Do you think you are a good listener as well? It is a skill we need all the time, yet most people have probably never had any advice on how to do it well. In work meetings, friendly chats, and more intimate conversations, we "hear", but do we really "listen"? Misunderstandings, confusion, frustration, offence... all these can happen when we don't listen properly.

Here, we present some practical tips for better communication in any language – with phrases to use when you are listening in English. The phrases we present are for all levels of English – easy, medium, and advanced – so you

can pick the one you feel most comfortable with. You will find more tips and listening exercises on Spotlight Audio.

Listen and... WAIT!

If we are already thinking about what we are going to say next, then we are not truly listening. We might miss the details of what the other person is saying or, more likely, miss the subtext or what is not being said explicitly.

Tip

Try to wait until the other person has finished speaking before you start to formulate your reply. This allows you to listen with more focus. It can feel odd at first, but it can stop you from jumping in too quickly with a response.

Listen and... CHECK!

You cannot have a meaningful conversation if you are confused or do not understand. If you are not sure what the other person is saying, just ask.

Phrases to use

E (Easy) Sorry, I don't understand. Can you say that again?

M (Medium) Sorry, when you said "...", what did you mean, exactly?

A (Advanced) Sorry, I'm not quite following you. What do you mean by "..."?

Listen and... REPEAT!

Even if you think you've understood, it is useful to check – you may have totally misunderstood,

or only half-understood, or missed something important.

Phrases to use

E Do you mean...?

M Can I check I've understood? I think you're saying...

A If I've understood you correctly, what you're saying is...

Tip

Try using a technique called "active listening", which is used in relationship therapy. The listener paraphrases what they have heard. If the conversation can move on if the speaker agrees that that's what they wanted to say not, the speaker should explain again until they feel confident that the listener really does understand.

Listen and... ENCOURAGE!

No one wants to talk into a silent void at the other end of the phone – the speaker will start to think you've fallen asleep or wonder whether the phone line has gone dead. In a face-to-face situation, you can nod or lean forward to show you're listening. On the phone, you can make encouraging noises such as "Oh", "Really?" or "OK". If the speaker stops talking, but you feel there's more to be said, you can ask a follow-up question, or check whether they have finished.

Phrases to use

E Is there anything else?

M Did you want to say anything else?

A Is there anything else you wanted to get off your chest?

Listen and... GET BACK ON TRACK!

If the conversation is interrupted or goes off in another direction, you can get it back on track.

Phrases to use

E Sorry, where were we?

M Sorry, we got distracted. You were saying...?

A Sorry, we got a bit side-tracked there. Do go on with what you were saying.

Listen... TO EVERYONE!

Listening is more complicated in a group, where one or two voices can dominate. Try to make sure everyone has the chance to speak if they want to.

Phrases to use

E What about you, Jane?

M Would you like to say anything, Jane?

A Was there anything you'd like to add to the conversation, Jane?

Tip

Recognize that a group session is not always comfortable for everyone – breaking up into smaller groups or pairs reduces the stress. In a video conference, you can suggest creating "breakout rooms" for more intimate conversations. In person, you can disappear into the kitchen, for example, for a quiet chat.

Listen... AND LOOK!

Eye contact is a tricky matter.



If you have your eyes on anything else – your phone, your laptop, or the view out of the window – it is just plain rude. You give the speaker the message that you are not interested and that you would rather be somewhere else. Obviously, you want to show that you are paying attention, but you should also avoid staring at your conversation partner as if they're reading the TV news – that is uncomfortable for both of you.

Tip

For difficult conversations, try to find a time when you don't have to sit face-to-face staring at each other. It is easier to talk and listen when you are walking or doing a simple task like making coffee.

Listen and... DON'T GIVE ADVICE!

One of the biggest mistakes people make in conversations is to offer unwanted advice. Your friend

moans about his teenage son and you dive in with a lot of parenting advice from your own experience or from the internet. This might make you look like a great parent, but it makes your friend feel awful. And your friend probably already knows the solution; they just wanted to let off steam. Your advice can easily sound patronizing and unhelpful. A better technique is to ask your conversation partner some questions to help guide them to their own solutions.

Phrases to use

E What can you do?

M Is there anything that you do that makes it easier?

A Do you have any ideas on how you can move forward?

Tip

If someone is talking about a medical problem, remember that you are unlikely to give bet-

ter advice than they have already received from their doctor. It's better to offer empathy and practical support, rather than amateur medical advice.

Phrases to use

E Thank you for telling me.

M I'm glad you shared that with me.

A I appreciate being taken into your confidence.

Listen and... QUESTION YOUR MOTIVATION!

When it is your turn to talk, be honest with yourself. What is really motivating you to speak? Is it about the other person, to show them that you understand what they're saying? Or is it about you? Are your comments going to be helpful?

Tip

Whenever you open your mouth, ask yourself: "Why am I talking?"

Listen and... LISTEN SOME MORE!

Do you know the saying "God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason"? It reminds us to listen more than we speak. Of course, it depends on the situation, but a good tip is to aim to listen more than you talk.

In sum, I realize that I was not a good listener after reading it because I did not happen to say to my friends in return even the words "Thank you for telling me." Now, I turn nearly 70. Therefore, when will I become a good listener? I happen to blame myself why I missed reading such a useful article.

Reference: Spotlight 2022

Listen and... REMEMBER!

A thoughtful person remembers what people have told them and asks about it when they next meet. It makes your conversation partner feel valued and important.

Tip

It is often helpful to make some short notes after a conversation – especially in a work context, even if it is just with friends or family. A quick note that your neighbour has a new grandchild, or your colleague's cat is ill, for example, he or she will remind you to follow up on these topics the next time you speak.

Listen and... SAY THANK YOU!

Sometimes, people just want

UN aviation body sees recovery to pre-pandemic air travel in 2023



DEMAND for commercial travel is expected to make a full recovery in 2023, with volumes exceeding the 2019 level at the end of the year, a UN aviation

In all, air passenger numbers reached 74 per cent of pre-pandemic levels in 2022, while passenger revenues were estimated to have hit 68 per cent of 2019 levels. **PHOTO: DANIEL SLIM/AFP**

body said Wednesday.

Forecasting a "complete and sustainable" recovery, the International Civil Aviation Organization said demand will reach pre-pandemic levels on most routes by the end of the first quarter and exceed the 2019 levels by around three percent by the end of 2023.

The body projected that 2024 air passenger demand would be

four percent above the level in 2019.

Shortages of pilots

The ICAO's press release did not discuss problems frequently cited by aviation experts as potential constraints on growth. These include shortages of pilots and other key aviation personnel and delays in the construction of airplane engines needed for new

planes.

The outlook came as the UN body released data that showed a significant uptick in travel last year compared with 2021, when more of the world still lived under severe Covid-19 restrictions amid limited distribution of vaccines.

In all, air passenger numbers reached 74 per cent of pre-pandemic levels in 2022, while passenger revenues were estimated to

have hit 68 per cent of 2019 levels.

The ICAO said the number of air passengers carried in 2022 increased by 47 per cent compared with the prior year.

The projections come as airplane makers Boeing and Airbus have also seen a significant surge in new plane orders.

That is due to pent-up demand after pandemic restrictions and the desire to replace older air-

craft with newer planes that use less jet fuel and emit less carbon.

But both companies have cautioned that supply chain problems will constrain the ramp-up of production.

US carriers have also cited these challenges, along with a labor crunch for airplane and air traffic personnel as another potential challenge to boosting capacity.—AFP

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Loans to be granted at cheapest interest rate for capital of domestic production

AT a meeting with entrepreneurs of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) from Ayeyawady Region on 7 February, State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said that the financial capital needed for domestic production will be lent at the lowest interest rate.

The SAC Chairman suggested using the financial capital beneficially which will be lent at the cheapest interest rate for manufacturing activities. Previously, a lot of foreign goods had to be imported due to the lack of encouragement for domestic manufacturing, creating trade deficits. At present, authorities are encourag-

ing domestic manufacturing and are working to re-open factories that have been shut down, the SAC Chairman continued.

In addition, the consumption of foreign currency can be reduced if domestic needs such as consumer goods can be produced sufficiently. Similarly, efforts should be made for the country to become an exporter from being an importer by producing basic consumer goods that are needed for the country to meet domestic demand. By doing so, the country's economy will improve and commodity prices will also decrease if there is a balance of income and expenditure, he added. — TWA/CT



A medium-sized industry is seen under operation.



Fire brigade members extinguish the fire on Bo Teza Road, 20th Ward, Hlinethaya Township on 9 February 2023.

One killed in 4 fires including vehicle fire in Yangon Region on 9 Feb

ON 9 February, four fires broke out in Yangon Region, including a car fire, and one person died.

One fire broke out on Bo Teza Road, 20th Ward (West), Hlinethaya Township at 1:38 pm on 9 February and one 16-year-old boy was killed as 17 houses were destroyed by the fire.

Similarly, another fire broke out in Phayagyi Ward, Twantay Township, Yangon Region at 6:37 am and one vehicle fire broke out on Min Dhamma Road, Ward No 3, Mayangon Township at 11:50 am.

Next, one more fire broke out on Natsin Road, Kalar Gyi Kone Village, Hmawby Township at 1:38 pm.

On 8 February, six fires broke out in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Dagon Myothit (South), Dala Township, Kyauktada Township, Ahlon Township, and South Okkalapa Township and one person died.

Within two weeks of February, six people died due to the fire. — TWA/KZL

Some roads in Yangon to be temporarily closed during 76th Anniversary Union Day celebration

SOME roads in Yangon will be temporarily closed during the celebration of the 76th Anniversary Union Day. The opening ceremony of the ethnic traditional food fair will be held to hail the 76th Anniversary Union Day on 10 February and the Union Day will be celebrated on 12 February at the assembly ground of the Hluttaw compound in front of the People's Square.

During the celebrations, the Pyay Road will be closed from 4 am to the end of the ceremony between 10 and 12 February. Vehicles running from north to south along the Pyay Road

have to turn right at Myaynigon traffic lights and use Kyimyindine (lower) road and vehicles running from south to north along the Pyay Road have to turn left into Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road and heading to Kyimyindine (lower) road through Baho Street and Ahlon Street.

The Union Day Commemorative Fair will be held at People's Square from 9 am to 5 pm on 10-12 February with 25 ministries' galleries, 15 galleries of Nay Pyi Taw Council, regions and states, 15 ethnic food stalls and 356 galleries of the Yangon Industrial Zone. — TWA/MKKS



Exhibition booths are under preparation.

Weekly update prices at Bayintnaung commodity market

BETWEEN 1 and 7 February 2023, a bulk supply of onion entered the Bayintnaung commodity market and so the prices decreased. The price of mung bean (Kayan Shwewah) rose for two consecutive days. There are transactions of pigeon peas weighing 480 tonnes and black grams weighing 120 tonnes on 7 February.

Onion

During the six opening days from 1 to 7 February 2023, 1.14 million visses of monsoon onion from various regions arrived at the market with the wholesale price of only around K1,000 per viss.

The Yangon market received 180,000 visses of onion on 7 February and the wholesale prices per viss were K1,150-K1,250 for Seikphyu onion, K1,000-K1,200 for Myingyan onion and K1,550-K1,950 for Myittha onion.

A total of 57,420 visses of onion were supplied to the Pakoku market on 7 February, along with the highest price per viss of K900 for Sinphyukyun onion, K925 for Seikphyu onion, K1,050 for Yaw onion and K1,250 for Taungtha onion. Onion from the Myittha area was priced at the highest rate of K1,500 per viss in the Mandalay market. On 6 February, 72,000 visses of onion

entered the Myingyan market and the price ranged from K400 to K850 per viss.

Garlic

On 7 February, the Yangon market traded garlic from Aungban, Shan State at the wholesale price of K5,000-K6,200 per viss and Kyukok garlic at K3,650 per viss.

Potato

The wholesale price per viss was K2,100 for potatoes from Bhamo Township and K2,300-K2,400 for China potatoes at the Bayintnaung potato market on 7 February.

Chilli pepper

The wholesale prices of the

Yangon market on 7 February were K10,000-K11,000 per viss for Hmyani chilli pepper from the Hinthada area and new Panye long chilli pepper; K11,500-K12,000 per viss for Pyawbwe Moe Htaung chilli, K11,000 per viss for Moe Htaung chilli from the Yaele area, K16,500-K17,000 for new Sinphyukyun bell pepper; K13,000 for Shan bell pepper and K15,500 for Zee bell pepper.

Rice

At Yangon market on 7 February, a small bag of broken rice (Ex), (1-2) and (2-3-4) were priced at K43,000, K42,700 and K42,500 respectively. The price per bag was K49,500 for

the new low-grade Thukha rice variety, K68,000-K70,000 for the new Pyapon Pawsan rice variety, K72,000-K74,000 for Pathein, Myaungmya rice varieties, and K78,000-K88,000 for Shwebo rice variety.

Pulses

On 7 February, a tonne of black gram (RC) was valued at K1,780,000 and that of SQ/RC at K2,001,000, while a tonne of pigeon pea (red gram) was traded at K1,935,000.

The price of mung bean (Kayan Shwewah) was K3,300-K3,420 per viss and the chickpea price was K4,000-K4,350 per viss. — TWA/CT

One in 3 schoolchildren lacks access to drinking water: UN



Clean drinking water and handwashing facilities are key to protecting children against the likes of Covid-19, parasites, respiratory illnesses and diarrhoea. **PHOTO: UNICEF**

ONE in three children worldwide does not have access to clean drinking water while at school, impacting their health and ability to learn, the United Nations said Wednesday.

“Globally, almost one in three schools has no drinking water from an improved source,” the UN cultural agency UNESCO said in a new report.

“One in three schools worldwide has no basic sanitation,” meaning a toilet and sewage system, the agency found, while “almost half of schools do not have handwashing facilities with water and soap”.

Clean drinking water and handwashing facilities are key to protecting children against the likes of Covid-19, parasites,

respiratory illnesses and diarrhoea, said school health and nutrition expert Emilie Sidaner, who oversaw the report.

Schools without clean drinking water cannot prepare meals for students, contributing to child malnutrition, she told AFP.

Lack of running water and soap is also a major challenge for girls who “cannot go to school during their period”, she added.

For example, one in four girls did not go to school in Bhutan during that time of the month, Sidaner said.

And one in five had to skip classes during menstruation in Ivory Coast, while one in seven missed school for the same reason in Burkina Faso.

“There needs to be more investment in water and sanitation as well as all other infrastructure that enables quality learning,” Sidaner said. “If pupils are not in good health, well-fed and protected in school, it’s even harder for them to take in what their school can teach them.”— AFP

Study explores effect of early-life adversity on childhood mental health



Early-life adversity can lead to prolonged periods of poor mental health, which in turn may have lasting effects on cognitive performance, such as working memory and vocabulary. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ REGISCOLLEGE.EDU**

NEW research indicates that early-life adversity—such as homelessness, parental violence, or longstanding illness in the family—may lead to mental health challenges, which in turn have adverse consequences for the development of cognitive abilities during childhood.

The findings were published in the *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. In the study

of 13,287 children in the UK, adversity at age three years was strongly associated with poorer mental health across all ages from 3 to 14 years. Also, adversity predicted poorer working memory at age 11 and vocabulary at age 14. The impact of adversity on cognition was partially due to its negative effects on mental health during development. “Our findings not only highlight the

deleterious effects of adversity on mental health and cognitive abilities but also reveal one of the mechanisms through which these effects manifest and persist over a long period of time.

Prolonged periods of poor mental health as a result of early-life adversity, may have lasting or partially cumulative effects on cognitive abilities of working memory and vocabulary,” said the lead author of the paper, Tochukwu Nweze, PhD, a recent graduate of the University of Cambridge.

He added, “At a time of rising mental health challenges among teenagers and young people, exacerbated by contemporary environmental risk factors, we suggest that educators in collaboration with clinicians could foster greater resilience by attempting to break this vicious cycle of persistent and self-sustaining mental health difficulties faced by individuals who experienced early adversity through some sort of deliberate and targeted clinical intervention.”— ANI

NEWS IN BRIEF

Study: 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week decreases liver fat

ACCORDING to new research from Penn State College of Medicine, the 150 minutes of moderate to severe aerobic activity per week suggested by the US Department of Health and Human Services can dramatically reduce liver fat.

The team’s meta-analysis of 14 previous studies confirms that exercise leads to clinically meaningful reductions in liver fat for patients with nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. While prior research suggested that physical activity was beneficial, it had not determined the specific amount of exercise needed to make clinically meaningful improvement.—ANI

Meningitis outbreak in Niger kills 18: WHO

AT least 18 people in southeastern Niger have died of meningitis in the past three months, the WHO said Wednesday, warning that the outbreak could spread to other countries. Between 1 November and 27 January 559 cases of the bacterial disease were reported in Niger’s Zinder region, including 111 that were confirmed in a laboratory to be meningitis, the World Health Organization (WHO) said. During the same period a year earlier, 231 cases were reported. The Sahel nation is located in Africa’s so-called meningitis belt, experiencing seasonal outbreaks every year.—AFP

China includes all approved homegrown anti-COVID drugs in medical insurance

CHINA has included all homegrown drugs for COVID-19 treatment approved to enter the market in its medical insurance scheme, according to the latest announcement by the national healthcare authority.

Among these drugs, two tablets were temporarily included in the medical insurance catalog, following a conditional approval by the National Medical Products Administration in late January.

Money spent on these two

tablets can be reimbursed by the medical insurance fund before 31 March, said the National Healthcare Security Administration (NHSA).

Provincial healthcare authorities were asked to disclose medicine prices, and act in a proper manner under oversight from the public.

Currently, there are more than 600 medications used to treat COVID-19 in China’s medical insurance catalog, according to the NHSA. — Xinhua



China is implementing swift and concrete measures to accelerate drug development, production and supply in order to guarantee better treatment of COVID-19 cases. COVID-19 inactivated vaccine products are packaged at a packaging plant of the Beijing Biological Products Institute Co Ltd in Beijing, capital of China, 25 December 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHANG YUWEI**

ECONOMY WORLD

S Africa awaits glimmer of light in Ramaphosa's annual speech

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa delivers his annual address to the nation on Thursday, facing mounting pressure over the country's energy crisis.

His speech to the National Assembly will be scrutinized for how he plans to tackle power cuts that since mid-2022 have lasted for up to 12 hours each day.

The record outages have piled misery on a population of 60 million already battling high unemployment, poverty, rampant crime and rising cost of living.

The state-of-the-nation address is traditionally held in pomp at the parliament building in Cape Town, where a red carpet is laid out for lawmakers and guests come dressed in glitzy designer outfits.

A military parade staged by the presidential guard signals



Democratic Alliance (DA) members hold placards as they march to Luthuli House, the headquarters of the ruling African National Congress (ANC), during a protest against prolonged energy crisis that has seen South Africans experience record power cuts, in Johannesburg on 25 January 2023. **PHOTO: PHILL MAGAKOE / AFP**

Ramaphosa's arrival.

But this year, for a second

consecutive year, Ramaphosa will deliver his speech from the

Cape Town City Hall, as the parliament building – gutted during

in an arson attack 13 months ago – is still being rebuilt.

At a time of austerity, the ceremony will cost taxpayers an estimated eight million rand, or nearly half a million dollars.

Calls have been swirling on social media networks and talk radio for a low-key event to show solidarity with the real state of the nation and its people.

South Africans have vented their anger at Ramaphosa's government over the rolling outages.

Some have taken to the streets, others to the law courts, and more protests are expected on Thursday.

The crisis is braking growth just as South Africa, the continent's most industrialised economy, is hoping to recover after the Covid pandemic.—AFP

Japan rolls out 'humble and lovable' delivery robots



Proponents hope the machines could eventually help elderly people in depopulated rural areas get access to goods. **PHOTO: AFP**

"EXCUSE me, coming through," a four-wheeled robot chirps as it dodges pedestrians on a street outside Tokyo, part of an experiment businesses hope will tack-

le labour shortages and rural isolation.

From April, revised traffic laws will allow self-driving delivery robots to navigate streets

across Japan.

Proponents hope the machines could eventually help elderly people in depopulated rural areas get access to goods, while also addressing a shortage of delivery workers in a country with chronic labour shortages.

There are challenges to overcome, acknowledges Hisashi Taniguchi, president of Tokyo-based robotics firm ZMP, including safety concerns.

"They are still newcomers in human society, so it's natural they're seen with a bit of discomfort," he told AFP.

The robots won't be operating entirely alone, with humans monitoring remotely and able to intervene.—AFP

Loans for new construction in Germany plummet to 12-yr low

NEW real estate loans to private households and self-employed people in Germany plunged to their lowest level since 2011, according to research by analysts Barkow Consulting published on Monday. The volume of new loans for construction by German banks fell 43 per cent year-on-year to 13.5 billion euros (14.6

billion US dollars) in December 2022, according to Barkow Consulting.

The monthly record volume of 32.3 billion euros was recorded in March last year, according to the research figures based on data by the European Central Bank (ECB) and Deutsche Bundesbank. The COVID-19 pan-

demic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict had a "significant impact" on construction in Germany, the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) said last week. Due to delivery bottlenecks, material shortages and higher energy prices, the cost of nearly all building materials rose "considerably."—Xinhua

US tech giant Dell to cut 5% of its global workforce

AMERICAN computer firm Dell said on Monday that it will lay off some five per cent of its global workforce, or around 6,650 employees, the latest casualties of a job-slashing wave hitting the US tech sector.

The cuts follow similar steps by tech giants Microsoft, Facebook owner Meta, Google-parent Alphabet, Amazon and Twitter as the industry girds for economic downturn.

They also come after a major hiring spree at the height of the coronavirus pandemic when companies scrambled to meet demand as people went online for work, school and entertainment.

But "market conditions continue to erode with an uncertain future," said Dell Technologies vice chairman Jeff Clarke in a memo released on Monday.

"The steps we've taken to stay ahead of downturn impacts — which enabled several strong quarters in a row — are no longer enough," he added.

Dell, based at Round Rock in Texas, had 133,000 employees at the start of last year with nearly a third of them in the United States.

On Monday, Clarke said the company now has to make "additional decisions to prepare for the road ahead".—AFP



Product sales, such as of desktops, laptops and workstations, which represent the bulk of the group's business activity, fell by 10 per cent in its latest quarter. Photo shows a Dell Technologies office building in Texas. **PHOTO: BRANDON BELL / AFP**

High freight prices lift Maersk to record profit in 2022



Demand for shipping plunged at the start of the pandemic, but bounced back strongly from mid-2020 until mid-2022, leading to bottlenecks on trade routes and causing massive disruption in supply chains. **PHOTO: JOHN THYS / AFP**

GLOBAL shipping giant Maersk reported its biggest ever full-year profit in 2022, amid soaring freight prices and easing bottlenecks following the Covid pandemic.

Maersk posted a net

profit of \$29.2 billion, the highest earnings ever reported by a Danish company.

Sales rose by 32 per cent to \$81.5 billion.

Gross operating profit, EBITDA, more than

doubled to \$36.8 billion, owing to lower costs and optimisations in the logistics chain.

Demand for shipping plunged at the start of the pandemic, but bounced back strongly from mid-2020 until mid-2022, leading to bottlenecks on trade routes and causing massive disruption in supply chains.

The company's "Ocean" unit posted its best ever profit last year, up 33 per cent from the previous year. Maersk said its earnings remained stable in the second half despite congestion easing and lower demand. For 2023, the group forecast an EBITDA of between \$8 and 11 billion. —AFP

Toyota profit falls despite record sales as rising costs bite

TOYOTA Motor Corp said Thursday its net profit in the nine months through December fell 18.0 per cent to 1.90 trillion yen (\$14.5 billion) from a year earlier as rising material costs eroded its profit margin despite hitting record high sales.

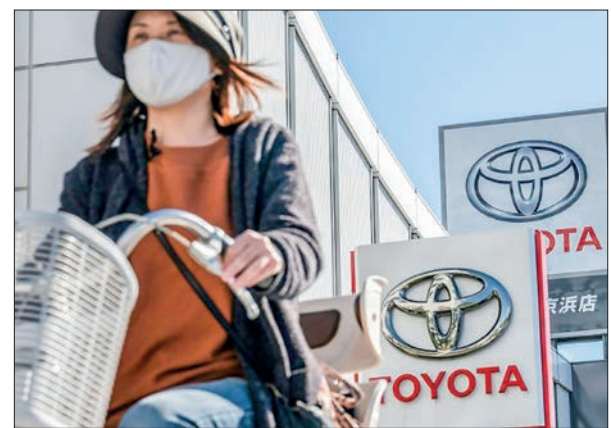
During the nine-month period, sales rose 18.0 per cent to 27.46 trillion yen, a record high, supported by an increase in vehicle sales in North America and Asia alongside a weaker yen, the Japanese automaker said.

Operating profits slid 17.1 per cent to 2.10 trillion yen due to higher prices for commodities such as steel, aluminum and oil, according to the company.

Rises in other expenditures and losses also weighed on profitability while the yen's sharp depreciation, hitting a 32-year-low against the US dollar in October, boosted operating profits elsewhere and helped cushion

the blow, it said.

The company now expects the yen to trade at 134 yen against the US dollar for the current business year through March, compared with its earlier estimate of 135 yen. —Kyodo



Semiconductors are an essential component of modern cars, and Toyota has struggled to keep up with its own production targets. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Michael Jackson estate eyeing near-\$1bln sale of music rights: report

THE estate of Michael Jackson is closing in on a deal to sell half its interests in the megastar's music catalogue, in a deal worth up to \$900 million, Variety reported.

The sale, to Sony and a possible financial partner, could include a slice of the singer's publishing and recorded-music revenues, as well as Broadway show "MJ: The Musical" and as-yet-unmade biopic "Michael", the trade title said.

If it goes ahead, the deal would be the biggest

yet in the burgeoning music catalogue market, which has already seen some eye-popping transactions.



Michael Jackson, who died in 2009, is one of music's most successful acts, and his back catalogue is enormously valuable. **PHOTO: AFP**

They have included the sale of Bruce Springsteen's publishing and recorded music back catalogue for \$600 million —

also to Sony — and \$400 million that Universal Music paid to buy Bob Dylan's recorded music.

Last month, pop juggernaut Justin Bieber sold his music publishing and recording catalogue shares to the Blackstone-backed Hipgnosis Songs Capital for \$200 million.

Variety, which cited three unnamed sources for its report, said the identity of Sony's partner in the blockbuster deal — or even the existence of one — was not clear. —AFP

Rolls-Royce hires BP exec to spearhead overhaul

THE new chief executive of British aircraft engine maker Rolls-Royce on Tuesday named an executive from his former employer BP to help overhaul the aerospace giant.

Tufan Erginbilgic, who replaced long-serving boss Warren East at

the start of the year, has hired Nicola Grady-Smith as transformation director, a company spokesperson said.

Grady-Smith spent 18 years at BP in various roles including as chief of staff at its downstream division, which was headed

at the time by Erginbilgic.

She is an "experienced leader with extensive international turnaround experience and a proven track record of delivery", the spokesperson added.

"As Tufan made clear to employees last month,

we need to significantly improve the performance of Rolls-Royce and Nicola will be instrumental in achieving that."

The firm will give more details on the turnaround plan on 23 February alongside annual results. —AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDA VOY.NO. (275N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BANDA VOY.NO. (275N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-2-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority

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GLOBAL AFFAIRS

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Philippines' Marcos in Japan for talks with PM Kishida

PHILIPPINE President Ferdinand Marcos Jr is in Tokyo for talks with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida later Thursday to affirm deeper economic and security cooperation amid China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.

During planned talks at the prime minister's office, Kishida

is expected to pledge the provision of a support package to the Philippines for infrastructure development, Japanese government sources said.

The two leaders are also likely to agree to continue their countries' "two-plus-two" security talks involving their defence and foreign ministers, the sources

said.

The first two-plus-two meeting held in Tokyo last April saw Tokyo and Manila agreeing to work toward signing a treaty facilitating joint exercises and reciprocal visits of their forces to one another's countries under the Reciprocal Access Agreement. Japan has signed a similar pact with Australia and the United Kingdom.

Marcos' visit to Japan, his first since taking office in June, has drawn public attention as it came immediately after his government deported four Japanese men suspected of being involved in a high-profile string of robberies across Japan.

The Philippine leader's five-day trip from Wednesday is also politically important as Tokyo and Washington are seeking to deepen ties with Manila due to China's increasing military and economic clout in the region, experts said.—Kyodo



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr salutes during the 87th anniversary celebration of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Quezon City, suburban Manila, in December 2022. **PHOTO: TED ALJIBE/AFP/FILE**

Spain trial over 2013 deadly train crash wraps up

A major trial wrapped up in Spain on Wednesday to determine responsibility for a 2013 high-speed train crash that killed 80 people, the country's worst rail disaster in nearly eight decades.

Two men are in the dock over the accident — the driver, Francisco Garzon, and the former safety director at state rail operator ADIF, Andres Cortabitarte.

Prosecutors have called for each to face four years behind bars for "homicide due to gross professional negligence".

Over 600 witnesses and experts were questioned by the court in the northwestern city of Santiago de Compostela since the high-profile trial got underway in October.

The court has not yet set a date for the verdict.

On 24 July 2013, a train travelling from Madrid veered off the tracks as it hurtled round a sharp bend on the outskirts of Santiago, a city in the region of Galicia.

It ploughed into a concrete

siding, leaving 80 people dead — including 12 foreigners — and over 140 injured, making it Spain's deadliest rail accident since 1944.

An investigation showed the train was travelling at 179 kilometres (111 miles) per hour, more than twice the speed limit for that stretch of track.

The probe also revealed the

driver answered a phone call from the conductor just seconds before the train lurched off the rails.

When he took the stand the driver, Garzon, acknowledged he was distracted by the phone call but said the track should have had signals warning him to reduce speed before the curve.—

AFP



Rescuers tend to victims next to derailed cars at the site of a train accident near the city of Santiago de Compostela on 24 July 2013.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

NATO must not be part of Russia-Ukraine conflict: German Chancellor



People stand by a damaged building in Kiev, Ukraine, Dec. 31, 2022.

PHOTO: ROMAN PETUSHKOV/XINHUA

DESPITE providing military assistance to Ukraine, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) must not become a party to the country's conflict with Russia, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Wednesday.

In a speech to the German lower house of parliament (Bundestag) ahead of a special meeting of the European Council to discuss the conflict, Scholz warned against a "public competition to outdo each other along the lines of battle tanks, submarines, aircraft..."

This would harm the unity of the West, he said.

"We preserve and strengthen this cohesion by preparing decisions confidentially first before communicating them," he said, referring to the recent decision taken by Germany and the U.S. on the delivery of battle tanks. Due to increasing pressure on Germany by NATO partners to supply heavy artillery to Ukraine, the German government decided in late January to deliver 14 Leopard 2 tanks, and to permit partners to re-export from their Leopard stocks. In addition, the export of up to 178 of the older Leopard 1 tanks was later approved.—Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

S Korea parliament votes to impeach minister over crowd crush

SOUTH Korea's parliament voted to impeach the country's interior minister on Wednesday over a Halloween crowd crush in Seoul that killed more than 150 people, the first such effort to remove a cabinet minister.

Interior Minister Lee Sang-min has come under pressure to resign following heavy criticism over his handling of the 29 October 2022 disaster, when scores of young costumed partygoers, mostly women in their 20s, were killed in the popular Itaewon nightlife area. Lee will be suspended from official duty following the impeachment motion — which passed 179-109 along party lines in the opposition-controlled parliament — until the country's Constitutional Court rules on the matter.

The motion said that despite his responsibility as an interior minister, Lee had "failed to take crisis prevention measures for large crowd events." The parliamentary vote followed a months-long special investigation that concluded in January and said there had been massive planning and response failures — but stopped short of blaming any top government or national police agency officials.—AFP

Deadly quake puts Erdogan under pressure in May polls



President Recep Tayyip Erdogan faces his biggest political test in May, with pressure higher on him after Monday's quake. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE stakes could hardly be higher for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Just three months before the biggest test of his political career, a massive 7.8-magnitude earthquake rocked Türkiye and Syria, killing more than 15,000 people.

On 14 May, Türkiye will vote in presidential and parliamentary elections that polls conduct-

ed before the disaster showed would turn into a tight race for Erdogan, who has led the country since 2003.

And even before disaster struck in the pre-dawn hours of Monday, Erdogan was trying to put out a series of crises at the same time.

His unconventional approach to economics has set off an inflationary spiral that saw

consumer prices soar by 85 per cent in annual terms last year.

At the same time, his government has been swatting away accusations of cronyism, corruption and bungling the response to environmental disasters, including wildfires in 2021.

Appearing to understand the challenge, Erdogan is fighting back.

Hours after the earthquake, he took centre stage at a press conference in Ankara — one of many that followed in the next three days.

On Wednesday, he hugged a weeping woman affected by the quake near its epicentre in the province of Kahramanmaraş before paying a visit to Hatay, where the death toll is even higher. He even acknowledged his government's "shortcomings" during the Hatay visit, but insisted it was "not possible to be ready for a disaster like this". —AFP

UK vows to overhaul anti-radicalization scheme

THE UK government on Wednesday vowed to overhaul its "Prevent" de-radicalization programme, after an independent report found it was failing to meet counter-terrorism needs.

Ministers ordered the external assessment in 2019 under new counter-terror legislation, following a spate of deadly attacks in the UK by so-called homegrown Islamist radicals.

However, some rights groups refused to participate in the review after objecting to the choice of ex-Charity Commission chairman William Shawcross to lead it.

Amnesty has accused him of a history of "biased comments" about Muslims and Islam.

In his 188-page report, Shawcross said Prevent "must return to its overarching objective: to stop individuals from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism". He argued the programme was not doing enough to tackle "non-violent Islamist extremism", and greater emphasis was

needed on tackling Islamist ideology.

Shawcross said during the course of his review he found several Prevent-funded groups had "either promoted extremism or had engaged with persons whose extremism would have emerged on reasonable enquiry".

Conservative interior minister Suella Braverman pledged

to implement his dozens of recommendations, telling MPs the de-radicalization programme needed "major reform".

Prevent was created as a strategy for supporting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. But the hardline Braverman said its focus now "must solely be on security, not political correctness". —AFP



Forensic investigators work at the site after a car crashed outside the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, London, Britain, 14 August 2018. **PHOTO: DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS/AFP/FILE**

Peru reopens train service to Machu Picchu

TRAIN services to Peru's historic Machu Picchu partially resumed on Wednesday following nearly three weeks of suspension caused by anti-government protests.

The service to the jewel in Peru's vital tourism industry resumed with locals looking to return to the small town at the foot of the ancient Inca site.

The Machu Picchu citadel itself remains closed.

Peru has been shaken

by two months of protests by supporters of former president Pedro Castillo, who was impeached and arrested on 7 December after attempting to dissolve parliament and rule by decree.

At least 48 people have been killed since then in clashes between security forces and demonstrators.

Protesters have blocked dozens of roads and placed rocks on the train tracks serving Machu Picchu. —AFP



Locals loaded with bags of produce wait beside the Machu Picchu train service as it resumed following close to three weeks of suspension due to the protests in Peru. **PHOTO: AFP**

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Morocco decries 'unjust' EU actions over Pegasus spyware

THE Moroccan parliament decried Wednesday an "unjust campaign" against it at the European Parliament ahead of a hearing in Brussels over the North African country's alleged use of Pegasus spyware. The European Parliament is set to hear from experts, human rights defenders and journalists on Thursday on claims that Morocco had used the spyware against politicians and journalists — a claim denied by Rabat.

Pegasus software, developed by Israeli firm NSO, can be used to access a phone's messages and emails, look through photos, eavesdrop on calls, track the owner's location and even film them with the camera. —AFP

Zambia commutes nearly 400 death sentences after law change

ZAMBIAN President Hakainde Hichilema has commuted 390 death sentences to life imprisonment, six weeks after he abolished capital punishment, a cabinet minister said Wednesday.

"So as it stands, we now do not have any inmates serving a death sentence following the abolishing of the death penalty," Home Affairs Minister Jack Mwiimbu, told a news conference.

The 390 prisoners, including 11 women — all being held at Mukobeko maximum security prison in Kabwe, a town around 150 kilometres (95 miles) north of the Zambian capital Lusaka — will now serve life terms. —AFP

Deadly quake puts Erdogan under pressure in May polls

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SPORT

Rakhine United sign star players for 2023 MNL football season

RAKHINE United signed a contract with Thiha Htet Aung and Maung Maung Soe, players of the U-20 World Cup generation, for the 2023 season, according to the team's statement.

The two of them were signed on a one-year contract.

Thiha Htet Aung, a defensive player, and Maung Maung Soe, a midfielder, made history with the Myanmar U-20 team at the 2015 U-20 World Cup.

In the 2022 season, Thiha Htet Aung last played for Yangon United and Maung Maung

Soe played for GFA.

Rakhine United FC will play a friendly match against the Africa All-Star team as a pre-season preparation and will prepare best for the new season.

— KZL

World Cup winner Martinez in line for FIFA best keeper award



World Cup winner Emiliano Martinez, Yassine Bounou of Morocco and Belgium's Thibaut Courtois were nominated on Wednesday for the top goalkeeping prize at the FIFA Best awards. **PHOTO: AFP**

WORLD Cup winner Emiliano Martinez, Yassine Bounou of Morocco and Belgium's Thibaut Courtois were nominated on Wednesday for the top goal-

keeping prize at the FIFA Best awards.

Martinez shone at the World Cup, playing a starring role in the penalty shootout as his country

defeated France.

He also, however, courted controversy by making an obscene gesture during the trophy ceremony when he received his prize for the best goalkeeper at the tournament.

Bounou featured for a defensively mean Morocco as they became the first African country to reach the semi-finals of a World Cup.

Belgium may have endured a poor World Cup where they were eliminated in the group stage but Courtois had already been one of the architects of Real Madrid's 14th Champions League triumph. In the women's category, the three goalkeepers nominated were Germany's Ann-Katrin Berger, Mary Earps of England and Chile's Christiane Endler.—AFP

Juve's off-field battles heat up as rivals Fiorentina come to town

JUVENTUS host Fiorentina in one of Italian football's most enduring and fiery rivalries on Sunday but once again the focus is on the off-field matters looming over their troubled campaign.

Juve are back in the top half of the Serie A table after Tuesday's 3-0 cruise past Salernitana, boosted by star striker Dusan Vlahovic putting his injury problems behind him with a nicely taken brace, his first goals for the Turin giants since mid-October.

But their season has been severely compromised by the 15-point penalty inflicted last month for what the Italian Football Federation ruled was illicit transfer activity designed to artificially boost their accounts,



Juventus are trying to salvage something from a season beset by off-field problems. **PHOTO: AFP**

with the 'Old Lady' 13 points away from the Champions League positions.

Juve are appealing the judgement at Italy's highest sporting court — the Olympic Committee

(CONI) — while also awaiting a preliminary hearing next month which will decide whether the club and its former leadership will face a separate criminal trial for accounting offences.—AFP

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Twelve Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance development based on agriculture and livestock using modern production techniques and to strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To assure support for the sustainability of Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) that prioritize import substitution, export production, and the use of domestically produced raw materials, in order to increase domestic production and generate employment opportunities.
- (d) To advance the socioeconomic life of the people, in order to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.

3. Social affairs

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

McIlroy says he's playing his best as rowdy Phoenix Open looms

TOP-RANKED Rory McIlroy, fresh off a victory in Dubai, says he's playing the best golf of his career as he prepares to tee off Thursday at the PGA Phoenix Open.

The 33-year-old Northern Ireland star beat Patrick Reed by a stroke two weeks ago for his third career Dubai title, then came home to push his game to a peak level.

"I don't feel like I've ever been as complete of a player as I am right now," McIlroy said Wednesday. "I feel like my base level now is just a little bit higher

and a little more consistent."

World number two Scottie Scheffler, the reigning Masters champion, and Spain's third-ranked Jon Rahm, who won two PGA events last month, can overtake McIlroy for the top spot with top-two efforts this week. "I don't like being number two," Scheffler said. "I'd rather be number one."

But McIlroy says he feels like he's the world's top player right now. "I'm playing well. I feel like consistency-wise, I've been as good as I've been ever in my career," McIlroy said.—AFP